



Young members urged to help shape pharmacy's future

Young pharmacists should come forward and help shape the future of pharmacy, said the President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Hemant Patel, at the Society's **annual general meeting** on 21 May.

Mr Patel said that pharmacy and science had played an important role in his own life since his family had moved from Africa to benefit from the education and opportunities on offer in Britain. He was proud of what the nation had helped him achieve and hoped that his desire to give something back as a Council member and President would encourage younger people to become involved with the Society.

He hoped that young people involved in pharmacy would appreciate their opportunities, not only to play an active part in healthcare through their work in hospitals, industry, communities and even prisons, but also to shape the future of the profession and provide easy access to pharmaceutical services.

Commending the Society's annual review, which was distributed to members with *The Pharmaceutical Journal* of 3 May, the President said that pharmacists had real opportunities in front of them — the new professional body, a greater clinical role and opportunities in the promotion of healthier lifestyles.

He concluded: "Whatever the future holds, the time is right for our profession to play its part in shaping that future to the benefit of Britain, for the public and for the wider healthcare community."

The President also commented on specific issues within the annual review, as follows:

Preparing for change The President said that the Society's Council and staff had been working for members against the background of major changes to the regulation of pharmacy, to clinical opportunities in pharmacy and to the Society itself. The Society had successfully influenced legislation under the Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Order 2007 so that it should be in a position to transfer pharmacy regulation to the new General Pharmaceutical Council, to the benefit of the profession and the public.

The creation of a professional body free of regulatory responsibility was an exciting change, but it had come at considerable cost and had been a major factor in the need to raise fees. All regulators had seen rising costs to meet higher expectations, and the Society was no exception.

On the challenge of creating a new professional body, the Society had engaged with



Jason King/Resources/RPSCGB

The President: pharmacists have real opportunities in front of them

members, carried out research and had established the independent Clarke Inquiry to involve members and organisations. It was taking that work forward in 2008.

Against the background of the demerger, the Society had been successful across Britain at influencing policy makers to recognise the greater role that pharmacy could play in healthcare and the pharmaceutical industry. The pace of change had stepped up but would need to get faster still to take advantages of the real opportunities for pharmacy and to create a viable professional body supported across Britain.

British Pharmaceutical Conference The President said that the Society continued to seek ways of making the British Pharmaceutical Conference more accessible to the wider membership. For 2008 it was offering attendance on the Sunday for just £25.

National pharmacy boards On the Society's national pharmacy boards, the President said that their formation had allowed pharmacy's voice to be heard as never before. The Scottish and Welsh boards had published manifestoes for pharmacy and the focus of the English board had been to influence Lord Darzi's review to gain recognition of the potential for pharmacy and to seek engagement in the commissioning of local services.

Public relations Pharmacy's voice had also been heard in the media, said the President. The press office and public affairs staff had

delivered excellent results in the national press, in broadcast media and in lobbying.

Publishing Turning to the Society's publishing activities, the President said that the Society simply could not deliver the range of services it offered to members without the financial success of the RPS Publishing business. Everyone knew and appreciated the flagship *Pharmaceutical Journal*, but RPS Publishing was much more. Its online products and books and journals were valued internationally.

Pharmaceutical Press products had been on display at the Beijing Book Fair and a version of Martindale was to be produced for the potentially huge Chinese market. The first Spanish edition of the British National Formulary had been published in 2007 and four Italian editions had been distributed in Italy since 2001. And the *PJ* had launched its first Arab States edition.

Member services Support for members had not been easy in 2007 because of the need to increase fees to meet regulatory demands and the increase expectations of members, said the President. In view of the current credit crunch and the global economies, the steps taken had been not only prudent but possible prescient. Times were difficult, but the Society had listened to its members not only on fees but also to learn what issues members wanted the Society to address and how they wanted the professional body to be taken forward.

Communication The Society had reached out to its members through open days in London and Edinburgh and roadshows in Wales, the President said. It had continued to support its branches and regions and its special interest groups. It had listened to members and improved the myRPSGB website facility. And the information services provided by the information pharmacists and the library and museum teams continued to be recognised as a centre of excellence.

Research The research and development team had also had a busy year. The academic awards scheme showed the Society's support for PhD students. The Pharmacy Practice Research Trust, funded by the Society, had published major reports into the new pharmacy contract and the future pharmacy workforce. And the in-house team had commissioned research to understand members' issues around the creation of the new professional body.

