

From your executive

Chairman's report

Having attended our 2007 Conference in Preston at the beginning of November, I should first like to say thank you to the organizers, Chris Barton and her team, who worked so hard over many months to put together an interesting programme in a delightful venue; they are to be congratulated. I – along with a number of others, I suspect – well remember the days of sharing university accommodation with hordes of overexcited freshers, whose presence it was, at times, not easy to ignore! In spite of significant difficulties in funding, it was immensely gratifying to see that so many managed to attend – and I greatly enjoyed catching up with old friends and making new ones.

The ACPWH committees have continued to work hard in many different areas in order to produce, as far as possible, what our members request. Please do look at our website: we try to keep this updated with current information regarding workshops and leaflets, and it is an ideal forum for advertising any courses, study days or workshops that you may be planning to organize. It is also a means of disseminating guidance on particular aspects of concern to all of us as it emerges; such information can be found in the 'Knowledge Base' section of the website. As you are aware, our Sixtieth Anniversary Conference is to be held in Birmingham in September; we hope to make some changes to the format, and ideas of how we might do this are included on the site.

At Conference, we said farewell to three executive committee members, all of whom have worked tirelessly on behalf of our Association: Jeanette Haslam [an *ex-officio* member, in her role as chairman of the education subcommittee (ESC)], Ann Mayne and Yvonne Coldron. We shall miss them all, and are very grateful for their enormous contributions over the years. Clair Jones has also left the committee, but has not been able to escape from us! As incoming chairman of the ESC, she will continue to attend executive meetings in this capacity.

We are delighted to welcome two new committee members, Helen Forth and Ann Johnson, and we look forward to working with them. I would like to remind you that we still have

vacancies on the executive committee and ESC, and ask you to consider whether you, or anyone one you know, might be interested in joining them. Please do contact any of us whose names appear on the inside front cover of the Journal if you would like to find out more about what is involved.

At the June 2007 meeting of the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health (IOPTWH) in Vancouver, Canada, Gill Brook, who had held the post of treasurer of this organization since 1999, was elected as secretary. Not only has Gill been working for our own Association, but she has also represented us on the world stage during this period – and continues to do so in her new post. Ros Thomas, in addition to her executive committee and ESC roles, and not to mention the demands of being Journal editor, was elected as the IOPTWH treasurer, a role that will keep her occupied until 2011.

We were delighted to receive an unprecedented number of applications for funding from the Dame Josephine Barnes Bursary, and in autumn 2007, five successful applicants were awarded financial help towards furthering their education in women's health. We congratulate Becky Aston, Teresa Cook, Penny Graham, Doreen McClurg and Michaela Pienaar. It was also a pleasure to present the Anne Bird Prize to *four* winners at Conference. This was a unique situation, since Tamsin Brooks, Amanda Savage, Gail Stephens and Shernaz Screwvala had worked together on a joint project, each of them contributing a huge amount to the development and delivery of the approved Pilates workshop. Congratulations also go to Rebecca Storer, who was the 2007 recipient of the Margie Polden Student Award. We hope that she enjoyed our conference and that she will continue to develop her interest in women's health. Details of how to apply for these awards are given elsewhere in the Journal (pp. 84–85). It is also appropriate to mention the Margie Polden Memorial Lecture at this point. Philip Toozs-Hobson, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at the Birmingham Women's Hospital, Birmingham, UK, gave a very interesting – and amusing – insight into his

work; Philip's lecture is reproduced in this Journal (pp. 4–7). Fitwise Management Ltd have now been working with us for more than a year, although they have been our conference organizers for 3 years. They have proved their expertise in managing our financial and membership aspects (each an enormous task), in addition to other administrative duties. This allows us as executive members to fulfil the educational and professional role for which we are elected; with well over 700 members in our Association, we are one of the largest of the 40 Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) clinical interest groups, and we wonder how we managed without this help for so long!

