

EDITORIAL

This introduces a year's hard part-time work by some 30 or 40 people: — contributors, their colleagues, and the editors.

According to our various interests and opportunities we have considered, debated, and recorded as best we can the facts we observed, the problems, solutions, and questions we encountered. We have sought to present them so that you, the readers, may readily grasp, share, comprehend, and answer them.

The editors' aims are two. One is to select the contributions that will be most interesting or useful. The second is to ensure that any author's meaning will be clear to most readers.

The writer's own absorption in his topic often makes it difficult for him to judge which aspects of it are easy and which are hard for readers to understand. Words, while he writes them, are apt to suggest ideas which divert him, for the moment,

from an intended logical presentation. The stimulus of a visible audience is lacking. The editor should be available as a preliminary audience.

If he is to help the writer, the editor must approach each contribution humbly, studying the whole before the parts. If all goes well, this leads to a mind-to-mind encounter wherein causes of obscurity are discussed and overcome. Such encounters make us intensely aware of diversity of approach, assumptions, vocabulary and knowledge; they confirm a common purpose, a common sense of responsibility, a common zeal for learning.

Now, readers, it is time for your minds to make contact with ours. We hope you will share our delight in diversity, and will appreciate the essential singleness of purpose, and that in due course you will offer, in writing, the fruits of your own experience to update ours.

Diana Craig



Miss Emmie Russell presents Miss Sue Cort (left), winner of "The Emmie Russell Prize" for 1979, with her award watched by the President, Mrs Patricia Dunlop (right), at the 36th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Orthoptic Association of Australia, Sydney, October 1979.

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ORTHOPTIC ASSOCIATION OF
AUSTRALIA
36th ANNUAL CONGRESS
SYDNEY
OCTOBER 1979

Presidential Address

We are indeed honoured to have Mr. Kevin Stewart, the N.S.W. Minister of Health with us today and on behalf of the Orthoptic Association of Australia I would like to thank him for opening the 36th Annual conference of our Association.

I should also like to welcome our many distinguished guests, our visitors from home and abroad, our own members from the various states of the Commonwealth. Many have travelled long distances to join us here in Sydney.

This 36th Annual Orthoptic Conference coincides with the International Year of the Child. We, as orthoptists are keenly aware of the principles declared and adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in 1959 on the rights and freedoms which every child should enjoy.

Our work in the profession of orthoptics involves us very much in the world of the child, so that friendship, understanding and tolerance are already a part of our daily commitment.

No orthoptist needs to be reminded that the possibility of a good functional result in a case of childhood strabismus declines rapidly where that child has been neglected through lack of care by responsible adults. Our aim should be, not only to care for the child but also to educate adults so that the ultimate result will benefit the child.

It is fitting that we associate ourselves with the International Year of the Child and its concepts of understanding, tolerance and friendship.

1979 marked the 4th International Orthoptic Congress held in Berne, Switzerland. Many Australian orthoptists attended with a total representation of 34 including ophthalmologists. Five papers were read by Australians and the O.P.S.M. Trachoma Film was shown also. Shayne Brown and Anne Marie Mahoney represent us on various International Orthoptic Association Committees. We are pleased that the Committee of Management of the International Orthoptic Association has accepted our invitation to hold their next Council and Annual General Meetings here in Australia in November 1980. As our Association is a full member of the International Orthoptic Assoc-

iation, all our members are encouraged and entitled to attend the International A.G.M. next year.

The Orthoptic Association of Australia grows each year with the influx of larger groups graduating from our two training schools and the fact that more orthoptists tend to stay in the work force after marriage or return to it later on. Our full members have increased from 123 in 1974 to 220 in 1979. Twenty years ago 15 orthoptists attended the annual conference — today we have a registration of 145.

Since the approval of the 3 year Diploma course in Orthoptics in 1978, orthoptists enjoy recognition as one of the para-medical professions. Orthoptists are ready to take a responsible place on any recognised committee for the purpose of improving eye health care in Australia.