Funding members' needs is paramount to success

Funding pharmacists' needs is paramount to the success of pharmacy's new professional body, the Treasurer of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Andrew Gush, told the Society's **annual general meeting** on 21 May. The Society needed members' support, advice, recommendations and input to make it a success.

Presenting the 2007 financial statements to the AGM, he said that his year as Treasurer had been challenging and had involved managing unpopular decisions. However, he was honoured to work on behalf of the membership to ensure the Society's finances were in order.

An early task had been to set some strategic objectives for 2007 and 2008. These were: to ensure the Society's reserves were built to a level that would meet future liabilities; to communicate with members on the Society's finances; to review the 2008 budget rigorously, with target savings to be achieved; to ensure the Society spent funds to the benefit of the membership; and to consult on membership fee categories, focusing on staged payments and low income fees.

On his first day as Treasurer he had inherited a proposal for a large increase in membership fees. The Society's reserves were too low to deal with the escalating cost of regulation and pension fund problems (as experienced by many organisations).

The members had not welcomed the Council's fees decision, but a smaller increase would have been irresponsible and dishonest. The way forward had to be based on stable finances, underpinned by timely and proportionate financial control.

The Treasurer added that since June 2007 he had communicated with members to try to illustrate the work required in balancing the books in a changing environment made more complex with the move towards demerger.

The AGM was also an opportunity to advise members of the Society's approach to its 2008 budget. Measures to ensure the budget met membership needs included making funds available for increased media attention, increased communication, a high profile for the profession and increased information and guidance for pharmacists.

In addition, the team had looked at alternative funding sources to assist with the Society's long-term financial commitments (eg, alternative charities to provide research grants). Significant savings had been made.

Finally, the Society had worked with the Department of Health to secure funding to support the transitional costs in creating the new regulator. So far, it had secured an extra £2m. It was committed to productive dialogue with its members, which would continue as financial support was required in setting up the new professional body.

Paying the annual fee was a big issue, and he had worked with the Council and staff to introduce staged payments and low income fees. Staged payments were now following the parliamentary process and were expected to be in

place this summer. Recommendations for low income fees would form part of the 2009 consultation. He hoped that many members would contribute to the consultation.

The 2009 retention fee would form part of this consultation. A number of options would be presented to members to enable the support of staged papers and low income fees.



The Treasurer: the Society needs members' support, advice and input

Turning to the 2007 financial results, the Treasurer said that the deficit on ordinary activities before tax of £220,000 was in line with the budget forecast presented during the second half of 2007. Significant work had been undertaken to minimise tax liability, and the Society had achieved a result of £260,000 against a forecasted liability of £800,000.

The strategic objectives for 2008 were:

- To produce a secure financial framework for the new professional body that is sustainable, can deliver relevant quality services and is affordable to potential members
- For expenditure to be further directed to the benefit of the members
- To continue working with the DoH to secure additional funding where necessary
- For the British Pharmaceutical Conference to become an income-generating event
- To look at creative ways of solving the pension fund deficit
- To support members with new fee types
- To produce and manage budgets for the President, Council and committees

Bernard Kelly, director of finance and resources, said that the Society had continued to pursue the financial strategy reported to the 2007 AGM. However, the benefits of the strategy were not yet reflected in the financial statements. One outcome of the strategy had been the increase in fees in 2008. This had been a tough but necessary decision.

The 2007 deficit of £220,000 before tax compared to a 2006 surplus of £112,000 after

Gift Aid payments of £853,000. The Society's finances were being squeezed between increased costs arising from the Section 60 Order implementation and the limited increase in retention fees in the previous two years.

For 2007, the Society could make no Gift Aid payments because of changes in legislation. Eventually it had had to pay corporation tax of £260,000. Taking tax and Gift Aid into account, the Society had faced a substantial turn-around in its finances, which helped underline the need for the fee increases in 2008.

A good way to check an organisation's health was to look at its balance sheet. In the Society's case, this showed a relatively stable position, with the exception of the pension fund figures, which had been volatile.

Two significant figures were the cash balance of £12.9m at the year end and creditors of £18.5m. These figures were significantly higher than for 2006 and reflected the large number of members using the internet to pay their 2008 fees before 31 December 2007.

Pensions liability had gone from a deficit of £4.4m to a surplus of £0.7m within 12 months. As a result, the reserves and assets appeared to have more than doubled in the year.

