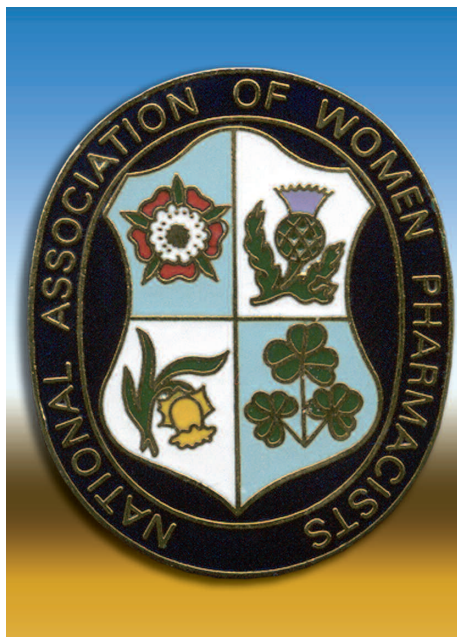


Journal celebrates 100 years of NAWP



“Thirty years have passed since, for the first time, the portals of pharmacy were open to women. But, in spite of the number of women who, since 1875, have gained the qualification of the Pharmaceutical Society, up to the present no systematic and organised attempt has been made to further the interests of women pharmacists or to co-operate for the common good. On Thursday, June 15, 1905, however, at a representative meeting of women pharmacists, held in London, an association was formed for the purpose of organised action, particularly with regard to the employment.”

The text above appeared in *The Journal's* report of the first meeting of the Association of Women Pharmacists (*PJ*, 24 June 1905, pp893–4). In the following section, *The Journal* celebrates the association's centenary with a variety of articles. We begin with an article (p730) that recounts the difficulties women pharmacists faced in gaining recognition and membership of the Pharmaceutical Society (in 1868, less than 2 per cent of pharmacists on the Register were women). Other scene setting include an article examining the past attitudes to women in pharmacy as reflected in the pages of the pharmaceutical press (p738) and an unexpected glimpse into one woman pharmacist's life through the pages of an old British Pharmacopoeia (p735).

The winning of the right to membership was not a panacea. Women pharmacists had to contend with many other issues, particularly in employment. This led to the formation of the association, described in an article on p733. Another article (p737) looks at other early professional women's associations.

Today, fewer difficulties face women pharmacists (who now make up 52 per cent of the Register), but one of these is returning to work after a career break to raise children. The celebratory section ends with a two-part article on taking a break and the support available to those who wish to return to pharmacy after a break.

A message from the association's president

I suspect that those women pharmacists who set up the Association of Women Pharmacists on 15 June 1905 (which, in 1918, became the National Association of Women Pharmacists) would be delighted to know that the organisation is extant and indeed vibrant 100 years later.

The association has achieved much for women in pharmacy; from equality of working conditions and pay in the early years to helping with problems encountered by women returning to pharmacy after a break in more recent years. From the ranks of the association came the first women members of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society, a number of whom went on to become president. Indeed, in 2003, three of the four officers of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain were women.

More recently the association has produced a “Women in pharmacy” pack, has offered a mentoring service to its members and has helped with continuing education and continuing professional development. A national conference is held each year together with a meeting before the British Pharmaceutical Conference and study days, aimed at updating knowledge and skills, are held both nationally and locally by the association's branches.

It is important that we should enter our next century “fit for purpose”, given the different world that pharmacists find themselves in today. This centenary year provides us with an opportunity not only to reflect on and celebrate the past but also to anticipate the future. Our close connection with, but independence from, the Society gives the association the ability to pursue its aims and objectives. Continuing to represent pharmacy within women's politics and examining pharmacy-related aspects of equal opportunities in health care are our priorities. Other areas, such as enabling women pharmacists to realise their full potential both within and outside pharmacy and workforce issues such as retention of women pharmacists on the Register and part-time and locum employment are important. Also, building relationships with pharmacists in other European countries and with women pharmacists in less developed countries are necessary in the 21st century. The friendly and reassuring fel-



lowship within the association provides valuable encouragement to women pharmacists who aspire to raise their personal and professional profile.

The association's executive has worked tirelessly to ensure this centenary year will be a memorable one and we look forward to building on its success to increase the membership and influence of the organisation in the future.

Monica Rose
President
National Association of Women Pharmacists