

Editorial—1989 changes

Our journal is now 5 years old and it seems quite amazing how quickly the time has passed since 1983, when negotiations took place with Blackwell Scientific Publications, regarding the possibility of a professional journal for medical, health and welfare librarians. Communication is perhaps the most vital aspect of professional development, and recording professional knowledge and experience, for sharing and dissemination is crucial to the process. The decision to launch the journal has been vindicated by its success, and there are subscribers in over 30 different countries.

Another very encouraging and important development in the last 5 years has been the holding of two well-attended conferences of European medical librarians, and the setting up of the European Association for Health Information and Libraries (EAHIL), which was formally constituted in 1988. These events have clearly demonstrated the value to us all of being able to share ideas and experience across national boundaries. We all face challenges which need to be debated in as wide a context as possible, and we have been pleased to publish some papers from colleagues in Europe. It is with hope that we look forward to the increasing opportunities for mutual co-operation and support offered by the EEC plans for uniting, and drawing on the richness and variety of experience that exists within the library and information world of the European community.

Health-care librarianship is an exciting, fast developing and volatile area of librarianship which is radically affected by the new technologies. From this year some new features are being introduced in the journal with the aim of building and developing it to meet the needs of its readership. The Current Literature column will continue to be edited by John Hewlett, but to improve its currency it has been moved to the Newsletter 'pink pages' section. The currency of the Calendar was improved last year, following a successful experiment, producing it with its own co-ordinator, as a separate insert, and this will continue. The Newsletter is under new editorship, and has a new look, reflecting the growing impact of desk top publishing in our environment. June last year saw the inception of a column on IT and this will become a regular feature.

A professional journal belongs to its membership and has an important role to fulfil, in giving scope to anyone who wishes to comment on practical or technical innovations in their own services, or to write a short piece about any matter of current professional concern. Contributions of this kind are most welcome, and the first such item, on microcomputer applications in a small medical library, appears in this issue. No abstract or references are required, and the aim is speedier publication of shorter pieces of current interest.

Please bear in mind that the journal's column editors, listed on the inside front cover, are also happy to receive contributions for consideration. So, if you have ideas, views or information on any of the areas covered by the column editors, do contact them, and if you are attending a professional meeting which could usefully be reported, why not ring up the Meeting Reports editor to see if a report would be welcomed.

Finally, don't forget that you can always air your views by letter—so please do not be shy about putting pen to paper! There are many other ways to contribute to a professional journal besides writing articles, and this is your journal so, wherever you are and whatever kind of service you are involved in providing, make it your (late) New Year resolution to think about some writing!