After offering a short masterclass in pension fund accounting to explain how the pensions liability was calculated, Mr Kelly said that, because of the impact of the deficit on the cost of maintaining the pension fund, the Society had been consulting with staff who are members of the scheme about limiting future pension benefits to be accrued. If implemented, the changes would reduce the cost of maintaining the scheme.

Before ending his presentation, Mr Kelly said that he wished to clarify an issue with regard to the presentation of Council members' expenses in the annual review and in particular the President's expenses. The figures had been distorted by a change in their presentation and also by the fact that discussion in 2006 on the issue of attendance fees and allowances had failed to reach a conclusion and the 2006 allowances for the President and Vice-President had not been paid until 2007. The President's expenses had also risen because of a significant additional level of activity arising from the White Paper and the prospective demerger of the Society.

In reply to a question, Mr Kelly said that the Society's Gift Aid had been made to the Charities Aid Foundation and subsequently paid into the Pharmaceutical Trust for Education and Charitable Objectives, a subsidiary of the Society. It was a tax-efficient way to support the Pharmacy Practice Research Trust and other areas of cost previously funded directly by the Society. Most of the money still existed and was still available to fund activities such as research and education.

In response to a question about a discrepancy in the annual review, it was reported that the number of international registrations in 2007 should have been given as 117, not 1,171.

AGM debate emphasises need to listen to members

At the **annual general meeting** on 21 May, the need to heed members' views in establishing the future professional body for pharmacy was raised by members during debate on a motion calling for a referendum on the Clarke inquiry's recommendations. However, the motion was withdrawn after the debate.

The motion, standing in the name of Mark Walker (Oxford), read: "This 167th annual general meeting welcomes the Clarke report and notes the recommendations that should be considered by members. The AGM instructs Council to put Clarke's recommendations to the members through a democratic process, preferably via electronic voting, at the earliest opportunity. Thereafter, as a final step, the AGM directs that Council's proposal for the future Society be ratified by a full referendum of members and notes that Council must gain approval from 75 per cent of voting members for such a major change in the Society."

Before the debate, the President, Hemant Patel, explained that the AGM had no power to instruct the Council. However, any motion carried would be considered carefully. In addition, changes such as amendments to the Charter or to the Society's name would need to be rectified by a special resolution which required a two-thirds majority of those voting, not a 75 per cent majority.

The motion was then proposed on behalf of Mr Walker (who was unable to attend) by Mike Williams. He said that he and Mr Walker both felt strongly that the members who decide which recommendations of the Clarke inquiry are considered by the Transitional Committee (Transcom) appointed to look into the recommendations of the Clarke inquiry.

Seconding the motion, Steven Curtis (Harrow and Hillingdon) said that, although it

was badly worded and basically flawed, he accepted its general principles. He seconded it because it wanted the Clarke recommendations to be put to the members.

Mark Koziol (Birmingham) said that Nigel Clarke had laid a superb foundation stone, but the Society needed to move on and the most important thing was whether the members bought into the report. Transcom had to have the right starting point and no one could say that the Clarke report was the right starting point. What was crucial was that the members came along in the direction that the Society wanted to head in.

A brief survey of 1,300 members of the Pharmacists' Defence Association, of which he was chairman, had found that most did not want technicians involved in the new body, and many would not join if they were. In addition, 70 per cent said that full membership should be open to all pharmacists, including those not regulated by the General Pharmaceutical Council. These were all areas that were not in accord with the Clarke inquiry.

The new initiative would only succeed if rank and file pharmacists supported it. Transcom needed a sound basis on which to build and the recommendations should be put to pharmacists to finally decide through a referendum.

Graham Phillips (member of Council) proposed amending the motion's "75 per cent" to "two-thirds". The amendment was seconded by Mr Koziol, put to a vote and carried.

Speaking to the amended motion, Mr Phillips said that there was a need to consider options other than a royal charter for the new body. A royal charter allowed interference by the Privy Council, and a search of news items on *PJ Online* brought up a number of exam-

ples of interference — often after a consultation — that had damaged the relationship between the Society and its members.

He was disappointed that the Clarke report simply reached a conclusion that the Society would keep its charter in amended form. It was important that this recommendation should also be put to the members.

Ian Simpson (Oxford) said that Council members were well aware of their responsibilities under the Charter to consult and to hold a referendum on major changes. The motion did little to foster trust in the new Council and he called on the proposer to withdraw it.

John Page (Stourbridge) asked where the motion would lead. It was desperation dressed up as democracy and should be kicked out.

