



## EDITORIAL

The National Health Service celebrates its 60th anniversary this summer. This issue presents the reader with an opportunity to see the service as it was through the eyes of two consultants. One joined the service at the stroke of midnight of its formation, the other a generation later. Each describes a world which today's patient does not recognise. Change has occurred, not so much because of major medical advances or political initiatives, but because people have had the courage and vision to imagine and implement the process of change on a small scale. It's been a gradual process whose benefits are only obvious after a period of time.

Will today's health professional curricula deliver an improved Health Service with better professionals? Will they be able to adapt to the problems of the service into which they enter? Will they be able to improvise when confronted with shortage of equipment or experience? Will they graduate with a vision for the future, a desire to mould the service to their vision? Such questions don't feature in the discussions we have about new undergraduate and postgraduate medical

training schemes but if the service is to continue to improve and evolve then we have to look back to those who have given us the service as it is today and the professional risks they took to deliver it.

This issue also contains an appeal to all readers to consider their skills as ones which can be used outside the normal work environment. Voluntary organisations are healthy features of the fabric of our society. Employers are understandably less inclined to tolerate fatigue or absence as a consequence of a night spent on a mountain rescue than they were a generation ago. But there is a need, and an urgent one at that, for health professionals who enjoy living in this beautiful part of the world and who are privileged to have contracts with time allocated for 'supporting professional activity' to get involved with the voluntary sectors. It's a powerful way of demonstrating that today's health service is in touch with the community that pays for it. And one which, at a time of political stalemate over service reviews, could pay dividends.

**Andrew Severn**  
Editor

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