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CHANGE OF HEART

There will be much rejoicing in the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's branches when members learn that the Council has reversed its decision to hold the 2003 branch representatives' meeting at the British Pharmaceutical Conference. The 2003 BRM will now take place, as ever, on the day after the annual general meeting in May at Lambeth.

Feelings ran high when the issue was discussed at the BRM in May this year (*Pfj*, 8 June, p823). A motion calling on the Council to withdraw its decision was jointly proposed by the Moray and Banff, South Cheshire and Shropshire branches. There were concerns that the AGM would be the main victim, because AGM attendance has always been strengthened by the presence of many branch representatives. Few other people, apart from members who live or work within striking distance of Lambeth, turn up for it. The concerns were that AGM decision-making would be weakened without broad input from the branches.

This call has been heard. When the Council realised that the suggestion had been greeted with such dismay, it conceded defeat (p227).

However, the Council has not changed its mind on the automatic funding of two representatives from each branch to attend the BPC — an issue that also caused much anger at the BRM. The Conference Committee is prepared to consider this matter again for 2003. By then, it will have some understanding of the impact of the decision on attendance at this year's BPC in Manchester, but the re-examination comes with a caveat that if the original funding is reinstated, there will have to be savings elsewhere. The committee's decision will clearly be influenced by how many representatives are actually to be found at this year's BPC.

CONSULTATION FATIGUE

Decisions on the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's future are being preceded by a flurry of consultation papers and questionnaires. Members have frequently asked to be consulted about major decisions taken by the Society; now they are, in spades.

Only if members make their views clear can the Society claim to be making the right decisions. The views of individual members can make a difference, as we have seen over the branch representatives' meeting.

So, shake off consultation fatigue and make sure your voice is heard, even if the summer holidays mean the deadlines soon come around.