

Celebrating 45 years of postgraduate medical education

We are delighted to be celebrating 45 years of publication of the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*. The first issue was published in October 1966 (see right) and its introductory editorial is reproduced on p. 546–7. Here we have some brief thoughts from Professor John Blandy, one of the original members of the editorial board, from Mark Allen, the publisher who took the journal over from its previous publishers Thomson in 1985, and from Professor Rob Miller and Rebecca Linssen, the current Editor-in-Chief and Editor.

From one of the original board members

Michael Hession came to see me in the summer of 1966 and told me of his plan for a new medical journal. When a houseman at Bart's he had been something of a rebel, protesting against the ghastly food and conditions of work. This led him to want to start a magazine that would be read by junior doctors in the NHS, and could become a vehicle for uniting their protests and their pleas for proper planned training programmes. As he made enquiries he realized that the magazine would inevitably need to be financed by the drug companies, and they would only be interested if they could be assured that the junior doctors would read it.

To get them to read any magazine the first thing was to give it away free. Second, and of much greater importance, it had to give them what they needed.

Hession realized that the chief concern of junior doctors was to get over the next hurdle in their professional careers – for surgeons the FRCS, for physicians MRCP, for obstetricians and gynaecologists the MRCOG. For each of these examinations there were the standard textbooks, but inevitably a textbook is

always a few years out of date. What was needed were up-to-date review articles. Michael Hession realized that the people who were best placed to provide these reviews were the authors of theses for MD and MCh, since each thesis always started off with a review of the literature. Who would be the authors of theses to approach? Obviously, newly-appointed consultants. (In those days, such was the competition one could not get on a shortlist without the FRCS or MRCP and a thesis.)

bers of the editorial board were paid: we felt it was a privilege to be there.

The meetings were wonderfully stimulating. We would suggest topics for the journal, and suitable authors. Most of us had just come back from one or another national or international meeting and were full of some bright young spark's contribution. The contributors were always delighted to be asked, and were not paid. The journal was very successful, and I remember being rather chuffed when examining in surgery at Cambridge to find that my co-examiners were citing *Hospital Medicine* reviews as the best authorities.

Sadly Michael Hession sold the business to Thomson, and left, installing Gordon Westerman as his successor in the editor's chair. Gordon proved to be brilliant: he had a keen eye for good prose and conducted the monthly editorial boards with great charm, making sure that there was plenty of booze to loosen tongues and stimulate discussion. Once a year he invited us with our wives to a good dinner in a good restaurant.

I continued to attend regularly for nearly 20 years, and then with the change in management and other demands on my time I decided to hand the baton on to other colleagues to continue the hard work.

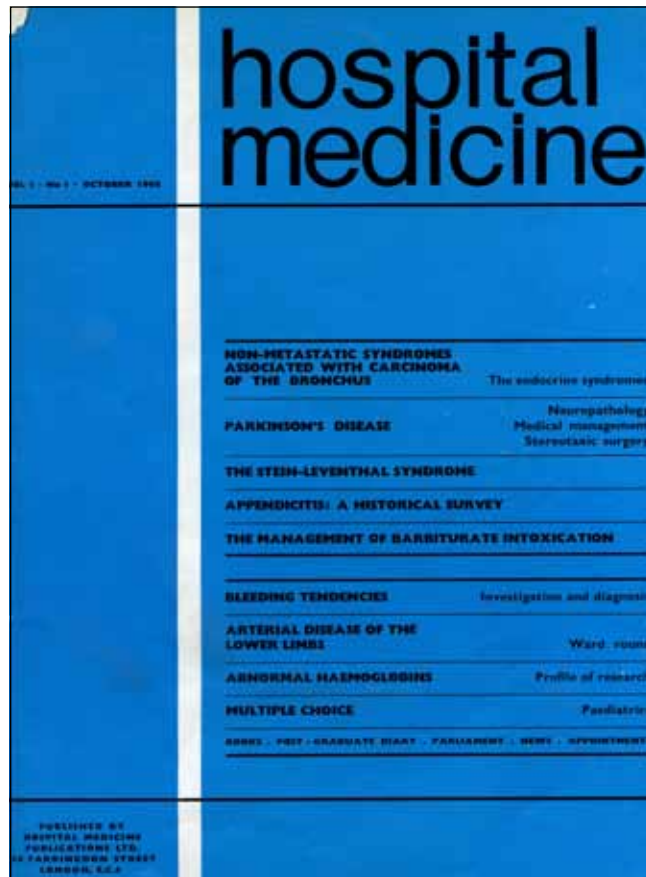
John Blandy

*Retired Consultant Urologist
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London*

We were saddened to hear that Professor Blandy died soon after writing this piece.

The proprietor's view

The one and only time I went to an editorial board meeting of the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine* while the journal



As far as I can remember I was asked to join the second meeting of Michael Hession's editorial board: the other members were Trevor Silverstone, the psychiatrist, and Bill Havard. I believe I suggested Adrian Marston as a general surgical member, and I think a year or two later John Ledingham from Oxford joined as a physician. None of the mem-