



## **NEWSLETTER Winter 2008-2009**

### **Dear BSPOGA Member**

My first year as Chairman of BSPOGA has been marked by some major events and multiple minor events and began with sadness and sorrow following the sudden loss of our Executive Treasurer, Dr Ian Allen in July 2007.

There followed a period of disarray as Dr Allen had invested considerable time and commitment to the smooth running of BSPOGA. A remembrance was published in the Journal of Psychosomatic O & G.

On 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008 we sadly lost our President, Professor Norman Morris. Obituaries were published and Mr Michael E Pawson and Professor Beth Alder both contributed to the remembrance and the Obituary (a copy of the Obituary written by Mr Michael E Pawson for The Times, follows my Report). On behalf of BSPOGA I invited Mr Pawson to be our Honorary President as the post was vacant after Professor Norman's demise.

The year progressed on a happier, busier note as we began to move forward again, with a successful fund raising event in February 2008 and a successful bid for Britain (London) for the venue of a World Congress in 2011. The meeting of the Executive Committee of ISPOG will be held during this Congress. Two Scientific Meetings were held along with the Annual Prize Essay Competition for Medical, Midwifery and Psychology students.

A full copy of my Report for the year is contained in this Newsletter and we begin 2009 with the support of a strong Executive Committee and endless enthusiasm for our cause.

I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy 2009 and wish to thank you for your continued support and please do let me know of any concerns or suggestions to help our aims during 2009.

[Mira Lal](#)

**Dr Mira Lal, MD, DGO, FRCOG**  
**Chairman**

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## **SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR**

### **An Afternoon of Music and Dance**

On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2008 we had a successful fundraising event to support BSPOGA's educational activities. It was entitled "An Afternoon of Music and Dance" and featured ballet, group dances, classical dances, sitar music and choir singing. The volunteers and artistes gave their time with generosity and declined to accept payment, accepting small tokens of appreciation for their efforts instead. This fundraising event helped fund the one day conference held on 7<sup>th</sup> March at the Royal College of Gynaecologists.

### **Conference 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

The One day Scientific Conference on 7<sup>th</sup> March entitled "Clinical Applications of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynaecology" held at the RCOG had a reasonable attendance. Comments from attendees "*Excellent meeting*" & "*Please may we have more training like this on a bigger scale. The day illustrated the importance of the topics so let us reflect that with more days*" & "*Too much to cover in one day - better given two days and 45 min for each talk*".

**ISPOG Executive Committee Meeting held at the WORLD CONGRESS OF ENDOCRINOLOGY in Florence in Feb/Mar 2008 was attended.**

**BSPOGA won the bid to hold an EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE meeting of the ISPOG and simultaneously hold an International Congress in 2011 in London.** This International Congress will be titled '*The First World Congress of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology – Psychosomatic and Biological Perspectives on Clinical Controversies*' and will be held in March 2011 in London.

### **BSPOGA Annual Scientific Conference and Annual General Meeting "Stress and pregnancy - the hidden childbirth morbidity"**

Joint meeting between the Forum on Maternity & the Newborn and the British Society of Psychosomatic Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology Royal Society of Medicine, London Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2008. There were 84 attendees besides the speakers and chairpersons. The Prize Essay was presented by the medical student at the start. BSPOGA has received commendation from the RSM regarding this successful collaboration and received a 50% share of the profits which has covered our expenses.

**Farewell to our Honorary Secretary:** Cathy Coulson finished her term and was bid a farewell with a small token of appreciation for her commitment and excellent work for BSPOGA. She will be missed.

**Welcome to our new Honorary Secretary:** Sandy Goldbeck-Wood was welcomed in as our new Honorary Secretary. She has started with aplomb.

**BSPOGA** had a stand and a room for presentation at the Careers Fair, RCOG, on the 15<sup>th</sup> November. Jayne Cockburn, Sandy Goldbeck-Wood, Anne Hawkins and Mira Lal manned it. Many trainees & students visited.

**Other News:**

Nigel Westwood is keeping our website in order. Over the past year we have changed our website. This year has also seen several new members join and more have promised to join us.

Hazel Jones has been efficient with admin so she has been asked to help with additional work related to new members as well. Thanks to both.

## Obituary for Professor Norman Morris.

Professor Norman Morris, who died on 29<sup>th</sup> February, was the obstetrician responsible for re-evaluating and changing the care of women in pregnancy and in labour. He was the first clinical professor at Charing Cross hospital when he was appointed in 1958. The appointment was made on the basis of his academic interest and research into blood pressure in pregnancy and the function of the placenta. He continued this work at Charing Cross making significant contributions to the understanding of transport across the placenta in particular. His department spawned many academic obstetricians who went on to their own chairs within the UK and the United States. The academic aspect of his career made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the physiology and pathology of pregnancy and labour. However, it is for his humane and empathetic approach to his patients, and for spreading that gospel, that he will be chiefly remembered.

