

## Chairman's Report 2005

The last annual meeting of the British Mass Spectrometry Society was held 12 months ago at the University of Derby. This last year has just flown by since I took over from Professor Gareth Brenton.

In comparison with Gareth's report last year where he summarised the progress of the society over the last two years most of this report will summarise our plans and discussions to develop, evolve and hopefully strengthen the Society for the next ten years. At the last AGM it was agreed to change the constitution of the committee officers as the appointment of a permanent BMSS administrator, excellently filled at present by Mrs Anna Upton, meant that the bulk of the work previously performed by the Membership Secretary was now included in this administrative position. The new position of office created to replace the Membership Secretary was the Education Officer. This position was filled by Dr Tony Bristow last November. This position was felt to be vital for the future of the society especially with the ever decreasing number of chemistry departments in the UK and the ever increasing numbers of mass spectrometers being sold. In addition although the committee has 'ring fenced' £150,000 of the monies invested into the society's funds from the International Mass Spectrometry Conference (IMSC) held in Edinburgh, in September 2003 in an 'education fund', it has been acknowledged that the Society can no longer support the BMSS John H. Beynon studentship as a studentship costs around £45,000 per postgraduate. This is because in the past when bank interest rates were high the Society found it easy to fund one or even two studentships, at any one time. This situation has changed with the very low interest rates and the Education Officer's role was to explore and create alternative education initiatives. These initiatives are to be discussed on Sunday evening at this meeting and are still being formulated but the main items being discussed at present are the appointment of a BMSS Lecturer, the generation of general lectures and training material for use in schools, universities and industry, the use of the website as an educational resource, joint training initiatives with other parties such as the RSC, LGC, Chromatographic society, Proteomics society etc. and funding studentships either by a joint funding with an industrial partner and/or donating smaller amounts of money say £5,000 to £10,000 to an academic department. In addition the society continues to support two other education initiatives. It is still issuing a free text book '*Mass Spectrometry: Principles and Applications*' by De Hoffmann et al. (John Wiley and Sons, 2003) to each new student member and supporting travel grants. The Society has purchased enough copies of the De Hoffmann book to support the student membership initiative for the next 12 to 18 months whilst the committee examines other possible options such as other books or CDs. In addition the numbers of travel grants issued increased by some 20% in 2004 and may well reach the £15,000 mark by the end of 2005.

The financial situation of the Society remains reasonably healthy; a full and detailed report has been posted in the Treasurer's Report. BMSS funds fluctuate and depend *inter alia* on whether an Annual Meeting has been held in that financial year, as this is the major source of funds for the Society. However, as Universities continue to adopt aggressive charging policies for conferences we expect this source of funding to be much less favourable. In due of the fact that it is unlikely that the Society will accrue as much income from its meetings as it did in the past, Dr Bob Galvin and Dr Don Daley reviewed the Society's income and expenditure over the last five years and then drew up a variety of spreadsheets to explore various income and expenditure scenarios so that the Society was aware which rates of income and expenditure would maintain a financially healthy Society. This review will be presented by Bob at the AGM. One

pattern that showed up very strongly in this financial review was the deficits that occurred in the years that the Society did not hold an Annual meeting due to the International Mass Spectrometry Society's meeting. This will happen again in 2006 so the committee is urging the Special Interest groups (SIGs) into organising some meetings in conjunction with BMSS. Currently two are planned, a joint NMR/BMSS meeting in March 2006 and an Environmental MS meeting in April 2006 but there is plenty of room for a few more. Just contact a member of the committee with your ideas and support and a scientific meeting can progress from there.

The infrastructure of the Society is still improving; the Web services developed by Don Daley has had a professional facelift under the expert guidance of our new Web Wizard, Dr Perdita Barran and in this our 40<sup>th</sup> year the Society was able to handle on line abstract submission for our Annual meeting for the first time which has made our new Papers Secretary, Dr Susan Crosland's job a little different and hopefully easier to cope with the ever increasing numbers of abstract submissions and makes the interface between delegates and the organising committee a little more professional.

The sixth issue, third under the title of 'Mass Matters' of our totally revamped newsletter under Dr Anneke Lubben's professional organisation and editorship was recently issued and goes from strength to strength but can not continue to do so without your help so please contribute as this publication plays an important role in the Society's publicity. On the subject of publicity again the committee is evaluating with the help of Mr Shaun Bilsborough your views on the Society's image and how it can be improved. Shaun started this evaluation by issuing a questionnaire and was impressed by the number of completed questionnaires he received. He is also holding a meeting on Tuesday September 6<sup>th</sup> at 2.15pm at this meeting to receive further views and his finding will be presented to the committee and summarised in a future issue of Mass Matters.

Deals for members continue with IM Publications Ltd and John Wiley and Sons providing journals and books at lower cost to members. These offers are advertised on the Society's website. In particular, IM Publications offers BMSS members a highly attractive rate for its *European Journal of Mass Spectrometry*. I encourage you to try it.

The advisory board consists of Professor Frank Pullen, Dr Neville Haskins and Dr Alison Ashcroft. This board has helped the committee evaluate the small equipment grant applications and has reviewed and updated the Society's criteria for awarding BMSS life membership. Three grants have been made in the last year. One to Dr Perdita Barran, another to Dr Bill Griffiths and the last as a matched funding scheme with BP to enable a GC-MS to be transported and installed at the University of Jommo Kenyatta in Kenya. More details of these awards are included in the advisory board's report.

BMSS attracts interest from a broad church with its meetings providing a place to represent our members' varied interests. My first year as Chair of BMSS have sped past, my main concern being to promote a healthy Society for the future; in particular to ensure younger members join and are well represented and to develop a strong approachable conduit for publicising, training and guidance in the art and science of mass spectrometry.

Finally I wish to thank all the BMSS members during my first year of office, in particular my committee members, our president Professor John Monaghan and Anna Upton for their extraordinarily loyal and devoted support.

This Society is run by a collective team work - long may it continue.

Mira V. Doig Chairman, 3 September 2004