Stephen Denyer (member of Council) said that Transcom was to develop a direction of travel and offer reasons for its proposals. These would then be subject to members' consideration and consultation. The committee should be allowed to explore the breadth of membership and not to have that potential to be denied from the outset.

Christine Glover (Edinburgh), opposing the motion, said that the Clarke report and Transcom may not be perfect, but the time frame was incredibly short and immediate action was needed.

Mr Phillips said that the Council had already agreed to form Transcom and to consult members, so the motion had been overtaken by events.

Summing up, Mr Williams said that what Mr Walker was proposing was a consultation on recommendations. But it had been pointed out that the Council had agreed to this. He was not personally happy with the motion as it now stood and would therefore withdraw it.

New annual report on fitness-to-practise matters

An annual report devoted to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's fitness-to-practise (FTP) activities is to be published for the first time later in the year, the Society's President, Hemant Patel, told the **annual general meeting** on 21 May. It is being produced to comply with new legislation for healthcare regulators.

Commenting on the absence of FTP statistics in the annual review, John Murphy (Nottingham), who is director of the Pharmacists' Defence Association, said that he understood that more than 1,300 pharmacists had either been through the regulatory processes or were still in the pipeline in 2007.

On the PDA's calculation, if one assumed they were mainly community pharmacists, then about one in 20 were being subjected to the Society's regulatory processes in one year alone. Regulation was important, to uphold the standards of the profession and to maintain public confidence, but at what cost?

The PDA believed the Society's regulatory processes were disproportionate, with consequences to the public interest agenda. Over-regulation stifled innovation, restricted pharmacists' professional decision-making in the interests of the patient for fear of discipline. Over-regulation prolonged the process of dealing with minor misdemeanours rather than dealing with the more serious ones. What was clear, said Mr Murphy, was that the only contact many pharmacists

had with their professional body was a bad one, tainted by the regulatory agenda. The Society was aware of this because it had embarked on a consultation about non-referral and a charm offensive, but the members were saying, "Show me, don't tell me". The Society was tainted by the idea that it only dealt in regulation. The challenge was to show the membership that the new professional body would be an organisation that pharmacists would be proud to be part of.

The Chief Executive and Registrar (Jeremy Holmes) said that he agreed with the need for proportionate, fair and transparent regulation. The Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians Order 2007 had presented challenges for the Society and it had been working hard to implement the new legislative framework. There were also positive moves, such as the introduction of the Health Committee, which allowed cases to be viewed through the lens of health rather than just discipline. The Society had recently gone out to consultation on new threshold criteria, which would mean that cases that not affecting patient safety would be dealt with locally rather than being referred to the Investigating Committee. That would lead to more proportionate regulation.

The point about "Show me, don't just tell me" was well taken. The Society was starting to show rather than tell, and that would come out in the FTP report.

Assurance on involving others in decisions on new body

An assurance that other pharmacy bodies will be involved in establishing the new professional leadership body was given by the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's President, Hemant Patel, during a presentation on professional leadership before the Society's **annual general meeting** on 21 May.

The President said that the Council had to take responsibility for making decisions but its firm intention was to involve other bodies. He hoped the membership would have confidence in it to deliver on that.

The President said that the Clarke inquiry had recommended that the Council should set up a Transitional Committee (Transcom) to produce a prospectus for the new body by the end of the year. Some time in 2009 it would establish a shadow Council so that the work of the new body could start in January of 2010.

Christine Glover (Edinburgh) asked how the shadow Council would be put in place. Would Transcom have to refer the matter back to the Council or would it have authority to get on with it?

Nigel Clarke, chairman of the Clarke inquiry, said that it would have to go back to the Council. But in the meantime, Transcom would have to involve the profession to the maximum degree, to ensure that what was referred back had widespread support.

Mark Koziol (Birmingham) said that many lay members had been appointed to the current Council because of the Society's regulatory role. To what extent would they be involved in making key decisions on the future professional membership body, if at all?

The President said that the Council as a whole was charged with protecting and growing the Society's assets. So a collective decision would be made by the Council, including its lay members and technicians.

Philip Brown (Weybridge) suggested that the General Pharmaceutical Council should charge a fee to cover both regulatory and pro-

value abroad and added to the brand. But with a charter came Privy Council interference. He was not suggesting that the profession should not have a chartered body, but it was crucial to have a balanced debate on the most appropriate structure and to look at the other options.

Mr Clarke said that most Privy Council interventions in the Society had been concerned with its role as regulator. Any problems were to do with government departments and not the Privy Council per se.

