

Editorial

Life Begins in the 40's – A Ruby Tribute to this Australian Orthoptic Icon

Whilst not our journal's 40th year, we refer to this Volume 40 as our 'ruby volume' and celebrate the success of the Australian Orthoptic Journal. Opportunities like this are perfect to reflect back on the past, indeed even the beginning, so that we can map our history and see how far we have come.

In the early 1940s Miss Diana Mann and Miss Emmie Russell planned the formation of the Orthoptic Association of Australia, which was inaugurated in 1943. So began the organised effort to develop and promote the profession and the formal exchange of ideas and scientific endeavour at the Annual Scientific Meeting, which was first held in Melbourne from 11-12 October 1944. This was held at the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, but the first session was held at the Royal Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital where "members undertook to test and initiate treatment on certain cases of squint presented to them"; that is, orthoptists had commenced 'live patients' sessions.

What was considered the first volume (but actually referred to as 'Journal No.1') of the 'Transactions of the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Orthoptic Association of Australia' was first published in 1959, in what seems to be the standard journal size of that time (25.5cm X 20cm, only slightly larger than our old baby blue coloured issues that we remember well). However, the Transactions of each Annual Scientific Meeting, which were simply duplicated typed manuscripts (typed on 34cm X 21cm pages), were available to participants since the very first meeting in 1944. Then, in 1958, the Editor Miss Diana Mann "initiated a new policy" – to "quickly circulate" the Transactions "among those members, and others interested, who were unable to attend". She continues:

"As the correction by the speakers of errors in the typescript of papers and discussions has invariably resulted in 6 months delay in publication, the Editor[referring to herself] has taken it upon herself to submit only her version of events. She has changed the order of the papers, to bring those on a common subject together. Moreover, in the interests of economy, she has abbreviated papers, rearranged tables, and condensed discussions. She offers sincere apologies to anyone whose ideas or statements she may have misrepresented in doing so."¹

It would appear that Miss Diana Mann was the first to fully embrace the role of Editor for the 1958 Transactions, which was the immediate precursor to the aforementioned first volume of 1959, and indeed that 1958 issue resembled a journal format with a table of contents included.

The publication of the journal-style Transactions continued until 1966 when the 8th volume and the first entitled the "Australian Orthoptic Journal" was published. Miss Barbara Lewin and Miss Ann Metcalfe were listed as the Honorary Co-Editors of that issue. To preserve history, Miss Jane Russell collected, indexed and photocopied the earlier transactions into two volumes. Three sets were bound and given to the Association's NSW Branch, the library of the Paramedical College and to Miss Patricia Lance's father, Dr Arnold Lance.

In "Volume 10" of the Australian Orthoptic Journal (1969-70), the first editorial committee was put together as "Sub-Editors" to assist the Editor, Miss Neryla Heard (who we are indebted to, since Neryla (now Jolly) has had one of the longest associations with the Journal). One of this editorial committee's first tasks was to develop guidelines for authors wishing to publish in the Journal. This was the consequence of discussions with Dr G. Serpell at a meeting in 1969, who "spoke on the art of editing" and clearly inspired the Association to move the Journal to a new phase.

The longevity and growth of the Australian Orthoptic Journal is a testament to the Editors of the past for their commitment and dedication to disseminating the science of our discipline and maintaining a record of our history. Whilst within each Journal since that first publication we have kept a log of our Association's office bearers and prize winners, we have not so included a page to honour our past Editors. This year, in our ruby volume, we document the editorial history of the Journal to acknowledge these people for their effort and contribution to this essential part of our profession's function. These individuals who have volunteered countless hours are listed here:

Vol 8	1966	Barbara Lewin & Ann Metcalfe
Vol 9	1969	Barbara Dennison & Neryla Heard
Vol 10	1970	Neryla Heard
Vol 11	1971	Neryla Heard & Helen Hawkeswood
Vol 12	1972	Helen Hawkeswood
Vol 13	1973-74	Diana Craig
Vol 14	1975	Diana Craig

Vol 15	1977	Diana Craig
Vol 16	1978	Diana Craig
Vol 17	1979-80	Diana Craig
Vol 18	1980-81	Diana Craig
Vol 19	1982	Diana Craig
Vol 20	1983	Margaret Doyle
Vol 21	1984	Margaret Doyle
Vol 22	1985	Margaret Doyle
Vol 23	1986	Elaine Cornell
Vol 24	1987	Elaine Cornell
Vol 25	1989	Elaine Cornell
Vol 26	1990	Elanie Cornell
Vol 27	1991	Julia Kelly
Vol 28	1992	Julia Kelly
Vol 29	1993	Julia Kelly
Vol 30	1994	Alison Pitt
Vol 31	1995	Julie Green
Vol 32	1996	Julie Green
Vol 33	1997-98	Julie Green
Vol 34	1999	Julie Green
Vol 35	2000	Neryla Jolly & Nathan Moss
Vol 36	2001-02	Neryla Jolly & Kathryn Thompson
Vol 37	2003	Neryla Jolly & Kathryn Thompson
Vol 38	2004-05	Neryla Jolly & Kathryn Thompson

However, it would be remiss to not also acknowledge the contribution of those who have published their work in the Journal, with over 400 papers having been published in the last four decades. Without the orthoptic community supporting the Journal by submitting their work, the Journal is not able to survive. In researching the history of the Australian Orthoptic Journal, it was a poignant discovery that in 1976 the Journal was not issued, since there were too few papers for publication. This similarly occurred in 1988 and 2006. Each volume that is published tells a story by mapping events and providing insight into the ideas, vision and indeed challenges of a particular point in time. A missing issue is a gap in the story. As we move into the second year of our role as Editors, we do so conscious of the importance of maintaining the Journal and rallying the support of our colleagues in order to make it happen.

This should not be difficult, however, for the orthoptic discipline in Australia is strong academically, innovative from a clinical standpoint and demonstrates leadership in terms of our professionalism. As usual, we represented well on the international stage at the recent International Orthoptic Congress in Antwerp; the official stats revealing that we were the country with the 5th highest number of presentations and posters and 6th highest number of attendees. Not a bad effort given our distance from Europe and being a relatively small profession in size. So why shouldn't we be able to produce a journal?

Whilst we glance back at our Journal's history, we should also take the time to look forward. In his Patron's Address of 1977, Dr Bill Gillies noted "Although it is fascinating to look back at how far orthoptics has come, it is far more important to look at the way ahead to see where you are going and how you may more effectively get there..."² Our sights should be on the continued development of our profession, so that we can continue to provide exemplary patient care, and do this through sharing our clinical experiences, exchanging our ideas and knowledge, and challenging the perceived limits of our current scope. We hope this Journal is utilised by you as one platform to achieve this. Here's to the next 400 or so papers that we anticipate the Australian Orthoptic Journal will one day clock up.

Connie Koklanis & Zoran Georgievski

La Trobe University

REFERENCES

1. Mann, D. Editor's Note. In: Mann, D. (Ed.) Transactions of the 15th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Orthoptic Association of Australia, Adelaide, Australia, 21-24 October, 1958; p.i.
2. Gillies WE. Patron's Address to the Orthoptic Association of Australia. Aust Orthoptic J 1977;15:2.