

Editorial

Welcome to a new Med Chi year!

The last year

Sir Alexander Macara (Sandy) has presided over a highly-successful year. The Society is greatly in his debt – more than many of us realise. The year was not all plain sailing and two of his key speakers were unable to give their addresses – both for entirely legitimate reasons. Despite this – a number of excellent presentations were given. Sandy himself started off by describing public health developments over the last 30 to 40 years. We have pleasure in reproducing his Address. We have all been amazed at the extent, breadth and depth of his involvement with many public health issues. Over a long period of time he has been involved with emphasising the health hazards of smoking and more recently has started to tackle the issue of how foods should be labelled so that the public can have an idea of what is “healthy” and what is not. Long may his pioneering energies last. We are very glad that Sandy will be remaining on the Med Chi Committee for a further year.

Richard Horton went to Bristol Grammar School. For some while he has been Editor of The Lancet and a leading medical thinker – often quite contentious! He spoke of the deterioration in the opinions that politicians have of doctors (unfortunately this is mutual!). He emphasised the current lack of medical leadership. He also discussed the issue of medical professionalism and referred to the recent RCP publication on the subject.

Dr Stuttaford’s talk was largely anecdotal but nevertheless very interesting. He didn’t really explain how he manages to produce high-quality commentaries on current medical events with such extraordinary speed. Dr Stuttaford is Medical Correspondent to The Times.

Lord Walton, the well-known neurologist, talked about 50 years of neurology. This was a masterly summary of the subject. The extent and breadth of the advances, when presented together, surprised even your Editor who is a neurologist! We intend to publish this talk shortly.

One meeting was devoted to presentations by 6 students – outlining their experiences during their electives. We are glad to publish summaries of their presentations. Who can fail to be impressed with the fearlessness and enthusiasm with which so many students throw themselves into the healthcare problems of less well-developed countries. We came away feeling that the future of medicine in the UK is in good hands.

Dr Michael Wilks has been involved with the BMA Ethics Committee for many years. He explained the excellent work that has been done by that group in formulating/crystallising medical opinion on many difficult ethical issues.

Finally – it was an interesting and fascinating year.

The coming year (2006/2007)

In October the Society welcomes Gareth Greenslade as our new President. He has put together a really interesting programme on the theme of doctors under pressure. Details of this programme are given elsewhere on the website. He proposes, amongst other matters, to introduce a debate about the future of the Med Chi – a subject that is dear to the heart of your Editor.

Other matters

The Editor plans to extend the debate about how changes in the NHS are likely to affect the practice of medical in Bristol and particularly the effect that the changes will have on the quality of health care provision. We plan to highlight good things and bad things, for example - The expansion of community care, the desirability of whether or not there should be a single acute Trust in Bristol, the reduction in the size of the major hospitals and how the overcrowded BRI environment can be improved!

We intend to provoke lively debate. This debate starts with the article in this issue by Michael Whitfield on the pros and cons of the Government “Choose and Book” initiative. We hope to attract email comments from all quarters!

Comments on the contents of the website and suggestions for topics to be covered are sought and welcomed.

How to contact us

We can be contacted via two email addresses:-

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We all look forward to a good 2006/2007 session for the Med Chi.

RLH

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