



# Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland

Patron: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG, KT

at The Royal College of Surgeons, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE  
Tel: 020 7973 0300 E-mail: admin@asgbi.org.uk  
Fax: 020 7430 9235 memb@asgbi.org.uk  
Website: www.asgbi.org.uk

1<sup>st</sup> October 2001

## An Executive Newsletter

Dear Fellow,

The Executive are taking the unusual step of writing directly to all Fellows and Members at this time of year to update you on some of the programmes and initiatives that we are pursuing at the present time and have planned for the future. This follows on from the revision of the Association's memoranda, articles and byelaws, that took place at the Annual General Meeting in Birmingham, which has allowed us new freedom to concentrate on those issues directly affecting surgeons and their patients and the environment in which they work.

The direction of the Association is strongly towards the training of surgeons and, over the next two to three years, driven by the new powerhouse - the Clinical and Academic Committee chaired by Professor John Farndon, is expected to formulate new policies in education, assessment, appraisal and examinations. Many opportunities now exist for improving our standards in these respects.

### **Birmingham, 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> April 2001**

The 2001 Annual Meeting in Birmingham, "*Emergency Surgery*", was an enormous success as those who attended will be well aware. The venue was particularly suited to the Association's large and enlarging meeting with excellent lecture halls and breakout rooms together with a good exhibition space in pleasant surroundings. The efficiency of the staff of the International Conference Centre in Birmingham made for an enjoyable and successful meeting. We will be introducing this venue again in four year's time following our Dublin, Manchester and Harrogate meetings. We envisage meeting again in Edinburgh in 2006 to celebrate the special 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Edinburgh College at that time.

### **London, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> November 2001**

There will be an Autumn meeting of the ASGBI in London at the Royal College of Surgeons of England dealing essentially with training and educational issues and also hot political and Health Service topics aligned with professional standards. This meeting will be open to all, including our affiliates and NCCG members and is entitled "*How to make a surgeon*".

The full programme is included with this Newsletter and has been awarded a generous tally of CME/CPD points. The BMJ will be covering the meeting, which includes various contentious topics for an open airing. A dinner is being held at the Law Society when it is hoped that delegates, their partners, their registrars and other guests will attend for a well-chosen medico-legal menu.

***BOOK NOW.....BOOK NOW.....BOOK NOW.....BOOK NOW.....BOOK NOW***

## **Dublin, 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> May 2002**

Next year's meeting in Dublin will take place at University College, Dublin with many functions being held in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland on a joint basis. This meeting will also be held together with the new organisation resulting from the merger of the Surgical Research Society and the Society of Academic Surgery – SARS. The programme is well advanced and is entitled "*Towards Excellence*". Up to seven parallel sessions will be running to include state of the art lectures and education for the practising surgeon, along the lines of the American College Meeting. CME/CPD points will be available throughout. Submitted papers for presentation will, for the first time, be required to be sent electronically and indeed passed to the referees electronically on a secure system which is automatically able to anonymise the content. This has been developed by Professor Paul Redmond's Unit in Cork and is an up-to-the-minute facility able to cope with complex formatting of tables and charts.

The President of Ireland will be opening the formal proceedings and Seamus Heaney will be speaking at our formal dinner. Sir Alan Langlands will be delivering a keynote speech "*Whither the NHS?*" and Sir David Carter has also agreed to address us. Social aspects of the meeting will be most enjoyable, both at the College and in the Guinness Storehouse and are expected to be extremely popular.

The last session of the Conference, on Friday afternoon, will be Anthony Clare putting a surgeon into his infamous chair. Doubtless many delegates will then wish to spend the weekend in Dublin.

### **The umbrella and the link-surgeons**

The inevitable role as an umbrella organisation for what, historically, is general surgery is involving the Association more and more in the political arena and this is not least due to the fact that we now have in place a cascade system of communicating with all Trusts and hospitals throughout Great Britain and Ireland through our link-surgeons. We are very grateful to those active link-surgeons who have helped with a number of surveys over the last year and in particular those that contributed so helpfully to the survey on the cancellation of elective operations. This data was of extreme importance and came to the attention of the Secretary of State and his advisors, precipitating an urgent visit by the President to the Chief Executive and Chief Executive Medical Officer. We are enclosing a short summary of the data for your perusal and please note it remains anonymous and confidential.

