EDITORIAL

In this issue is a letter from Sir Neil Cantlie asking for more papers recording the achievements and/or experiences of our Corps in peace and war. We also publish a most interesting account of an Army Surgeon’s experiences in Italy in 1944-45 by Major Vellacott. The letter and papers referred to give our editorial pen a much needed jog as we had been meaning to ask for more accounts of contemporary events as well as past ones. What is so often overlooked is that the contemporary scene becomes part of history overnight. This was brought forcibly home to us when we retired to become Curator of the Museum. To celebrate our retirement we carried out a ceremonial cremation of most of our uniform. The warmth of this blaze was rapidly cooled when we arrived at the Museum and found that no examples of puttees were held—it was then too late to recall the four intact pairs we had burnt. (Would readers please note we do not need any puttees as we did get examples after a struggle).

We do however receive some gems from time to time and two of these we bring to our reader’s notice as we hope to publish them in the journal in due course. The first is “The Autobiography of Captain William Morrison J.P.” Captain Morrison is the father of Brigadier W. K. Morrison D.S.O. (Retd.) and it was thanks to the latter’s generosity that the Historical Library received a typed copy of the original MSS. The autobiography covers the period 1860-1895 and is an almost unique account dealing as it does with the daily life of an other rank in Victoria’s Army. Captain Morrison began his military career as a private soldier in a Highland regiment and transferred into the Army Hospital Corps in which he rose to commissioned rank. On retirement he became a J.P.

The second is “The Medical History of the Blewes 1742-1746.” This is a journal of some 400 pages kept by John Buchanan Surgeon to the Royal Horse Guards (The Blues) in the Low Countries during the War of the Austrian Succession. It is without doubt the most detailed and informative account of its kind in existence and was purchased for the Corps at a recent auction of MSS at Sothebys. What shines brightly from its pages are the humanity and the professional skill of the author both in marked contrast to the usual “Hogarthian” concept of life in the mid 18th century.

Colonel Commandant R.A.M.C.

Major-General D. G. Levis, C.B., O.B.E., M.B., D.P.H., Late Royal Army Medical Corps, has been appointed a Colonel Commandant R.A.M.C. from 16 August 1973.