



## EDITORIAL

# Spot the difference

This issue of the British Journal of Plastic Surgery has some changes from the traditional format. It is the nature of change that people embrace or resist it in unpredictable ways, but as the current changes were being discussed at the Council of the British Association of Plastic Surgeons (who own the title) it became surprisingly apparent that there was a clear feeling that as time had moved on, so the journal should move too.

Some of the changes will seem superficial and even cosmetic. Of all specialties, Plastic Surgery should not, however, undervalue those attributes. The cover design, and the internal layout are all emblematic of the intended direction of the journal, and the unifying theme is to serve a more international readership and author group. For this reason it is especially fitting that this first new issue should coincide with the IPRAS World Congress in Sydney this summer, and our best wishes go to the organisers and delegates of that meeting.

When I took over as Editor my intention was to try to welcome a wider audience and author base. I had hopes of indicating this by changing the Journal name. When asked what aspects I wanted to alter in the title of the Journal I suggested that 'British' was a little parochial these days, that 'Plastic Surgery' might seem to exclude that huge body of reconstructive surgeons in other disciplines, and that it was hardly a 'Journal' if it did not come out every day. That left the word 'of', which on careful reflection is not a propitious name for a journal, although it does now seem to me to have a slightly alluring and mysterious quality to it. Changing the name of a Journal is not easy: apart from the difficulty of changing the brand, there are also the serious issues of citation, registration and impact factor to consider. Added to this, there is a vast historical legacy of excellence in the original name, and so the excellent compromise is seen on our front cover; we now go by the sobriquet BJPS, which reflects our heritage and associated tradition of high standards, but also plays down any narrow affiliation, whether specialist or geographical. This

attitude is reinforced by the subtitling of our Journal as 'An International Journal of Surgical Reconstruction'. The same theme is repeated in our statement of aims on the frontispiece.

A bigger sign of our intention is the new editorial structure where we have separated financial management and editorial management. There is now a committee previously known as the Editorial Committee but now mainly charged with managing the journal as a business entity. There is a new Editorial Advisory Board, which has already secured excellent membership from around the world. We aim to represent all major regions of the Plastic Surgery world on that Board and will welcome proposals for membership as time goes by. These Editorial Advisors will serve as local representatives of the Journal, and I hope our readers and authors will approach the membership with enquiries or to offer advice or their point of views. Like our reviewers, these Board members are unpaid volunteers and as with the reviewers, all those who read the BJPS owe them a debt of thanks for their often-unsung work, which keeps our publication at the high standard it holds dear.

Some of the articles in this issue are the first to have explanatory boxes appended. This also represents a departure from the traditional approach of scientific journals. I should confess to having taken the idea from the British Medical Journal, which has pioneered so many breaks with tradition. I have adopted this method on the principle that if I do not understand something, there may be others out there similarly in the dark. My generation of plastic surgeons are often at sea in a world of genes and growth factors, and in future we will welcome the inclusion of text boxes with manuscripts where the box can usefully either summarise, explain or contextualise aspects of the article.

As I said at the start of this editorial, change provokes the entire gamut of reactions. I somewhat flinchingly invite you to feedback your views on the changes so far. Nothing too violent please. Some

will feel we have not gone far enough: tell us why and please be patient. Those who feel a dear old friend has been disfigured may find solace in a comfortable chair, a relaxing drink and some back issues of the British Journal of Plastic Surgery. Sorry, BJPS!

S.P. Kay  
*Department of Plastic Reconstructive Surgery,  
St James University Hospital, Chancellors Wing  
Beckett Street,  
Leeds LS9 7TF, UK*  
*E-mail address: editor.bjps@leedsth.nhs.uk*