EDITORIAL

I am grateful to many people who have assisted with the production of the *Annals* during 2008, particularly Tara Nikovskis and Matt Whitaker within the *Annals* office at the College. Gill Haddock has continued to provide excellent and efficient production support. Adam Brownsell has recently joined the team in place of Tara. I am also pleased to acknowledge the assistance of the active *Annals* editorial board.

The *Annals* archive digitisation project, supported by the Wellcome Trust, the Joint Information Systems Committee and the US National Library of Medicine, has been completed. Articles published from the first volume in 1947 onwards can be freely accessed by visiting <<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/>>. Usage of this valuable reference service more than doubled in the last half of 2008 and I am pleased that so many readers are taking advantage of our digital archive.

We are always looking for ways of reducing the waiting time from acceptance of an article to publication and we are committed to offering as many quality articles as possible. The number of manuscripts submitted to the *Annals* continues to increase (approaching 800 in 2008) and we cannot accommodate every article we would wish within the print journal. The rejection rate remains at about 70%. The introduction of online-only case reports in 2004 and the increase in the number of *Annals* issues from six to eight a year in 2006 have already helped to reduce wait times for authors and to deliver more content to our readers.

The introduction of Ingenta's FastTrack service is a welcome addition to the *Annals* that enables us to publish articles in advance of their appearance in print. These articles can be accessed alongside the regular *Annals* online content by following the 'FastTrack articles' link above the contents list. Every article has been assigned a digital object identifier (doi) and we will continue to update the FastTrack content as each new issue of the *Annals* is published.

Once again, I thank our reviewers for their assistance and support to the *Annals* during the year. I am always grateful to receive comments (both positive and negative) from our readers and any suggestions on how the *Annals* might be improved.

I wish all our readers a very happy and successful New Year!

IRVING TAYLOR

Editor-in-Chief