Finally, I cannot finish without thanking all those who have helped me during my first year as chairman. I have never before encountered such a steep learning curve! Ros Thomas, as previous chairman, together with *all* the executive members, has given me total support and encouragement. I am also grateful to the many others who help in so many different ways: the members of our subcommittees, our area representatives, workshop organizers and the many others who take on tasks that arise from time to time. In spite of the financial constraints that are affecting all of us, I am sure that our Association will continue to go from strength to strength in the year ahead.

Pauline Walsh

Treasurer's report

During the past months, the financial aspects of the ACPWH have been giving the executive committee some grounds for thought. The auditors brought to our attention that we had made a loss of £10 000, and that this was caused by an overall increase in expenditure. On looking into things more fully, it became clear that we had not been increasing our income in line with our expenditure for several years. This is partly because our fees have remained static since 2000, and also a result of the increased levels of activity as the Association has undertaken such projects as patient and clinician leaflets, workshop development, and ongoing production of the Journal. The employment of Fitwise Management Ltd has been an enormous asset to the Association, but has also increased our expenditure.

In order to rectify the situation, the executive has taken several proactive steps, some of which are still ongoing. These include:

- (1) increasing the membership fee to £65.00 per member (pro rata) (due notice was sent to members, and this motion was passed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 3 November 2007 at Conference);
- (2) negotiating a reduction in Journal and leaflet overhead/production costs;
- (3) ensuring that all other aspects of the work of the Association are profitable;
- (4) reviewing and monitoring the costs associated with the employment of Fitwise Management Ltd; and
- (5) introducing a direct debit system, which will facilitate the payment of fees.

Please remember that it is possible to obtain tax relief on your subscription.

I would like to thank you all for your continued support. If you have any queries, please contact me at <Doreen.McClurg@gcal.ac.uk>.

Doreen McClurg

Fitwise Management Ltd report

Membership

Significant progress has been made over the past year in the overall management of the ACPWH membership database and reporting process. While some minor adjustments still have to be made, including the recording of CSP registration numbers on the database for full and affiliate members, the cooperation of the CSP is helping to resolve this issue by providing ACPWH members' registration numbers where these are missing. Since membership figures are provided monthly to the executive committee, it is easier to identify patterns of new and lapsed members, although, essentially, numbers are reasonably consistent.

Interestingly, out of a database of approximately 736 members, there are 265 individuals, representing 36% of the membership, who do not provide e-mail addresses. This is roughly on a par with the other healthcare associations with whom Fitwise work. However, it is worth considering, especially if wearing an environmental hat, that this is something that the Association may want to address in terms of future communications with members. Reducing the carbon footprint by paperless communication, wherever possible, should be part of everyone's agenda and e-mail communication represents an opportunity for the ACPWH to further develop contact with members. With the bulk of subscription renewal notices due to be dispatched in

March 2008, this will be an opportunity for members to provide e-mail addresses where these are currently missing.

With the review of the annual membership subscription charges and the recommended increase in fees having been accepted at the 2007 AGM in Preston, further changes to the method of payment of subscriptions will be introduced during 2008. Currently, the vast majority of members pay by banker's order (73%), with the remainder paying by cheque. In order to improve administrative efficiency and cut costs, a direct debit system of payment will replace the current standing order system. From the individual member's point of view, this will require all members paying by banker's order to cancel their existing arrangements and complete a direct debit system of payment. Further explanation and details of this process will be communicated to members early in 2008.

Books and Leaflets

Booklets and leaflets produced by the Association continue to be sold through two distinct distribution channels. For sales of less than 50 units per title of individual leaflets or booklets, orders need to be processed through Fitwise. For volumes above 50 units per title, all orders must be processed through Ralph Allen Press. Fitwise has developed a spreadsheet similar to that used for membership database reporting that is supplied to the book and leaflet secretary on a quarterly basis. This details information about the monthly stock balance, as well as all stock ordered and sold.

Conference

Conference 2007 in Preston proved to be a significant success. With 124 delegates attending, this represented an increase of three delegates on the previous year in Cardiff. There were 10 exhibiting companies in Preston compared with nine in Cardiff, with sponsorship income slightly up on last year. The after-dinner speaker in Preston, Sean Hughes, was a great success, being both informative and amusing. A full Conference financial report and delegate evaluation report will be sent to the 2007 Conference organizing group and the executive committee in early January. Organization for the 2008 event in Solihull is progressing smoothly and members are asked to note that this is the Sixtieth Anniversary Conference and will be a special occasion in the Association's 2008 calendar.