At the time of his appointment the medical approach to the pregnant woman was very paternalistic, a female obstetrician was a rarity. Norman Morris challenged the dualistic attitude of "I am the doctor. You are the patient".

He established his philosophy in a remarkable address on the inauguration of his chair at Charing Cross. This was published in The Lancet in 1960 as "Human relations in obstetric practice" and reprinted last year as one of the most influential papers of recent times. The only references were from women who had written of their unhappy experiences in pregnancy and birth. Such was the opposition to a "non scientific" inaugural address that the tapes he had made for it mysteriously disappeared from his office 2 days beforehand and all had to be recorded again. In the paper he wrote of the complacency of obstetricians. They had reduced maternal and infant mortality but had completely ignored the emotions. The joy that should accompany birth was lost in a "sea of inhumanity".

He asked why this had happened. Why was no thought given to the mother as an individual? Where was sympathy and kindness? He urged his colleagues to change and to put their

house in order. He emphasised the importance of talking and listening to patients. He was critical of the established division of pregnant and labouring women as "normal" and "abnormal", pointing out that those classified as normal were then ignored as if on a production line. In all this he called for leadership from his fellow obstetricians and he himself led the way.

He re planned his own unit to be as like the home as possible. He did away with the undignified and unnecessary enema and pubic shave that greeted all women on admission to the labour ward. He promoted ante-natal classes as a time of preparation not only for labour but also for family life. Within these classes it was always made clear that he could not give women the perfect labour they wanted, but that he would do his utmost to ensure that he made the best of the labour they were going to have. Fathers were welcomed at the classes and in the delivery suite. An innovation that rapidly became standard practice.

He had the courage to criticise the standard of care at the time. The challenge that he issued was not popular with many of his colleagues. He got the greatest response from women and women's groups, from midwives and the younger generation. Gradually approaches changed spreading out from his department first at Charing Cross and later at the West London hospital. Labour wards were re designed and attitudes of the professionals to pregnancy and labour changed to the lasting benefit of women.

He taught that the listening ear was the most important diagnostic tool in medicine, for physical diagnosis no less for the understanding of the feelings of patients. He introduced weekly Balint type groups under the supervision of a psychiatrist where difficult cases were discussed. Newcomers to the department soon found their stereotyped and conventional views gently demolished, but they were the better doctor for it.

Norman Frederick Morris was born on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1920 in Luton. Both parents had a social conscience which he inherited. He went to school in Dunstable and proceeded to St Mary's medical school qualifying in 1943. It was here that he met one of the powerful influences on his professional life, Alec Bourne. Bourne had performed an abortion on a 14 year old rape victim and had

publicly given notice of his intention. Norman Morris greatly admired his courage in doing what he believed to be right regardless of opposition.

During the war he held several junior hospital doctor posts before joining the RAF as a surgical specialist. He then worked as a senior registrar in the department of obstetrics and gynaecology at Hammersmith hospital. In 1956 he was appointed Reader in the academic department at University College hospital under Professor Nixon the other great influence in his humane approach. In 1958 he moved to the chair at Charing Cross.

He was a founder of the International Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology together with Lamaze, Vellay, Newton and Zigella. He founded the British Society of which he remained president until his death.

He took on a prodigious amount of administrative responsibility. Within the University of London he was at various times Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Dean of the faculty of medicine. He was on the advisory forum to the Chief Medical Officer. He served as deputy chair of the N.W Thames regional health authority and was chair of the regional research committee. He was a visiting professor to 27 universities worldwide.

He remained active in his retirement being the director of post graduate medical education at the Cromwell hospital, and was always available for advice and counsel to those who asked. It was after a meeting at which he was trying to help resolve an ethical issue that he collapsed and died.

He was blessed in his marriage of over 62 years to Lucy, who survives him, together with his four children who are all doctors.

