

EDITORIAL

This issue of the Journal is devoted to a selection of the papers presented at the Marathon Medicine Conference sponsored jointly by The Sports Council and the Health Education Council. The conference was organised by the Chairman of BASM, Dr. Dan Tunstall Pedoe who also took responsibility for editing the clinical papers which appear in this report. A summary of the advice which the delegates at the conference would wish to offer those preparing for and participating in marathon races has already been published and is reproduced in this issue with permission of the BMJ. We have included this material, (along with application forms for membership) at the centre of the Journal so that it can be detached for easy reference.

The original intention was for this issue to appear as a supplement to the Journal and so there would have been two issues in December. However the editorial staff would have found this far too great a load and so gave priority to the conference report. The conference took place last February and so the appearance of this report just ten months later is a satisfying achievement. Most conference reports or proceedings take a minimum of a year before appearing in print and that is only achieved when delegates supply their papers to the organisers at the conference and there is a full-time editorial staff to cope with all the manuscripts. A more realistic time scale for the appearance of conference proceedings is of the order of eighteen months to two years. Many authors realise that their material will be buried in a conference proceedings for up to two years and are therefore reticent about including any new material in their conference papers. This of course, is an understandable strategy from the author's point of view, though possibly not an acceptable strategy as far as the potential reader is concerned. Conference proceedings are generally expensive and during these days when libraries are looking for ways of saving money, a department is loath to spend its limited library funds on volumes of proceedings. Therefore on both of these accounts the present conference report comes out on the positive side. Including a report as part of the normal publishing schedule is more economical than producing a hard back separate issue which gets only secondary publishing priority. Early publication is more likely to appeal to authors who are encouraged to include in their conference papers newer material, hypotheses and speculations which will still be fresh, interesting and stimulating when the report appears in print. At this point I should add that if the rest of the editorial staff had as much energy as Henry Robson, the editor, then we would have had this issue out in June.

In the next issue, which will be the first of volume 19, the size of the Journal will change. In the past standard A4 paper has been trimmed to produce the neat, though non-standard, size which is one of the unique features of this Journal. The Journal will be printed in future in the new A4 size, which will be more economical and so help delay the rise in the cost of its publication. We hope that this change will not cause too much inconvenience to librarians and those responsible for binding copies of the Journal. Nevertheless we hope that the change will be seen by BASM members as part of the continued evolution of the Journal which mirrors the healthy growth of the Association.

Finally the editorial staff would like to thank the following people who have been most generous with their time refereeing papers submitted to the Journal during the past year

Dr. J. Atha, Mr. W. Bell, Mr. J. Clegg, Ms. Anne Daggett, Mr. A. M. Fraser, Dr. E. J. Hamley, Mr. M. Harding, Mr. B. Helal, Dr. L. J. Hipkin, Mr. F. M. Holliday, Dr. J. Kane, Mr. J. King, Dr. J. MacGregor, Dr. R. J. Maughan, Mr. J. Robertson, Dr. N. Craig Sharp, Prof. D. E. M. Taylor, Dr. D. S. Tunstall Pedoe, Dr. J. G. P. Williams, Dr. A. Young, and above all to Mrs. Olga Harris, Dr. Robson's Secretary and to Surgeon Rear Admiral S. Miles who as Chairman of the Editorial Board has critically reviewed almost every paper which has been published in the Journal.

Clyde Williams