Finances

Changes in the financial management of ACPWH, with both general and Conference bookkeeping being carried out by the Association's bookkeeper, Sandra Rees, has led to improvements in the way that financial data is now presented to the executive committee. The use of the SageLine 50 software bookkeeping system provides more detailed financial data, which allows for better financial planning by the executive committee in turn.

The essence of this system is that it separates the Association's activities into departments, and allocates income and expense to each area of activity. This has the advantage of identifying areas of activity that are not cost-effective and areas of activity where the Association is able to generate income, a significant advantage when it comes to future planning.

Searching for a physiotherapist

On average, between four and six queries a week are received from people requesting details of a physiotherapist in their local area. We are supplied with a postcode and the database is searched by area for the closest match. We check with the selected physiotherapist to ensure that she gives consent for her details to be given out. The enquirer is then e-mailed the physiotherapist contact name, position and work address. If there is no physiotherapist on the database in the requested area, the query is passed to the ACPWH area representative who covers the enquirer's area and the enquirer is e-mailed to the effect that the area representative will be in touch shortly.

Area representatives

The current area representatives have been invited to confirm that they are still the representative for their particular area. Some responses are still awaited. Once the list of representatives is confirmed, a monthly list will be circulated. A procedures document will also be sent detailing data protection rulings and other procedures for handling personal details.

General

December 2007 completes a full working year for Fitwise serving the ACPWH in an administrative capacity. Many changes have taken place 'behind the scenes', and while it has been a learning curve for Fitwise staff in terms of acclimatizing ourselves to the language, acronyms

and culture of ACPWH, the future of the relationship looks extremely positive.

Blair King

Public relations officer's report

No nominations for the role of public relations officer (PRO) were received, and hence, no one was elected at the 2007 AGM. I was asked if I would consider being co-opted to the role following Ann Mayne's retirement, and since our Association cannot continue without a named PRO, I agreed to take on the job.

Many members will know me already, but for those who don't, here is a brief synopsis.

I have worked in women's health for over 20 years, having completed Jo Laycock's first Promotion of Continence and Management of Incontinence course in Bradford in 1988. I followed this by immediately taking the old foundation course, which led to membership of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

I then was employed in Zimbabwe for a time, and since my return in 1996, I have worked in Leeds. By 1997, I had become part of the ACPWH executive committee, first as book and leaflet secretary, and then secretary. Since I was already the chair of our local group, I also took on the newly formed role of area representative for Yorkshire. In order to have more time for my Master's degree, I stood down from these roles and have since completed my MSc in Rehabilitation Studies at the University of Bradford, where I now assist in leading the Postgraduate Certificate in Women's Health.

I have agreed to this role on a temporary basis for one year until someone new is found.

Please consider whether you could be the next person to take on this role, someone who can bring some new ideas to it and the executive committee.

Ann Johnson

Education subcommittee report

This is my final report on the work of the ESC. Since my last article, more of the established workshops have been held successfully in various parts of the country. By the time that you read this, there a new course, Physiotherapy for Bladder and Bowel Dysfunction – A Practical Workshop, will have taken place. Work continues to establish a new male continence workshop and a musculoskeletal workshop. Meanwhile, an

application has been made to the CSP for endorsement of the Pelvic Floor Examination and Assessment for Urinary Incontinence workshop. More on this development will be published in the next issue of the Journal.