It is particularly pleasing to have Mr. Kevin Stewart (N.S.W. Minister of Health) perform our opening ceremony and support our Association in this way. Let us look forward to a new era where orthoptists are fully recognised by Government and Community.

Those of us who are involved with the training of orthoptists in Australia must be aware of the types of employment available to graduates. However, let us not orientate the training too far in the technical area lest we overlook the professional side of orthoptics:— the *diagnosis*, *prognosis* and *therapeutics* of ocular muscle imbalance and binocular vision defects. The reciprocity with the British Orthoptic Society's Diploma which the Australian qualification now enjoys is something we should not take lightly and must strive to maintain in our professional standards.

In the 1979 Queen's Birthday Honours, Miss Patricia Lance was honoured with Membership of the Order of the British Empire for her services to orthoptics. I am sure you would all like to join me in congratulating her on this high honour to herself and to our profession.

Recently there has been much interest in the new treatment of amblyopia developed by the

Cambridge research/clinical team of Watson, Hess, Campbell and Banks and many of you will have read articles and reports of it.

We are indeed fortunate to have Miss Ruth Banks here as our guest speaker at this conference in Sydney. Some Australian orthoptists have been using these techniques and we hope to have a stimulating and informative session on this subject later this week.

We are also delighted to welcome Miss Mary Wesson (U.K.) and Miss Frances Williams (Canada) who will each present a paper. Mary Wesson is Treasurer of the International Orthoptic Association

and is also an Honorary member of the Australian Orthoptic Association.

The organising committee for this 36th Annual Conference under the able chairmanship of Janette Yap has worked hard to prepare an interesting scientific and an enjoyable social programme for you. We trust you will find something of interest, something to learn and pleasant company during the coming week in Sydney.

Patricia Dunlop, D.B.O. (D.) (Lond.)
President, Orthoptic Association
of Australia, 1978-1979

PATRON'S ADDRESS

Madam President — four years ago you asked me to be Patron of your Sydney Orthoptic Congress, a fact regrettably that I had almost forgotten until I found a copy of the speech that I had given at that time. I tried on that occasion to look into a crystal ball as to the future of orthoptics. You were at the crossroads, you had college problems, curriculum problems, community problems, identity problems, not forgetting the orthoptic problems.

I think that the last four years has probably been the most significant in the history of orthoptics in Australia. You are today, four years later, confidently, aggressively and solidly established in one of the leading institutes of health science in the world. You have an established three year course. You are Associate Members of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists and your work in the community field is now well recognised.

I consider the very presence of Mr. Stewart, the Minister for Health, at your opening today, whilst it might not quite give the Royal stamp of approval, is indeed a great honour for the Orthoptic Association of Australia. Perhaps political recognition these days is as important as professional and community recognition.

With all this success where do you go from here? Perhaps, Madam President, you are once again at the crossroads. I suggest that if you are an enthusiastic profession you are always at a crossroad. You are now professionally established and it is time to look at the quality of orthoptics because I believe the future of medicine and orth-

optics depends on being able to deliver quality. My challenge to you for the future four years is this, your President may like what I am going to say because I think it is from her that I have learnt it, but some of you perhaps will not like it. It is the following:- I think it is very difficult to see any great advance in orthoptics over the next four years unless we greatly improve our understanding of basic sciences and neuro-physiological processes.

Your President has clearly proved this by the recent paper she gave at the International Orthoptic Congress in Berne. That does not mean that you are not practising excellent orthoptics. I know you are, within the bounds of your present knowledge. Our knowledge and understanding and conceptualisation of binocular vision is really just developing. I think, with that knowledge, Clinical orthoptics will really take off. Forty years ago Chavasse said "So long as a squint is present, the child pays with its sight for every day's delay who ever treats it. The child has a moral right to instant investigation and treatment. It is the only way." I cannot improve on those words. I know with an increasing knowledge of neuro-physiology and binocular vision that the child is going to get even better treatment in the future.

Madam President, you have done me a great personal honour in asking me to be your Patron. I sincerely hope your Congress will have all the success it deserves.

Geoffrey C. Hipwell F.R.A.C.O., F.R.C.S.