

## Editorial

By JOHN GROVES, Proceedings Editor of the Conference

THIS issue of the *Journal* is devoted to the Fourth British Academic Conference in Otolaryngology, July 1975. Despite earlier anxieties about financial problems, the decision of the General Committee to go ahead was more than vindicated by the enrolment of more than 900 members and associate members from 44 countries. In the ideal environment of London's South Bank and in 6 days of perfect summer weather the now traditional programme of plenary sessions, panel discussions, instructional sessions, films, and trade and scientific exhibitions was unfolded. This was no curate's egg. Everything seen and heard was good, although many things were better than others; the prime objects of assembly, exchange of ideas, mingling of generations and cultures, were splendidly achieved.

The opening ceremony, in which the Master, Mr. John Angell-James, was installed by his predecessor, Mr. Ronald Macbeth, was followed by a recital of music, generously given by Miss Margaret Price, Mr. John Williams and Mr. Anthony Hose.

A garden party was held at Hever Castle by kind permission of Lord Astor. Enjoyment of the beautiful house and grounds was heightened by music played by the band of the Royal Life Guards. At the banquet on 24 July the Master presided and again there was music—on this occasion from members of the R.A.M.C. military band—which included a fanfare specially composed for the occasion by Major Hurst, A.R.C.M., Director of Music, R.A.M.C.

When the Fifth Conference comes in 1979 the world will be a different place. We cannot foresee the circumstances, but clearly the exchange of scientific information and opinion must remain the prime purpose of these meetings. It is important that the format should not become an ossified ritual. Better methods of cross-fertilization must be kept under continuous scrutiny, and adopted even if only experimentally. This year's modest experiments have been successful, and will be remembered, one hopes, so that the arts and humanities will be in our minds whilst we are evaluating the scientific medical offerings we are privileged to hear.

Gratitude is due to the administrative and technical staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hall, St. Thomas's and the London Hospitals, and to the very many anonymous voluntary workers who made everything work so extremely well. The complicated arrangements for the panel discussions

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and for the instructional sessions (at St. Thomas's Hospital), films, and trade exhibitions ran perfectly on schedule to the great satisfaction of all.

The Editor thanks the contributors whose papers are reproduced here for submitting them promptly, and for submitting with grace to the editorial knife wherever want of space has necessitated abridgment. Some of the finest presentations, which relied very heavily upon projected slide material, have suffered unavoidably because it is impossible to do them justice without literally dozens of colour illustrations. Dr. J. L. Pulec of Los Angeles, replacing Dr. Sadé in the Plenary Session of 24 July at short notice, gave a paper on the Surgery of Vertigo. We much regret that it has not proved possible for him to submit a manuscript in time for publication here.

As a matter of policy an early decision was made not to attempt to report in print the enjoyable discussions which ended each plenary session. Likewise, the four afternoon panel discussions, each of which was very well attended. These activities totalled some eleven hours of lively debate, and would require a complete book for their publication. They have been tape-recorded and will be kept permanently available in the Conference Archives.