Editorial

Societies devoted solely to neurosurgery were first formed in the 1920s, more than 40 years after surgeons began to deduce diagnoses and to plan operations from the principles of neurological structure and function. Contacts between the early pioneers of neurosurgery on either side of the Atlantic who perhaps inevitably were highly independent individuals, depended mainly on informal visits to each other's clinics and operating rooms. Such visits continued to be a feature also of the early meetings of the emerging neurosurgical societies, as recorded in the article in this issue by the Archivist of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons.

The British Society was the first formal neurosurgical society in Europe and the first that claimed to represent neurosurgery on a national scale. Professor Potter's article marking the Society's 60th anniversary chronicles its history and pays proper tribute to the outstanding personalities amongst its founders and emphasises the traditions that the Society inherited from them. The concept of the Society having a life of its own is justified by its role in the development of the speciality and the commitment of its members to work through it for the advancement of neurosurgery throughout the British Isles.

The *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* has been associated with the Society of British Neurological Surgeons for four decades. The importance of interaction between the clinical neurosciences makes it artificial to put limits on the interests of a particular speciality; nevertheless, most of the articles in this issue deliberately have a neurosurgical "flavour". Many of these continue to concern the issues and controversies that Professor Potter records as having engaged the Society's attention during its first six decades. Perhaps the most striking change has been in the techniques of investigation that can be employed in either clinical or experimental research. By the time the Society reaches its centenary, the techniques of scientific investigation would no doubt seem just as strange and wonderful to neurosurgeons of today. But will a similar collection of papers still focus upon the clinical topics and problems that are already all too familiar to us?

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