

SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The history of Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy

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Abstract

This article celebrates the seventieth anniversary of the founding of POGP. Beginning with profiles of the early pioneers of physiotherapy, who emerged from the specialty of obstetrics and gynaecology, it highlights the most significant milestones in the association's history. The author goes on to describe how the field expanded to encompass colorectal conditions, urology, pelvic health and sexual function, the latter of which is no longer gender-specific. The article acknowledges the association's founder members, who came from diverse medical backgrounds, but were united by a common goal: improving maternity care for their patients. The author also reflects on how the core aims and values of POGP remain the same today.

Keywords: history, Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy, seventieth anniversary.

Introduction

When searching through archives to research the present article, the main sources of information were the various incarnations of POGP's own journal. These provide a profound insight into how the association began, and it was also interesting to see how the publication evolved from a simple, but precise and informative newsletter into the professional journal it is today. The enthusiasm and dedication of many editors and Journal Subcommittee members are captured in its pages.

The association, which was originally called the Obstetric Physiotherapy Association (OPA), was founded in 1948. This was the same year that the UK National Health Service was established, and 28 years after the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics (CSMMG) – now the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) – was granted its Royal Charter by King George V.

The OPA was one of the earliest clinical interest and occupational groups to be formed, the first being the Association of Teachers of Physiotherapy in 1922, which was followed by the Association of Orthopaedic Chartered

Physiotherapists in 1945. It is interesting to note that the CSP's name was only adopted in 1944 in order to represent the scope of its work more accurately. Since this was only 3 years before the OPA was formed, the change of title perhaps illustrates how fast the profession was developing. The members of the CSP were a mixture of trained nurses with an interest in massage and medical gymnasts, and this combination was reflected in the medical professionals who influenced the formation of the OPA.

History

The origins of physiotherapy

Interest in approaches to ante- and postnatal care that emphasized the physical and psychological well-being of mothers began as early as the 1900s. Dr J. S. Fairbairn, who was based at St Thomas' Hospital, London, UK, and a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and the Royal College Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, had a particular interest in advancing preventative obstetrics by improving ante- and postnatal care. As early as 1912, he began working with Miss Minnie Randell on using early physiotherapy techniques to treat obstetric patients. They placed an emphasis on the psychological

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well-being of the expectant mother. This collaboration was interrupted by the need to use their skills to treat the wounded during World War I, but it continued again after the Armistice.

Miss Randell was a qualified nurse, midwife and teacher for the CSMMG, and she eventually became the principal of the School of Physiotherapy at St Thomas' Hospital as well as the sister-in-charge. She was later honoured with an OBE and a CSP fellowship (Table 1). Fellowship is the highest honour awarded by the CSP. It is reserved for members who have made an outstanding contribution at the highest level; for example, by extending professional knowledge, or by furthering the aims of the profession and the CSP. Her work in the field of ante- and postnatal education was further influenced by the work of Dr Kathleen Vaughan and Dr Grantly Dick-Read.

Among Miss Randell's pupils was Margaret Morris, who was also a professional dancer with her own school. In 1934, Morris wrote a pamphlet, *Aims and Objectives of Antenatal and Postnatal Exercises*, and in 1936, she collaborated with Miss Randell on a book called *Maternity and Post-operative Exercises – In Diagrams and Words* (Morris & Randell 1936).

One of the participants who attended Margaret Morris' movement courses was a physiotherapist called Laura Mitchell, who went on to develop the Mitchell Method of physiological relaxation (Mitchell 1977; Mitchell & Dale 1980). During the 1980s and 1990s, this approach was widely used by obstetric physiotherapists in antenatal education and parentcraft classes, and it is still practised today.

The outbreak of the World War II saw Miss Randell facing some testing times at St Thomas' Hospital. Her physiotherapy school had been temporarily dispersed, and the daily bombing of the city forced her to perform her nursing role underground. Despite these difficulties, she

continued to give lectures on ante- and postnatal care to doctors and midwives. Following the end of the World War II, interest in this area among CSP members and the medical profession grew considerably.

One CSP member, Helen Heardman, a trained educational gymnast with a teacher's certificate and a diploma in physical education, was very much influenced by the work of Dr Grantly Dick-Read. She initiated classes for expectant mothers, and was invited to the London hospitals to teach physiotherapists and midwives antenatal relaxation techniques, exercises and breathing techniques for labour and delivery.

Obstetric Physiotherapy Association

There was sufficient interest in the subject of maternity care for a paper on the role of physiotherapy in the training of the expectant mother to be presented at the CSP's annual congress at the Royal Free Hospital in London in 1948 (Nixon 1949). It was during this event that Helen Heardman organized a meeting for all the members who were interested in obstetric work on 25 September, with the aim of forming a working group. The purpose of this group would be to discuss the national provision of ante- and postnatal physiotherapy.

The OPA was formed, and the founder members were:

- Helen Heardman (Leeds);
- Miss Randell (St Thomas' Hospital, London);
- Miss Ebner (Principal, School of Physiotherapy, Leeds);
- Eileen Montgomery (Bristol);
- Miss Shires (Charing Cross Hospital, London);
- Margaret Williams (Edgeware General Hospital, London);
- Kit Greenhill (Royal Free Hospital, London);
- Miss Gray (Glasgow); and
- Miss Johnson (Leeds).