The link-surgeons' cascade in the new political arena invites unity, cooperation and communication and empowers the ASGBI with data of immediate relevance and important opinions. We believe the link-surgeons are the key to our success in the future in our negotiations with the Department of Health and Government.

### **The Chief Executive and the Secretariat**

Dr Nicholas Gair has been appointed as our first CEO. He has had wide experience of educational issues in the charitable and university sectors and has been Deputy Secretary of the School of Pharmacy for the last eight years. He spent many years as an administrator with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other outdoor recreational and sporting organisations. He has published widely and one of his first tasks will be to bring our website up-to-date with facilities for communication, registration and poster-boarding. It will now be more helpful than ever to have Fellows' e-mail addresses so letters such as this can be distributed quickly.



*Dr Nicholas Gair, our CEO*

Nechama Lewis has returned from maternity leave as Deputy CEO on a part-time basis and Jeanette Robey has relinquished some of her commitments to the ASGBI to concentrate, once more, on her role as Administrator for the VSSGBI. Her work for the Association has been greatly valued during Nechama's absence.

### **The Executive**

Our relationships with the Royal College(s) are changing as the ASGBI takes on a refreshing new partnership role. It is proposed that, in future, our President, rather than the Honorary Secretary, will represent the ASGBI on RCSEng Council and will have full and complete voting rights. Council appear at the present time to be in favour of a two rather than a one year Presidential term to render the incumbent more influential, although there continues to be discussion around this area. Our Vice-President: represents the ASGBI on Senate and the FSSA at present. In future Council wish nominations for the candidates for Honorary Secretary and Treasurer to be past or current elected members of Council to widen the choice. These possible changes will go before the Association's Annual General Meeting in Dublin.

### **Political connections**

Your Executive has been working hard with the Department of Health, its Officers and Ministers to continue a dialogue. We bring important points to the attention of Professor Liam Donaldson and Mr Nigel Crisp and, of course, are intimately linked with the four Royal Colleges and the Senate of Surgery. Several of the Honorary Officers sit on College Committees and Council.

At the end of September, Professor Donaldson responded to concerns raised by the President, Chris Russell, and the Honorary Secretary, Graham Layer, in an extensive letter. We have paraphrased below some of the points that the Chief Executive Medical Officer feels we have raised and on which he wishes to offer his reassurance that the Government is addressing these issues "to ensure that we have a NHS that meets everyone's expectations."

- 1) "The work and effort surgeons put into providing better services is fully recognised and appreciated .... they will continue to provide a quality service and work towards the Government's objectives to deliver better, faster and fair health care".
- 2) Provision of resources "NHS is in most prolonged period of expansion in its history. 2000-1 to 2003-4, Expenditure will grow 6.6% a year over and above inflation. Extra cash is beginning to bring on line the extra capacity needed to make care better and faster for patients."

- 3) ASGBI concerns over quality of training infrastructure “the responsibility of Royal Colleges and postgraduate deans to assess each situation carefully as they make decisions on the approval of posts or placements for training.”
- 4) Concerns over adequate information and information technology “there is general agreement that work is need at all stages of the data collection process and at both an organisational and individual level to ensure data is sufficiently robust to support consultant level reporting and appraisal. I am sure your Fellows will be encouraged that through this work there will be opportunities to influence and support the intended improvements.”
- 5) “I am grateful to the Association for backing the Government’s plans to modernise the NHS.”

We hope that the mailings included with this Newsletter bring you up-to-date with some of the work going on at the ASGBI which directly influences your practice. Our next challenges are:

- 1) The new consultant contract.
- 2) Revision of the job plan in consultation with the specialty associations.
- 3) A more comprehensive curriculum with yearly goals.

