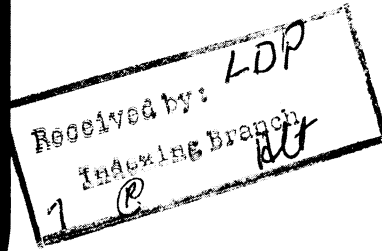


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EDITOR'S CHOICE

BMJ

John Thwaites, that most lovable member of the editorial staff of his generation (and, like several of his colleagues, immortalised in John Rowan Wilson's *This Side of the Angels*), would have had a sense of déjà vu about this week's *BMJ* (p 741). Himself a respected Brighton general practitioner and the last surviving member of the BMA council that debated the NHS Act, he would have been saddened by the findings on general practitioner obstetric care in Bradford, with its

high crude perinatal mortality (p 725), and angered by the secretary of state's imposition of the contract, particularly with its clinical direction (p 756). But problems are not confined to Britain—see George Dunea's analysis of the mix up over Medicare in the USA (p 730)—and perhaps we should remember the mythical Armenian anecdote: "We know exactly what the future will be like. Our problem is the past; that keeps changing" (p 759).