Kit Greenhill was the first chairman of the association (Box 1).

A biannual newsletter, a forerunner to the association's journal, was launched in 1951. This included reports from around the country, and an article on two obstetric physiotherapy educational courses running in Leeds and Birmingham. A research subcommittee had also been formed, and there was a call for a national register of all chartered physiotherapists who had a special interest in obstetric work. The cost of the annual subscription was 10/- for members in the UK, and 15/- for those overseas.

Table 1. Members given fellowships by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Name	Year
Miss Minnie Randall OBE	1948
Maria Ebner	1984
Dorothy Mandlestam	1992
Dr Jo Laycock OBE	1993
Jill Mantle	1997
Margie Polden (posthumous)	1999
Dr Grace Dorey	2004
Ruth Hawkes	2005
Ruth Jones	2009
Kathleen Vits	2011
Jane Dixon	2012

Box 1. Chairmen of the association

Kit Greenhill
Brenda Savage
Kit Greenhill
Lady Margaret Williams
Eileen Montgomery
Sheila Harrison
Betty Barlow
Julie McKenna
Anna Colgan
Anne Bird
Margaret Bartaby
Jill Mantle
Jeanne McIntosh
Ruth Hawkes
Gill Brook
Ros Thomas
Pauline Walsh
Ruth Hawkes
Doreen McClurg
Katie Mann

Obstetric Association of Chartered Physiotherapists

During the 1950s, the OPA had grown sufficiently for an application to be made to the CSP for the association to be recognized as a special interest group, and its name was changed to the Obstetric Association of Chartered Physiotherapists (OACP).

In 1975, OACP purchased two insignia using the sum of £100 that had been left as a bequest by Miss Minnie Randell (Figs 1 & 2). The insignia are still worn by the chairman and president at official functions. As well as serving as a permanent memorial to one of its founder members, the design became the official emblem of the association.

Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology

The association kept its name until 1978, when this was changed to include gynaecology as the specialty naturally expanded into this very relevant and closely associated field, and a new logo was created (Fig. 3). The Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology (ACPOG) also had a change of president: Dame Josephine Barnes assumed the role, and continued to hold it for 18 years (Box 2). She was instrumental in the development of the bursary named after her (see pp. 79–80), which began as the Bristol Bursary after an ACPOG study



Figure 1. Insignia and chain of office of the POGP president.



Figure 2. Insignia and chain of the POGP chairman.



Figure 3. Logo of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Box 2. Presidents of the association

Professor W. C. Nixon
 Professor Norman Morris
 Professor Philip Rhodes
 Professor Peter Huntingford
 Professor Alun Browne
 Mr John Carron Brown
 Dame Josephine Barnes
 Professor Linda Cardozo
 Miss Karen Nugent

weekend was held there (POGP 2018). Records show that the Dame Josephine Barnes Bursary was launched in 1988. The original purpose of this award was to encourage younger physiotherapists to train in obstetrics. It was this period of the association's history that saw the development of the much-needed educational programmes, and the support of the members attracted many high-calibre physiotherapy educators. The membership categories also changed, with full membership only being awarded to provisional members once they had completed the ACPOG Foundation Course. The Foundation Course was awarded Professional Acknowledgment for Continuing Education/CSP accreditation in 1992.

In 1990, ACPOG annual study weekends were replaced by the ACPOG Annual Conference, the first being held at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. The Anne Bird Award was launched in memory of the chairman of ACPOG from 1985 to 1988. This still remains the organization's only prize that fellow members of the association can bestow upon a colleague. It is given for "overall excellence, professionalism and empathy" (POGP 2018), and awarded to an individual who makes a contribution to education or the specialty of physiotherapy (see pp. 53–54).

Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health

At the 1994 ACPOG conference, the annual general meeting (AGM) of members agreed to another name change, this time to the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health (ACPWH). This new title focused much more holistically on the health of the woman, and very much emphasized that physiotherapists would help her from the cradle to the grave. A new logo was introduced that incorporated a primrose, the Chinese symbol for women's health, into the original design of the lotus flower, the Egyptian symbol for childbirth, and the CSP's "helping hands" motif (Fig. 4).

The membership categories also changed again. Only those who had completed an accredited post-registration course were eligible for full membership of the association. These included the recently recredited and renamed ACPWH Post Registration Course in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and the CSP-accredited ACPOG continence course. In addition, the first MSc module in women's health began at the University of East London.

Professor Linda Cardozo FRCOG became president of ACPWH in 1995, and remained in office until 2010.

In 1998, ACPWH became a founder member of the International Organization of Physical Therapists in Women's Health. In addition, to celebrate the association's fiftieth year, ceremonial chains were purchased for the insignia with money bequeathed by Kit Greenhill and a donation from Margie Polden's family (Figs 1 & 2). The president's and chairman's chains were dedicated and inscribed in memory of Kit Greenhill and Margie Polden, respectively. The names of past presidents and chairmen are also engraved on the respective chains.