The President and Honorary Secretary are keen to meet as many link-surgeons as possible this year. This initiative was begun at the AUGIS meeting in Edinburgh recently and will be repeated at the VSSGBI, AESGBI and the BASO-BSG meetings amongst others.

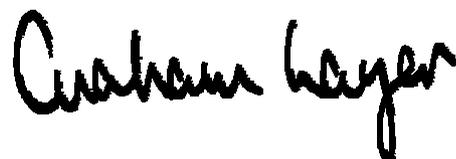
We continue to value your support and would be delighted to hear of your opinions. Our transformation of the ASGBI is ongoing to match the pace of communications, technology and the demands of our peers and patients, and we will try to keep pace with the accelerating demands of the Department and Government and act on your behalf in constructing and effecting appropriate criticism.

With all good wishes.

Yours sincerely,



**Christopher Russell**  
President



**Graham T Layer**  
Honorary Secretary



*Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and  
Ireland*

**The Structure of the ASGBI**  
Graham Layer, Company Secretary

**Mandate for change**

- ◆ Repetitive items on the agenda of different committees, reporting to each other.
- ◆ Expense of so many meetings.
- ◆ Limited time for interaction during the working day between honorary officers and secretariat.
- ◆ Management burden upon the President.
- ◆ Need to adapt to new technology.

**Specific reasons for change**

- ◆ Agenda of Education Committee and Specialties Board overlap.
- ◆ Specialties Board is most effective when the Presidents are present.
- ◆ Scientific Committee needs to be more proactive in planning the Annual/Autumn Meetings.
- ◆ Private Practice Committee poorly attended.
- ◆ Executive needs to meet more frequently in addition to regular contact by e-mail, fax, telephone, etc.

**New Structure**

- ◆ Upgrade certain committees/groups to meet with Executive.
- ◆ Streamline Council and make it more representative.
- ◆ The concept of the Clinical and Academic Committee.
- ◆ The new Directors of Education and the Scientific Programme.
- ◆ The concept of flexible and ad-hoc working groups.
- ◆ Membership of the CAC to include the SAC.
- ◆ Increasing the role of the Specialty Presidents.
- ◆ The need for a Chief Executive.

**The Chief Executive**

- ◆ Responsible to the Company Secretary.
- ◆ Ultimate responsibility to the President of the day.
- ◆ Support for the Honorary Officers.
- ◆ Involvement in policy, finance, staffing, etc.
- ◆ Demanding job/person specification.

## ◆ A message from Mr Bernie Ribeiro

August 5<sup>th</sup> 2001

Dear Fellow

My first duty as Chairman of **the Distinction Awards Committee** is to thank Professor Averil Mansfield for her enormous contribution as Chairman. Averil was able to draw on her experience as a member of the Advisory Committee on Distinction Awards (ACDA) to inform our deliberations and to ensure a high success rate for our Fellows.

In 1999 the ACDA membership was reduced from 33 to 14 with no Royal College representation. Future proposals outlined in the consultation document circulated in February 2001 – Rewarding Commitment and Excellence in the NHS – and available on [www.doh.gov.uk/nhsclinicalexcellenceawardsscheme](http://www.doh.gov.uk/nhsclinicalexcellenceawardsscheme), recommends a further reduction at regional committee level to:

- 1/3 medical to include general practice.
- 1/3 NHS management.
- 1/3 NHS patient or service user representatives.

We will review the outcome of this consultation process, which threatens to restrict higher awards to 'A' and 'A+', leaving local awards to be made by NHS Trusts. The Distinction Awards Committee will ensure that its recommendations at national and also regional level are effective.

### **Higher Awards**

For this year's round (2002) the same criteria as previously, will be applied by the ACDA and should cover the areas listed below:

- Professional excellence.
- Research, innovation and improvement in service.
- Outstanding administrative or management effort.
- Outstanding contribution to other forms of service development.
- Teaching and training.
- Outstanding commitment to the achievement of service goals.

