

## Winter-Spring Newsletter (2010-2011)

Dear BSPOGA member,

Here is the latest Edition of our Newsletter following my Chairman's report last year. Although overseas, our Secretary General, Dr. Clare Willocks, has managed to send a contribution to this newsletter as was the norm in the past. In December, I had gone overseas to attend a conference and got held-up until the last week of January as I could only get a confirmed seat for part of the return journey. Apparently many Brits go for a holiday to warmer climes in the winter and return in January. Hence, I had left home listening to 'Santa Baby' in a snowed-in Britain and returned to a thawed Britain but got snowed-under mail and pending work instead – a truly laborious greeting!

I was obliged to accept a second term when voted for it but it is gruelling work (depending on what you want to give, of course) and I could not have officiated without the support of so many. Therefore thank you for supporting BSPOGA and our work. I wish you a Happy, Prosperous and Healthy 2011. Like every year I have been busy with promoting BSPOGA and now the additional work related to the World Congress 2011 this March adds to my time constraints.

*I send a warm welcome to all new members!* I cordially invite you to join in our activities with your *nouvelle* enthusiasm. I would appreciate if you contacted Clare Willocks about your interests/availability.

**Executive Council (ExCo) meetings:** I chaired two ExCo meetings (spring and autumn) as every year. At the spring meeting (5<sup>th</sup> March) other than the routine agenda, the Treasurer's report and discussions about organising the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), which did not take place in March as planned, the major share of the time was taken up by discussions about the 1st World Congress of Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology ([www.wcoga2011.com](http://www.wcoga2011.com)) at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster (March 20th - 23rd, 2011). Congrex, the Congress secretariat, gave a detailed account regarding their involvement and what stage it was at. We all agreed to promote the congress. The local organising committee of WCOGA 2011 also met that day and Annie Hawkins volunteered to inform the trainees. A date was set for the next meeting of the local organising committee. Additionally, the scientific committee was to meet to prepare for the online web-launch in the summer.

During the Autumn meeting (1<sup>st</sup> November), I proposed Shaughn O'Brien as Chair-Elect which was accepted. Annie Hawkins volunteered for the post of Honorary Treasurer which was going to be vacant after Mollie Graneek finished her term. Julia Dodd agreed to take up the post of Membership secretary which had been lying vacant for some time but was needed to help with increasing membership. The return of Jayne Cockburn and Pauline Slade to the ExCo was accepted.

**The ASM:** In the spring I learnt that the ASM that was to have been organised by other ExCo members in March (to allow me to concentrate on the World Congress), had in fact not been. It was then left to me to organise this for the fall without enough time to publicise; in my experience (four BSPOGA conferences) it usually took about a year for such planning. This threw me into a great quandary. The RCOG had no meeting rooms free until mid-December and the RSM had availability for only three days in November, so I took the earliest date (2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.). Due to the delayed onset in planning, enough publicity could not be given so we had fewer registrations. I requested a change to a smaller room. The meeting was very interesting and the feedback was positive.

**Further news regarding WCOGA 2011: Online registration** is available at [www.wcoga2011.com](http://www.wcoga2011.com) with the discounted rate continuing until the 1<sup>st</sup> March. There are complimentary parallel courses and pre-congress (both professional and life skills). Abstract submission was completed, with all accepted abstracts being published in the supplement to the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

**The Gala dinner** on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March at the Royal College of Surgeons will be very entertaining. The Royal College of Surgeons was selected as the venue for the gala dinner because of its illustrious history in supporting learning and with the added understanding that any surplus funds from this event would go towards education. This agrees with BSPOGA's aims to promote education. The current manager will be explaining about the historic exhibits including paintings. Professor James Drife will also be giving an

entertaining talk punctuated with humour. Please attend even if just for the day as it will be a memorable once in a lifetime occasion. Do come in your finery as photography is allowed!

**Other responsibilities:** I attended the RCOG's Careers Fair and was helped by Julia Dodd, Annie Hawkins, and Vera Dixit-Chandra. I have been promoting BSPOGA's interests including publicising WCOGA 2011 at scientific meetings which I have attended, including overseas at Belfast, China, Venice and India. Successful liaison with the Royal Colleges (RCOG, RANZCOG, RC Psych, RCM) and the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) have helped with publicity and the RCOG and RSM will exhibit at WCOGA 2011. Accreditation towards CPD is being given for attending the scientific sessions along with courses/workshops.

**ISPOG meeting** - I attended the ISPOG meeting in Venice where BSPOGA presented a symposium 'Glimpses of British Psychosomatics' which was co-chaired by Clare Willocks and myself, with Claudine Domoney, Annie Hawkins, Shaughn O'Brien and myself as speakers. The audience showed interest. I attended the ISPOG meeting to support the candidature of Pauline Slade as Executive Secretary of ISPOG and this was formalised with Beth Alder guiding. I was residing just outside Venice and I did find reaching the meeting venue difficult with various forms of transport which were uncoordinated despite overnight planning. However, the talks and the gala dinner were enjoyable.

**Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics & Gynaecology (JPOG):** Providing a complimentary copy of the journal to members was financially unsustainable and I negotiated to get out of the contract arranged by my predecessor. After negotiations, the Journal office has agreed to offer an online version at a subsidized rate.

**Membership fee:** The membership fee was increased to £65.00 for medics and £50.00 for non-medics to make online viewing of the journal possible. This has taken into account inflation (the fee had not been changed for ten years) and accounts for the online journal subscription. This is important in sustaining the health of the society allowing it to support its activities whilst maintaining value for money.

