

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST AUGUST 2004

Membership

The Society now (as of 31st August) has a total active membership of around 1168 with 45 new ordinary members being elected this year. The total number of members is a few down on last year, due to individuals who have not paid their subscription for three years or more having been taken off the membership list. Professors Klim McPherson, Nick Wald, Michael Marmot and Sian Griffiths have all been put forward for Honorary Membership of the Society and would all be honoured to accept.

Annual Scientific Meeting 2003

The 47th Annual Scientific Meeting was held at the University of Edinburgh in September 2003 under the presidency of Allyson Pollock. On behalf of the Society I would like to thank Sally Wyke, Raj Bhopal, Heather Coupar and the rest of the local organising team for their considerable efforts in putting on a very successful and enjoyable meeting. The meeting and the scientific programme were of the usual high quality and feedback from delegates was extremely positive.

This year's Annual Scientific Meeting

A total of 210 abstracts were submitted for consideration for presentation at this year's scientific meeting. There will be 88 oral presentations and 66 posters at the meeting here in Birmingham. Papers were scored by members and oral presentations and poster presentations were chosen from the highest scoring abstracts. The Committee has continued the policy of inviting speakers to the conference, following the success of previous years. Professor George Davey Smith is this year's Cochrane Lecturer and Dr Tim Evans from the WHO is this year's international speaker. Many thanks are due to Carol Richards, Richard Wilson and the rest of the local organising committee at Birmingham for all their hard work.

Other business

Website and Archive

The website continues to develop – thanks to the efforts of Charles Florey. It is now possible to update contact details directly via the website. Members are urged to visit the site regularly. The archive has recently been updated with material put on to CD by Charles and this will be held at the Wellcome Institute.

Meetings

Each committee member is encouraged to organise at least one one-day meeting during their term of office. A one day meeting on “Developing a framework for equity in the new NHS” took place at Birkbeck in October 2003 and in November 2003 a further one day conference was held on “Globalisation and Health Policy” – both were organised by Allyson Pollock and both were highly successful. A one day conference was also held by the HTA and the Society for Social Medicine jointly on Methods in HTA research – this was not only extremely well evaluated but made money for the society! A further joint meeting was also organised to celebrate the life of Alice Stewart in March 2004 with the Society for the History of Medicine. Robert West was involved with the organisation of this one day meeting on behalf of SSM which was also highly successful. Thanks to the organisers of all these one day meetings.

Future meetings

Next year's Annual Scientific Meeting will be held in Glasgow 14-16th September 2005. In 2006 the meeting will be held in Leeds, and plans are afoot for the 2007 meeting to be in Cork; the 2008 in Southampton with the possibility of the 2009 meeting in London.

A one day meeting has been organised for autumn this year by Alicia O'Caithin on "Mixed Methods in HSR Research". We are also planning a molecular epidemiology meeting in Leeds in February 2005 and an evidence based PH policy one day conference in early Summer 2005.

The Committee

The current members of the Committee for 2004 are:

Margaret Whitehead (Chair)
Allyson Pollock (Past Chair)
Sally McIntyre (Chair Elect)
Ian Harvey (Honorary Treasurer and JECH editorial board rep.)
Aileen Clarke (Honorary Secretary and JECH editorial board rep)
Shah Ebrahim
Charles Florey (Co-opted: Website)
Barbara Hanratty (Co-opted newsletter editor)
Mark Gilthorpe
Gillian Leng
Alicia O'Cathain
Joy Townsend
Carol Orchard (EUPHA representative)
Robert West (IEA European Federation representative)
Richard Wilson (Co-opted: ASM)
(Ellen Nolte (EUPHA Scientific Committee member for SSM))

Committee Changes

During the year Allyson Pollock (Past Chair) and Charles Wolfe, Nick Payne, and Barbara Hanratty (Ordinary Members) completed their terms as elected members of the Committee.

On behalf of the Society I would like to thank them all for the hard work and the valuable contribution that they have made to the success of the Society over the last few years. Barbara Hanratty, although she has completed her term of committee membership has kindly agreed to continue editing the newsletter until the end of 2004 and we are very grateful to her for this. Ian Harvey has completed his term as treasurer and wishes to step down. He has done an admirable job of husbanding the society's finances well through his term of office and we are very grateful to him for all his hard work. I have been nominated for this post and this means that I will also be stepping down as Honorary Secretary at the end of the year. A ballot will be held with the next mailing for the post of Honorary Secretary – and any members wishing to find out more about the role should contact me in the first instance. As a result of nominations we will be welcoming two new members to the committee from January 2005 – they are Lawrence Moore and Roger Harrison. I am also delighted to report that Ian Harvey has been nominated as Chair Elect during 2005 - his term as Chair will be in 2006.

Correspondence and committee business:

In addition to the organisation of scientific meetings, and the organisation of the society, the following topics have been discussed by the committee through the year;

- Rosh Hashanah and the timings of ASMs
- The UK voluntary register and our input to it
- Joint activity with other PH organisations (a meeting took place on this on 17th June 2004)
- Payments to invited speakers at SSM events
- Data protection Section 60 and effects on research
- Issues related to EUPHA and its ongoing viability as an organisation
- SSM nominations for the next RAE

Thanks

I would like to Barbara Hanratty who has continued to do such a great job producing the newsletter this year and Angela Rowe (membership secretary) for her continuing efficient management of the database. I would also like to thank Ian Harvey who with the support of Angela Rowe has been an excellent Hon. Treasurer for the past 6 years. Olivette Stanislas has been a great help and support to my role as Honorary Secretary over the past year as have Margaret Whitehead and all the members of the committee. I look forward to our ongoing success as a society.

Aileen Clarke
September 2004