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Welcome back

Peter Trewby

Volume 1, Number 1 of the *Darlington Postgraduate Journal* was published twenty five years ago almost to the day. The founding editor was consultant psychiatrist Ian Martin ably supported by the then Clinical Tutor Malcolm Whittaker. It was through their labours that *Darlington Postgraduate Journal* was born and flourished. Copies were sent to hospital doctors and GPs as well as to Postgraduate Centres throughout the country. The journal put Darlington on the map with many doctors applying for posts in Darlington because they had read the journal, liked it and thought that a hospital that produced such a publication was a good place to work in. Our thanks go to Ian Martin and Malcom Whittaker and also to subsequent editors, David Hutchon, Peter Williamson, Dip Mahraj (Peter Williamson's predecessor), Terry Featherstone, Ahmet Fuat, Mo Sattar and Ian Williamson. They deserve our praise, as does Philip Neely whose ceaseless labours in the illustration department resulted in the fine production that the journal was and will now continue to be.

An eclectic mix of original papers, case reports and reflections filled the pages. For a period there was even a recipe in each edition. The back numbers in the library are worth perusing and I commend in particular an article by Professor Judith McKay entitled "Tobacco, the Third World War". She did more than anyone to publicise and fight against the tobacco industry in China and Hong Kong. This article was published first in the *Darlington Postgraduate Journal* and only appeared later in the national medical press (*Darlington Postgraduate Journal* 1996;19:12-21). Vernon Sproxtton the broadcaster and philosopher published regular articles including an interview with Tony Benn (1991;10:4-5) and Malcolm Bateson's reflections on things medical in almost every issue, as in this one, make sparkling copy. Each issue had a "Tutor's letter" and woe betide any of us who were late in writing this. Betty Wilson (the then Postgraduate administrator) would chide and threaten until the job was done.

The tensions of the day were debated and the journal was a perfect place for audit results and case reports to fill gaps in CVs, and each year the Darlington Postgraduate prize was awarded for the best article by a junior doctor. There were also obituaries. Dr Blair Edmunds, my much esteemed predecessor, wrote in the first edition but tragically died the following year barely a year after retiring and his moving obituary written by Joe Hampson appears in the next but one edition.

Those in high places may frown on such things but even they cannot deny that hospitals have a culture and a past. Doctors, nurses and managers come and go, hospital buildings change but the ethos of the hospital as a place of care and shelter for the injured, the diseased and the dying lives on. Tragedy, sometimes happiness and often humour are played out for real every day on the shifting stage of our hospital wards and GP surgeries. For the past 25 years the culture of our hospital and community health services has been chronicled in the *Darlington Postgraduate Journal*. It was a shame when publication ceased in 2003 but Richard Henderson and Andrew Michie have now taken on the mantle as new editors to move the journal forward with the same enthusiasm and principles as before. Only the name has changed to reflect organisational changes and to encourage, as always, contributions from colleagues across the County.

The Persian sage Omar Ibn Al-Halif is credited with the quote - "Four things come not back: the spoken word, the spent arrow, time passed and the neglected opportunity." He did not, thank goodness, include the *Darlington Postgraduate Journal*. Welcome Back!