Editorial

An extra set of hands

Tim Lane, Editor-in-Chief of the *Annals*

The Royal College of Surgeons is a broad church of surgical specialties. Ever since the Company of Surgeons – from which this Royal College can claim direct lineal descent – was established in 1745, there has been a relentless pursuit of excellence that has inevitably driven subspecialisation. Although subspecialisation increasingly differentiates our surgical practices, there remains a much more fundamental connection between our allied clinical fields that represents something more than just kinship. The *Annals* is a clinically based research publication that focuses on the practice of surgery. It holds a unique position in the surgical literature in that it continues to publish papers from across the surgical spectrum – specifically selecting those articles that have pan-specialty appeal. Published articles highlight a connection between neighbouring spheres of endeavour and underscore parallel learning curves. Papers focus on points of congruence and reciprocity, ultimately providing a collation of surgical experiences. Advancing surgical care is and always has been at the heart of this development.

The *Annals* now plans regular additions to the current publication schedule in the form of periodic supplements with cross-specialty appeal, which we anticipate will indulge a long-overdue surgical desideratum. The *Annals* supplement will focus largely on those areas where there is a shared commonality, either reflecting a multidisciplinary approach to surgical interventions or where there is significant similarity of surgical technique or challenge. The first of these supplements – which undertakes a surgical reconnoitre into the field of robotics – explores the

extent to which this innovative technology has become the standard of care. More importantly, it allows for those new to the field to explore the similar challenges facing those across the surgical spectrum and to understand the fundamental concepts that both challenge and drive surgeons from different areas of interest.