Each year the committee make recommendations, with regard to 'B' and 'A' higher merit awards, to the Royal Surgical Colleges and very importantly, also, directly to the ACDA and the Scottish Advisory Committee for Distinction Awards (SACDA). Before you decide to submit an application, remember that it is unusual for a 'B' award to be granted under the age of 40, and an 'A' award under the age of 45 is exceptional. A guide to the awards scheme and a new CV questionnaire for the year 2002 is being prepared by the ACDA and SACDA and should be available in late October on the following web sites:

For England, Wales and Northern Ireland: [www.open.gov.uk/doh/nhsexec/acda.htm](http://www.open.gov.uk/doh/nhsexec/acda.htm)

For Scotland

[www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sacda](http://www.show.scot.nhs.uk/sacda)

Please ensure you download the correct version of the CV Questionnaire. Year 2002 CV Questionnaires will also be available from Hospital Trusts or the Association of Surgeon's Office. Your full CV should **NOT** accompany your application, but may be requested at a later date.

Some does and don'ts on completing the questionnaire from our outgoing chairman may be of value:

- It must be on the **current** form
- It must be signed
- Do not leave sections blank
- Write something about every aspect of your professional activities
- When asked for 'peer reviewed' publications, ensure that they are that
- Suggest someone who you think would be appropriate to write a citation on your behalf

Although not essential, nearly all applicants hold some discretionary points and it is important to remember that the ACDA would expect applicants for higher awards to have been awarded discretionary points by their Trust.

The Association of Surgeons acts as an umbrella organisation for general surgery and its allied surgical subspecialties. All requests, including self-nominations and those from specialty associations are considered and will be judged the criteria used by the ACDA. Please enlist the help of a colleague, who has an award, to assist you.

### **5-Year Reviews**

It is important that holders of higher awards who are due to submit CV Questionnaires for 5 year reviews should treat this process with the same respect as they would if making an application for the first time. Regional Committees have been known to restrict awards on the basis that there has been no evidence of continuous meritorious achievements.

### **Discretionary Points**

All Consultants at the top of the pay scale are eligible for discretionary points. Applications should be made to the chairman of your local Discretionary Points' Committee. Subject to the acceptance of the new NHS Clinical Excellence Award scheme, the committee will review its policy in respect to applications for discretionary awards.

Members of the Distinction Awards Committee of the Association of Surgeons are:

- Mr Bernard Ribeiro (Chairman)
- Mr Christopher Russell (President)
- Mr David Watkin (Immediate past President)
- Mr Robert Johnson (Vice-President)

All correspondence, marked "Private and Confidential", should be forwarded to me by Friday ..... November 2001 to the address set out below:

**Mr Bernard Ribeiro,  
Chairman of the Distinction Awards Committee,  
Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland,  
at the Royal College of Surgeons,  
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields,  
London  
WC2A 3PN**

Fax: 0207 430 9235

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Ribeiro FRCS  
Chairman, Distinction Awards Committee

## Computerised Logbooks

The new Consultant Appraisal process appears to require some form of logbook or at least an accurate annual caseload and in an ideal world this would be available from your Trust. But unless you can be sure that the download of your data are complete, accurate and up-to-date it may be safer to have ready access to your own data.

There are now two consultant versions of the logbook available from the Association website and there is a helpline for your assistance. Please see the enclosed flyer for details.

A facility to provide central analysis of trainees' computerised logbook data for Regional Training Committees is under active consideration.

### The logbooks - 1

#### **Logbook for higher trainees in general surgery:**

SAC requirement

Psion 3a/c, 5mx, PC (Delphi), MS Access 97 and 2000

Regional coordinators can collect and analyse data

Next upgrade – Psion and Delphi to be phased out

Download from ASIT website [www.asit.org/logbook/](http://www.asit.org/logbook/)

### The logbooks - 2

#### **Logbook for consultant general surgeons:**

ASGBI software pro tem to provide annual caseload data required by appraisal

Similar to trainees but pages for publications, lectures/presentations and courses/meetings

Access 97 and 2000

Download from [www.asgbi.org.uk](http://www.asgbi.org.uk)

ASGBI funded help line [irenegreen@lineone.net](mailto:irenegreen@lineone.net)

