

EDITORIAL

Obituary – James A Boyle, Senior Lecturer, University Department of Medicine, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, SMJ Editor 1972-1974

J Beaton, Staff Editor, SMJ

This final issue of the Scottish Medical Journal for 2008 marks the passing of one of the former editors of the Journal by giving a short account of his life, as well as looking back to some of the material published during his time as editor, and of course, forward to the current contents of the Journal.

James Anthony (Tony) Boyle was born in Bridgeton in the east end of Glasgow in 1938. He studied medicine at Glasgow University, qualifying in 1960. After his house jobs, he entered training in medicine, and developed an interest in rheumatology. In the days before the introduction of the intercollegiate MRCP, many trainees sat the membership examinations of the three medical Royal Colleges, and Tony was no exception, gaining MRCP(Glasg), MRCP(Ed) and MRCP(Lond), subsequently becoming FRCP(Ed) in 1974, and obtaining his MD from Glasgow in 1967, with a thesis entitled "Non-Toxic Goitre - Studies in its Aetiology and Diagnosis." Most of his time in Glasgow was spent in the unit of Professor Edward McGirr at Glasgow Royal Infirmary, and he was a major collaborator with the late Professor Watson Buchanan. Together they were largely responsible for opening the Centre for Rheumatic Diseases in Baird Street in Glasgow in 1965, which has now been incorporated into Glasgow Royal Infirmary. This collaboration also brought about a highly regarded textbook of rheumatology, "Clinical Rheumatology",¹ published in 1971. Nurse education was also an interest of Tony's and this resulted in his "Lecture Notes in Pharmacology and Therapeutics for Nurses" which went into two editions, in 1969 and 1974.^{2,3} Tony Boyle's contemporaries recall him as an extremely able individual with great self confidence and boundless energy. In the mid 1970s, he left the National Health Service, and held a number of posts in the pharmaceutical industry, eventually emigrating to the United States. Some of his family remained in Glasgow, and he returned from time to time, but the focus of his career and family life was in the United States. Tony Boyle died in the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, on 12th March 2008, as a result of complications following surgery.

Tony Boyle was editor of the Scottish Medical Journal for two volumes, volume 17, which appeared in 1972 and volume 18, 1973. In 1972, the journal was published monthly but the following year this was reduced to an issue every two months. He also had a team of assistant editors. Then as now, a key feature of the journal was the publication of Society abstracts. As well as these, during his tenure of the editor's chair, the Journal also published the abstracts of a symposium on hypertension, as well as a supplement on gout, which included a long article on the aetiology of gout by the editor.⁴ Of particular interest to historians of medicine is a view in the 1972 volume of the journal on prospects for medicine in the 1970s by the late Professor RH Girwood,⁵ shortly to become the Chairman of the Board of Management of the Journal on the resignation of Professor Tom Anderson, who had held office since the inception of the Journal in 1956.⁶ Boyle stepped down from the editor's seat at the end of 1973, and his place was taken by one

of the team of assistant editors, Bill Greig, Senior Lecturer in Medicine and Consultant Physician at Glasgow Royal Infirmary who wrote a fulsome tribute to Tony. Greig noted that Tony Boyle had "demonstrated his intrinsic originality throughout his phase of Editorship. He made several innovations which not only improved the quality and circulation of the Journal but have also gone a long way to curing some of its economic disabilities."⁷

Moving forward to 2008, the Journal has settled in to a pattern of regular quarterly publication. It acts then as now, as a focus for medicine in Scotland with the aim of being "the voice of the educationalist to help in the training of undergraduate and postgraduate medical students and others in the caring professions."⁸ The Journal's relationship with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow has also developed, and the Journal is now the College's educational journal. The Scottish Medical Journal's role in education continues to be of great importance, and this can be seen in this current issue, with a review article on colorectal cancer screening by Goodbrand and Steele⁹ and an overview of issues in the diagnosis and treatment of thoracoabdominal aneurysm by Richards, Moores, Nimmo and Chalmers.¹⁰ Tony Boyle was an editorial innovator and we hope that the current Journal goes some way towards honouring his contributions to Scottish Medicine.

References

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