**Mr Michael E Pawson  
For The Times**

## **FULL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2008**

### **Dr. Mira Lal, MD. DGO. FRCOG**

*Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Russells Hall Hospital, Dudley Group NHS  
Trust & St. James's University Hospital, Leeds*

### **My first year as Chairman of BSPOGA**

- Started 21st September 2007
- Ended 13th November 2008
- Associated with four major events
- Multiple minor events
- On behalf of BSPOGA I invited Mr. Michael E Pawson to be our Honorary President as the post was vacant after the sudden demise of Professor Norman Morris

### **Start and early part (sorrow)**

- Start clouded with sorrow as we suddenly lost our Executive Treasurer, Dr. Ian Allen, that July (2007). We were in disarray as besides the commitments of his post he had invested considerable time in the smooth running of BSPOGA. A remembrance was published in the Journal of Psychosomatic O & G.
- We sadly lost our President, Professor Norman Morris on the 29th February. Obituaries were published.
- Mr. Michael Pawson and Professor Beth Alder contributed to the remembrance and the obituary.
- I added extracts of these to our web-site, sent copies to the Lancet and dealt with enquiries from the UK and Internationally.

### **Start (stormy)**

- Ex-Chairman left soon after the AGM on the 21st September 2007
- Learnt that signatory status takes weeks
- Neither me nor Dr. Cockburn had signatory status
- I had to keep on apologising to those who expected payments soon after we took up office
- Everyone was 'all-smiles' once we gained signatory status and could pay them

### **Major event**

- Organised a successful fund raising event on the 24th February 2008 to support BSPOGA's educational activities
- It was titled 'An afternoon of music and dance' and featured ballet, group dances, classical dances, sitar music and choir singing
- Volunteers and artistes declined payment so I gave them small tokens of appreciation
- It helped to fund the one day conference on the 7th March at the RCOG

### **Major event**

- Represented BSPOGA at the ISPOG Executive Committee meeting which was held at the World Congress of Endocrinology in Florence
- Attended the World Congress and contributed to the ISPOG symposium at this congress – well received
- Discussed with Professor Alder and submitted a bid for Britain (London) to be the venue of a World Congress in 2011 and was successful. A meeting of the Executive Council of ISPOG will be held during this Congress.
- The Congress is from the 21st to the 24th March and is titled the ‘1st World Congress on Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology - Psychosomatic and biological perspectives’.

### **Major event**

- Organized the one-day conference at the RCOG titled ‘Clinical applications of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology’ on the 7th March
- We had a reasonable attendance despite a hiccup. The fund-raising event helped towards expenses. I requested a RCOG refund (£200) promised by a previous President and this was honoured. Thus the costs were even.

### **Other events**

- Changed our web-site to make online application forms for membership easier to obtain and alert all officers
- Have had several new members and more have promised to join
- Advertised for the annual prize essays for the medical, midwifery and psychology students and corresponded regarding this. An essay submitted by a medical student has been given the prize and she has presented her talk and will receive the prize at the end of our AGM

### Other events

- Besides ISPOG promise of contribution, I have met and corresponded with officials of the RCOG, RSM, Royal College of Psychiatrists, Royal College of General Practitioners and International societies to negotiate contributions to the World Congress and they are willing to contribute in 'kind'
- After discussing with the RCOG and our Treasurer, contacted organisations and entertained bids for running the World Congress and the process is continuing. Fund raising would be an important aspect and I have been in dialogue with our Treasurer and the ExCo and our President regarding this
- I have a suggestions book today for entering regarding our scientific programme. i.e. symposia, work-shops, plenary sessions, lectures, etc.
- I would look for volunteers for our scientific and social events.
- The preliminary information and publicity starts next year but more help would be needed from 2010

### Other events

- Successfully managed sudden events which could have compromised BSPOGA's standing by urgent communications including e-mails to all members and friends
- Have met officials of the Marcé Society regarding collaboration for future scientific meetings ? in 2009
- Discussed future collaborations with other societies
- Have suggested and helped in formalising other sub-committees such as, academic, fund-raising, PR and scientific committees

### Other duties carried out

- Have contacted the RCOG regarding training and recognition of Psychosomatics as a sub-specialty. Have had discussions regarding this with International representatives of the European Board and also politicians.
- Have organised a BSPOGA stand and workshop at the Careers Fair of the RCOG
- Have discussed with Mr. Pawson regarding a patron for BSPOGA
- Have written a review on this subject area and have been promoting BSPOGA at meetings

### An appreciation

- In all this I have been lucky to receive the support of the officers and members of the Executive Committee besides your moral support
- Best wishes to all and a very happy 2009

## **FUTURE ARTICLES FOR NEWSLETTERS**

If you have any Articles or information that you would like to add to future Newsletters please send these to me c/o our Administrative Manager, Hazel at [hazel.jones@ntlworld.com](mailto:hazel.jones@ntlworld.com) or by post to Dr Mira Lal, C/o Mrs Hazel Jones, 76 Manor Road, Ash, Nr Aldershot, Hampshire, GU12 6QD. She will be happy to pass these to me for inclusion in future copies.