Annals of the
**RHEUMATIC
 DISEASES**

Leader

The Nottingham Office ... one year on

At the end of March 1993 the Nottingham editorial office and newly formed editorial board completed their first year of activity. The two principal objectives of the board for 1992–3, set out in last April's issue,¹ have been achieved. Specifically:

- 1 *provision of an efficient, professional service for submitting authors.* Communication with contributors has been optimised by dedicated fax and telephone lines and employment of a full-time editorial assistant (Prue Naphine). Most newly submitted papers are now processed (that is, sent out for assessment by two to three peer reviewers and a decision transmitted back to the submitting authors) within eight weeks of arrival in the office. A number of strategies have helped to streamline this process, though the main determinant remains the time taken by (unpaid!) reviewers.
- 2 *reduction of the publication time to under six months.* Publication time from acceptance is currently between four and five months. As three months is the minimum time required for quality technical editing, printing, and binding this means we are close to the minimum publication time possible. This compares very favourably with other (especially European) rheumatology journals.

During the year April 1992 to March 1993 we processed a total of 814 submissions (300 inherited from the previous office, 514 new) and currently receive around 50 new submissions a month. During the year we accepted about one in three manuscripts. In almost all cases this followed revision of the original paper.

Several changes in the format and content of the journal have been instituted. For example, a structured abstract system is now established for both extended and concise reports. There is no longer a specific section for case reports, though exceptional individual or collected cases may be published in the correspondence section or as concise reports. The last 'Heberden paper' appeared in March 1993, and any further linked reviews will now appear as series within the regular monthly issues. The proceedings of two meetings, containing brief expert reviews and selected expanded abstracts, have been published within the journal rather than as supplements.

This arrangement still permits offprint abstract booklets to be available for meetings (if organised far enough in advance with the editor!) but means lower publication costs, compared with separate supplements, for meeting organisers. The Masterclass series returns in 1993 rotating bimonthly between rheumatology centres in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe. The original link with Bath continues with Ashok Bhalla as coordinating editor.

Two new members joined the editorial board during 1992 (Gerd Burmester, Bernard Duquesnoy) and a regular statistical adviser was commissioned (James Pearson). Younger scientists and clinicians are increasingly taking part in the reviewing process and the proportion of assessors from outside the United Kingdom has been expanded.²

As always the editor welcomes from readers any comments or suggestions relating to the running or content of the *Annals*. Equally the editorial board is keen to publish its aims on a regular basis and report on its success or failure in their achievement. Although such a report is delivered at the annual general meeting of the British Society for Rheumatology, we believe that wider communication and feedback to all our subscribers is appropriate. Our continuing aim is, of course, that 'the *Annals* continues as a premier vehicle for dissemination of clinical and laboratory based research and as a forum for comment related to rheumatology'.¹ For 1993–4 our immediate goals are:

- 1 to provide a decision in under eight weeks for 90% of submitted manuscripts, and
- 2 to maintain publication time at under five months.

Our performance in these areas, together with statistics relating to submissions and acceptance rate, will be published in the 'Notes and news' section in 1994.

*Rheumatology Unit,
 City Hospital,
 Nottingham NG5 1PB,
 United Kingdom*

MICHAEL DOHERTY

1 Doherty M. From Truro to Nottingham. *Ann Rheum Dis* 1992; 51: 433.

2 Acknowledgments. *Ann Rheum Dis* 1993; 52: 248.