As I look back over my years of involvement with the ACPWH, I am reminded that there are so many people who have helped and inspired me whilst I have been involved with the ESC. Jill Mantle was my introduction to the committee – I felt so honoured to be asked to join the happy band on the committee! There were people on it whom I felt were the 'famous ones' who soon became established as good friends and colleagues. I later became chairman of the ESC and found that it did not run by itself, but rather, it was the sum of the hard work of all the participants. After this followed 3 years in Germany, and on my return, I became a member of the ESC again. There had been changes: a workshop had just been established and the primitive leaflets that we had started work on had started to come to fruition as the wonderful documents that we have now. Three years ago, I was again privileged to become chairman of the ESC, and during that time, there have been more changes, such as new leaflets, workshops and statements, and the upgrade to Master's-level courses to attain full membership of the ACPWH. This has only been achieved by the hard work of many people, including the ESC members who have supported me and given of themselves. I wish to personally thank all the members of the ESC who have worked so hard whilst I have had the honour of being chairman of the ESC.

There are new challenges ahead and I am delighted that Clair Jones has now been elected as ESC chairman. I believe that change is essential for the healthy growth of the Association and I am personally delighted to find that one of our younger members is taking up the baton. Please do all give her your support; I am certain that the ESC under her chairmanship is more than up to the challenges of both reviewing what currently falls under the ESC's auspices and being proactive in the educational needs of the membership in the future.

Jeanette Haslam

I am both excited and honoured to be taking over the role of chairman of the ESC. Having worked on the executive committee as diversity officer for 3 years and the ESC for the past year, I feel that I have a good understanding of the

inner workings of the ACPWH. I also have a solid clinical base, which is backed up by a Master's degree in physiotherapy. I have represented the Association at the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, and have recently been working with Skills for Health on the 18-week pathways.

I work full-time in women's health at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust, Norwich, covering obstetric and gynaecology inpatients and outpatients. My workload also includes extended-scope practice in a urogynaecology triage clinic, which necessitates close multi-specialty working. My colleagues and I treat between 800 and 900 obstetric outpatients per year, and we are currently auditing our treatment outcomes. I am particularly looking forward to developing the new musculoskeletal workshop, whilst continuing to promote educational issues in and around gynaecology.

I live with my husband in Norwich, and we have an active interest in the theatre. We are currently rehearsing for a production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, to be followed by a new professional version of *Les Misérables* in Madeira in April. It's certainly a good way to switch off for a while and keeps us both busy.

I am looking forward to the challenges that being chair of the ESC will present. With the continued support and hard work of the committee, I am sure that we will continue to promote physiotherapy in women's health and serve the needs of ACPWH members. I look forward to updating you on a variety of projects over the next 3 years.

Clair Jones

Book and leaflet report

The ACPWH booklets and leaflets continue to sell well. For the most up-to-date information on availability and costs, please refer to the Association website (www.acpwh.org.uk), since there are occasional changes in both leaflet and postage prices. The inside back cover of the Journal is a good guide, but is only guaranteed to be correct at the time of publication. Remember that quantities less than 50 must be ordered through Fitwise. If in doubt, please contact

either Ralph Allen Press or Fitwise directly before ordering.

One new leaflet is now available, *The Role of the Women's Health Physiotherapist*. It was written in response to the need for literature informing physiotherapists and other health professionals about what the role involves, and also in order to enlighten the general public. The price of the leaflet had not been confirmed at the time of going to press, so please check the website for details.

It was envisaged that *The Role of the Women's Health Physiotherapist* could be used at Congress and student conferences, in hospitals or surgeries, and at any venue where we interface with the public on behalf of the ACPWH. This leaflet, like our others, will incur a purchase cost, but it is possible that the leaflet may be provided free of charge on specifically approved occasions, if this is in the Association's best interests. You would need to apply to Clair Jones, the education subcommittee chairman, for permission.

Promoting Continence with Physiotherapy has been reviewed this year and a number of the other leaflets are also currently under reassessment.

Ros Thomas

Diversity officer's report

The CSP recently held the second training day for diversity officers – it's amazing how much the role has expanded since it was identified some 3 years ago! The legislation continues to move forward in many different areas, while the CSP's diversity networks have also grown significantly.

I am really pleased to have had the opportunity to undertake the role of ACPWH diversity officer. I have learnt a lot and enjoyed working to ensure that Association practice is fair and equal to all. This has included giving guidance about male physiotherapists working in women's health as well as issues raised by individual members. Being diversity officer has certainly opened my eyes to the wider issues that affect us all, both professionally and personally.

Clair Jones