The CSP Distinguished Service Award was inaugurated in 1999 (Table 2). This honours



Figure 4. Logo of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Women's Health.

members who have contributed long and outstanding service either to the society itself or for the benefit of others.

The turn of the century marked many new changes to ACPWH. As a result of a generous grant from her family, the Margie Polden Student Bursary was launched in memory of Margie (POGP 2018), and the Margie Polden Memorial Lecture was also instituted. Work began on developing the association's own set of short courses and workshops. The POGP's list of publications underwent a complete overhaul, and in addition, a network of local support for members was set up in the form of the area representatives. The journal had developed to such a standard that ACPWH appointed Andrew J. Wilson, a professional production editor, to support the Journal Subcommittee. He now serves as the managing editor.

The association's own website debuted in 2001.

The following year saw the launch of the first ACPWH-approved workshops. These provided a sound introduction for physiotherapists who were new to the specialty, and also allowed those who had some experience to update and refresh their knowledge and skills. There are now eight POGP-approved workshops, all of which adhere to strict quality control measures in order to maintain a standard of excellence.

In 2004, ACPWH began its association with Fitwise Management Ltd. Initially, this company

Table 2. Members given Distinguished Service Awards by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy

Name	Year
Jeanette Haslam	2001
Jeanne McIntosh	2001
Margaret Bartaby	2002
Eileen Brayshaw	2003
Jane Goudge	2006
Gill Brook	2007
Ros Thomas	2010
Daphne Sidney	2011
Lesley Cochrane	2012
Pauline Walsh	2013
Judith Lee	2017

organized the Annual Conference, and then in 2007, it also began to provide administrative support. The University of Bradford established two postgraduate modules dealing with the theory and practice of physiotherapy in women's health that replaced the previous post-registration course that led to full membership.

By 2008, the two courses had been revalidated by the university. Successful completion of both core modules would lead to the award of a postgraduate certificate in either Physiotherapy in Women's Health or Continence for Physiotherapists. Further study and additional modules would contribute to the award of an MSc in Physiotherapy in Women's Health or Continence Practice.

By 2010, the ACPWH-approved workshops were generating such a workload for the workshop coordinator that it was agreed that a workshop administrator should be appointed to support the role, and also relieve the workload of the local workshop organizers. The post involves helping with marketing, planning, and handling queries and applications for individual workshops.

The ACPWH website was relaunched as a microsite of CSP website in 2011.

In 2012, the association's National Conference Organizing Committee was formed to work alongside Fitwise Management Ltd. Its remit is to implement and develop the Annual Conference programme, which involves suggesting and liaising with potential speakers, proposing locations for the event, and agreeing on programme topics.

Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy

In 2013, the membership voted at the AGM to accept yet another new name, Pelvic, Obstetric and Gynaecological Physiotherapy, and the strap-line "Excellence Matters". Changing the name gave the association the opportunity to create



Figure 5. Logo and strapline of POGP.

a new visual image to illustrate the broadening scope of the areas that it has embraced. The rebranding took place in 2014, and resulted in a new badge that retained the flower motif and acknowledged the “held” nature of the specialty, but added gender balance in its colour scheme (Fig. 5). The association also welcomed a new President, Miss Karen Nugent FRCS.

In 2014, the Chartered Physiotherapists Promoting Continence group joined the association. The first POGP tweet was sent in 2014 (@POGP), and this was followed by the launch of the POGP Members Area Facebook page (www.facebook.com/groups/1652693234997631/). In 2016, the journal’s Twitter feed (@JPOGP) was launched, as was the Journal Club. The most recent subcommittee to support the executive is the Communications team, which was formed in 2017 and is chaired by the POGP public relations officer.

Conclusions

Advances in physiotherapy techniques, medicine and technology since 1948 have meant that the association has itself needed to move forwards and progress rapidly in order to embrace

the changes. However, over the past 70 years, its principle has always remained the same, and that is that “Excellence Matters”. Striving for high standards has meant that POGP fulfils its commitment to members, which is to equip them with the knowledge and skills that they need to provide their patients with the best possible treatment and care.

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Ruth Hawkes FCSP’s connection with POGP began in 1988, when she became a full member of ACPOG, having successfully completed the Foundation Course. She became a member of the Executive Committee in 1990, and assumed the role of secretary in 1991. In 1997, she became chairman of ACPWH. During her term, Ruth was responsible for the overseeing of the development of the Margie Polden Memorial Lecture and Student Bursary, and the expansion of the Dame Josephine Barnes Bursary. She also developed the area representative network during this time. Ruth has served on the Education Subcommittee (ESC), both as a committee member and as chairman. In 2002, during her time as chairman of the ESC, she led the development of the then-innovative short courses for members that have now become the eight POGP-approved workshops. In 2005, Ruth was awarded a fellowship by the CSP in recognition of her leadership and promotion of ACPWH, “and for her role in developing the knowledge base of this physiotherapy discipline”. In 2010, she became chairman of the association again, and took the association through to its fifth name change. Ruth is currently a member of the POGP Executive Committee, chairman of the ESC and POGP workshop coordinator.