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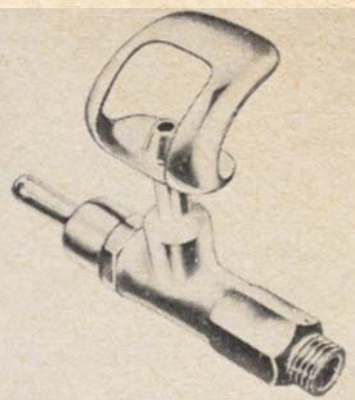
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Highlights from our 1970 archives



A new mouthguard to prevent water from the mouth dropping back on to the outlet was developed following an outbreak of infectious hepatitis in a Victorian primary school. Published 14 February 1970.

The Australian Tobacco Research Foundation

Sir: One notes that the four major tobacco manufacturers in Australia will contribute their managing directors to this Australian Tobacco Research Foundation, and the secretary will be the head of the research department of one of Australia's largest tobacco manufacturers.

Apparently the Foundation envisages a 5-year project concerned specifically with smoking and health research in the Australian environment.

There is much disquiet in the USA among sociologists regarding the increasing use of the government or corporation special purposes grants in university funding.

This has occurred in our universities so far

to only a minor degree, most particularly in engineering and the sciences, both physical and social.

However, one must view with alarm the association of leading medical academics with an organisation which must have a vested interest in the manufacturers of the smoking and tobacco industry.

Surely, involuntarily or otherwise, their freedom to criticise must be impaired and their presence legitimises the organisation.

*John Melov
Engadine, NSW
31 January 1970*

Ut homo rei magister sit!

The theme of the doctor and his machines ... is almost painfully topical, and it is wider in its implications than just to doctors.

There is a nice balance to be struck here, a balance that every doctor must strike for himself, between the personal human approach and the impersonal scientific approach.

Either can get out of proportion.

The one can be used to justify sentimentality, woolly thinking, inflation of the ego and an exaggerated estimate of one's own clinical judgement.

The other can cover disregard of human feelings, careless dismissal of the interaction between mind and body, and even sheer laziness.

In both cases, in a sense, the machine wins. Or, more precisely, man fails to make himself its master.

When Professor CA Coulson, Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, was in Sydney recently, he told a press

conference that the most important single technological development since 1935 had been the growing use of big electronic computers.

Personally he did not like them, but they had to be used.

Then he commented: "I don't think these computers have got much of a soul — but that's not a scientific thing to say. Computers are tools, and there is always the danger that the tool will take possession of the man who uses it. I don't want this to happen to me. I'm afraid that if I used the computer too much, I wouldn't be doing enough thinking. I want it to do the hard work, but I do think there is still a place for me."

If man ceases to be master — whether of a computer or a pen, a bomb, or a dollar, a diagnostic machine or a drug — he is so much the less a man.

Always, but more than ever as technology grows, his motto must be: "Ut homo rei magister sit!" — "Let man be the master of the thing!"

Editorial

7 February 1970 (edited extract)

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