Moving forwards

The appointment of specialty Section Editors to the *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons* has now been completed and I can finally both congratulate and welcome them all to the team. Many have been staunch advocates of the *Annals* for several years. Their creditable roles have been varied – as authors, editors and reviewers – as well as scoring a host of palmary achievements relating to their clinical practices. Their remit will undoubtedly evolve over the coming months as we work together to further develop the *Annals*.

One of the fundamental precepts of their roles, however, will be to encourage the submission of high-quality research from their respective fields of expertise. As Section Editors they will provide a more tangible focus for specialty submissions and they will work to further enhance the process of peer review, which is crucial to academic publications. It is hoped that we can encourage fellows of the College to take part in this peer review process – a process which has been described as the ‘business of science’. If you would like to be considered for such a role then the *Annals* team would be pleased to hear from you (annals@rcseng.ac.uk). Contributions made by colleagues to the peer review process will now be formally acknowledged by the *Annals* and is something that can be reflected in both an individual’s personal and academic annual appraisals.

Bruce Campbell, who is soon to demit his role as Chair of the International Procedures and Medical Technologies Advisory Committee (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence), has been advising our readership on NICE guidance throughout his tenure there. It is no mean feat to present such data in a readily digestible format to a surgical audience. Such direction has been part of the staple diet of the *Annals* for some years. Since those early days, NICE guidance has become much more widely available within our individual spheres of work and it is now commonplace to discuss such advice at local and regional audits across the length and breadth of the country. As a result of the increased accessibility of this data, the *Annals* will no longer be running NICE guidance as a regular feature. We are indebted to Bruce for his hugely significant contribution to the *Annals* over the years. We are grateful that Bruce has agreed to continue to further develop the *Annals* Technical Section and oversee, in collaboration with our Multimedia Editor Matt Wilson, all those

innovations relating to the new multimedia format that the digital version of this publication has afforded us.

The *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons* remains one of the few surgical publications where clinically based research, relating to the practice of surgery, is read by a general readership of surgeons from all specialties. While we have consciously avoided defining too closely the nature of articles considered for publication, endeavours in the fields of basic science and qualitative research inevitably defer to clinical research and articles related to the practice of surgery. The *Annals* is therefore uniquely placed to appeal to a very general readership. As a result the *Annals* delivers an eclectic mix of articles, many of which highlight the merits of inter-specialty collaboration. It should therefore come as no surprise that lessons gleaned from one field of endeavour inevitably provides lessons for another. And it is this that lies at the heart of the *Annals* and its continued success.

For many at the beginning of their surgical careers, the successful submission of articles for publication is an increasingly essential pre-requisite for career progression. I am pleased that many still choose to submit their articles to the *Annals* where they are assured of recognition by their peers, whatever their specialty interest. I am sorry to disappoint those who submit articles which are ultimately declined. The decision not to publish is rarely a reflection on an article’s worth alone, but more frequently a reflection on the restriction of publication space. Where possible we endeavour to provide feedback for individual authors.

We do, however, intend to reward excellence. At the start of 2016 we will be awarding the first annual *Sir Cecil Wakeley Medal* – named in honour of the *Annals*’ first Editor – to the first author of what we judge to be the best original research paper first-authored by a trainee and published in the *Annals* in 2015. We hope this annual award will give some recognition to the excellent work submitted by surgical trainees and encourage them to submit further articles to this esteemed publication in the future.

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The Sir Cecil Wakeley Medal: terms and conditions

The Sir Cecil Wakeley Medal winner must be a UK-based trainee surgeon who was in a recognised training post at the time of print publication. The winning paper will be selected by the *Annals* Editor-in-Chief with support from the Editorial Panel. The winning paper must have been published in print in 2015, and have a trainee as first author. The medal will be awarded in early 2016 and the winner will be announced in the *Annals*.