**Training in psychosomatics:** This is still lagging behind the rest of Europe although dialogue with the RCOG is continuing. I have been made aware of increasing interest in psychosomatics amongst trainees and consultants which concurs with a global trend as these disease conditions gain prominence. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March as part of the World Congress, there will be a full day course (**fee £30.00**) on Psychosomatics based on the European model practiced since the last century; Certification for basic Psychosomatics will be given.

**A special request:** Please try to avail of the discounted registration fee for the World Congress (20<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> March). There are double and single day registration rates if one cannot stay for the whole congress. Other courses/workshops related to the Congress are on vulval disorders with one-to-one surgical skills training, mentoring (anxiety/stress), symptom control by Hypnosis (both Gynaecology and Obstetrics), preterm labour, alternative to violence, role of the NCT in parenting and Forensic Gynaecology. Places are limited as they are individualised so one should book at registration.

**A special appreciation:** My thanks are due to Mollie Graneek who completed her term despite extenuating personal circumstances towards the end of her tenure. **My special thanks** to Hazel Jones and Nigel Westwood, who have supported BSPOGA during this busy period notwithstanding mitigating circumstances.

**Important message:** There is a proposal to accept WCOGA 2011 as this year's ASM and to have a short AGM on the 21<sup>st</sup> March afternoon or early morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> March. This will save Professor O'Brien from the problems of planning late, and satisfy our statutes. Please send differing views regarding this to Clare Willocks or me. I look forward to welcoming you to London in March and hope many of you have registered.

Kind regards,

*Mira*

Mira Lal *MD, DGO, FRCOG*  
Chairperson, BSPOGA

Dear BSPOGA members

It is with great pleasure I am adding this note to the Winter Newsletter. I was voted onto the ExCo in September 2009 as Secretary General and formally took up the post in March 2010. It has been an eventful year, not just within the society as many global events have occurred which have been life changing for so many individuals and for society at large.

We are truly entering a time of transformation, and there have been many changes within this small Society. Mira managed to persuade Professor Shaughn O'Brien to be Chair Elect so she can hand over her responsibilities to him and will exit with a Grande Finale. Professor O'Brien had been too busy to undertake the duties of chair-elect but will do so from April in the transition to taking up the post of chair. Mira has been organizing the First World Congress in Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology (WCOGA) 20-23 March 2011, a courageous venture which she was given the opportunity to organize has carried out her duties with superhuman efforts and zeal with the help of interested BSPOGA members including several from the ExCo. Her sole aim is to promote psychosomatics within undergraduate and postgraduate curricula in the UK and she has made many steps towards this by collaborating with, and gaining support from the various Royal Colleges. She has been very clear about accepting full financial liability for fulfilling this dream and we wish her every success with this. We are delighted that Professor Shaughn O'Brien has accepted the post of Chair Elect as come April, Mira will be in need of a well deserved rest! We look forward to his Chairmanship and continuation of promoting psychosomatics and multidisciplinary collaboration in the UK. We welcome Annie Hawkins, a long term member of BSPOGA to the post of Treasurer and Julia Dodd as membership secretary and wish to thank Mollie Graneeck for all her hard work as secretary in the past year.

We held two ExCo meetings during the year, the bulk of which discussed the forthcoming meetings, namely the Annual Scientific Meeting in November and WCOGA; the Scientific and Local Organising committees met at separate occasions, BSPOGA being represented in both Committees affiliated with the Congress.

A highlight of the year was the ISPOG 16<sup>th</sup> International meeting in Venice. This was an excellent opportunity to learn about the situation of psychosomatic training in Europe and further afield. There was a fantastic and very full programme with excellent opportunities to network, not just with members of ISPOG, but with our own society too. The setting was spectacular. My hotel looked on to the Grand Canale, and I enjoyed negotiating my way along the canals and alleys from Accademia to the Scuole Grande where the Conference was held, often returning by vaporetto. The whole experience was a feast for the senses, with many interesting conversations and presentations interspersed with several macchiatos and the occasional gelato, not forgetting our private view of the Guggenheim and dinner at the casino on the final evening!

We are all in the midst of an economic recession and our funding is at an all time low. We have therefore decided to increase our membership fees (£65.00 medical, £50.00 non medical), but this will be inclusive of complementary online subscription to the Journal of Psychosomatics. There has never been a greater time to pool our expertise and resources together. We hope that WCOGA will boost our membership and that BSPOGA members can collaborate by inviting their colleagues and trainees.

The Annual Scientific Meeting was poorly attended by members this year which was disappointing but the publicity started very late after Mira took up the task abandoned by others. However a few non members attended and showed interest in the Society. The meeting was entitled Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Andrology from conception to convalescence – Diseases from mind-body interactions and was a preview of the World Congress. The speakers were excellent and the seminar on Pregnancy and Obesity generated lively debate.

BSPOGA was again represented at the RCOG Careers Fair and we hope with the support from Professor James Walker current Vice President and Chairman of WCOGA Scientific Committee that our visibility within the RCOG will increase.

We have promoted WCOGA widely, and Mira has travelled extensively over the past 18 months promoting her cause of increasing recognition of psychosomatics within the UK. We have an excellent programme drawn up with many interesting pre-congress symposia and parallel workshops. Uptake from the UK has

been poorer than overseas, and most likely a reflection of the economic crisis we are all facing. There is still time to register at the discounted rate until the 1<sup>st</sup> March and we are hoping more funding will be forthcoming. We hope to see you at WCOGA and look forward to the future of our Society. My email is [clare.willocks@nhs.net](mailto:clare.willocks@nhs.net) if you wish to contact me about any BSPOGA related matter.

Wishing everyone renewed hope with spring again round the corner,

Best wishes

*Clare*

Clare Willocks

Secretary General