David Morgan (North Wales) said that many UK pharmacy organisations wanted to be involved in setting up the new body. How did the Council intend to work with them to appoint Transcom and its chairman? If it did it on its own, it would not take the membership with it.

The President said that it was impossible for everyone to be represented on Transcom, since it was likely to be perhaps

13 people at most — "a small group of people who are well informed, have good connections and are willing to work in partnership with other organisations and help the chairman to deliver the kind of organisation that this profession needs and deserves".

Asked when Transcom should have its first meeting, Mr Clarke said that it should be as soon as possible. Much work had to be done and the longer it took to set it up, the more difficult it would get. As far as the numbers went, although the core group might be no more than about 13 people, many more would be involved in the different streams of work.



Jon Terry/Resources/RPSGB

Listening to a question from the floor, left to right, the President, the Chief Executive and Registrar and inquiry chairman Nigel Clarke

fessional activities and pass a proportion on to the professional body so that pharmacists would not have to volunteer to support it.

The President said he would like that, but the lawyers said it could not be done.

The Chief Executive and Registrar, Jeremy Holmes, said that the Society and the Department of Health were both sensitive to the aggregate amount pharmacists would have to pay to register with the GPhC and also join the professional body. They were working on ways of minimising the burden.

Graham Phillips (member of Council) said that the attractions of a royal charter included the word "royal", which had heritage, had

President's final message: members must change

In a final message to the profession before his retirement from the Council of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, the Society's President, Hemant Patel, has said that not only does the Society need to change but its members must change too.

Speaking at the end of the Society's annual general meeting on 21 May — his final official duty as President — Mr Patel said: "My final message to the profession is this. Everybody demands culture change at Lambeth. I think it is right. The Society needs to change some of its deeply ingrained practices and value its members. But it cannot be one way: the members must themselves change in attitude, values and commitment to

their local branch, to the Society. It is their organisation. The Society is the membership."

The President thanked the membership for the support they had given him and the Society's staff for their hard work during all his years in the post. From time to time there had been differences, but he wanted everyone to know that he admired their work. "I also want to thank the many branches who invited me. I think firm friendships have developed from those early introductions," he said.

One thing he wished for was that the Society should become more overtly pharmacist-friendly. The Society had to be relevant to the daily needs of pharmacists. It did

fantastic work in terms of strategy and long-term planning, but pharmacists also wanted help in dealing with their everyday activity.

Mr Patel added that pharmacists needed to reflect on their backgrounds and see what education, and in particular a degree in pharmacy, had done for them.

When people say "What has pharmacy done for me?", they should reflect that a degree in pharmacy is incredibly invaluable. Their standard of living is only possible because of the degree and the membership of the Society. Membership did not just offer *The Pharmaceutical Journal*: it was the right to practise in a noble profession. "I am proud. Thank you for your support."

Charter medals: Soraya Dhillon and Christine Heading

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's Charter medals for 2008 have been presented to two women pharmacists who have made a mark on the profession. The Charter gold medal has been awarded to Soraya Dhillon, head of the new school of pharmacy at the University of Hertfordshire, and the silver medal has gone to Christine Heading, past president of the National Association of Women Pharmacists.

Making the presentations at a ceremony before the Society's **annual general meeting** on 21 May, the President, Hemant Patel, said that the medals, instituted in 1963, are awarded by the Council on the President's recommendation. The gold medal recognises outstanding services rendered by a member to the Society or generally in promoting the interests of pharmacy. The silver medal recognises similar outstanding services rendered by a member locally or to a specific sector of the profession.

This year, said the President, he wanted to recognise two women who are shining examples to their peers. Through their professional working lives, both had striven to achieve excellence, and he was delighted that the Society was able to recognise their tremendous efforts and commitment to pharmacy in their chosen communities.

Presenting the gold medal to Professor Dhillon, the President said that among other things the award recognised her involvement in establishing collaborative links with universities and institutes across Europe and India.

Professor Dhillon had worked in research and pharmacy practice before moving into pharmacy education in 1989. Before taking up

her current post she had directed postgraduate studies at several institutions.

Since the late 1980s, she had been instrumental in developing innovative, problem-based postgraduate education courses for pharmacists. Programmes leading to a postgraduate diploma in clinical pharmacy and a masters degree in pharmacy practice had been

an MBE and also made a fellow of the Society. Her achievements showed that she was a worthy recipient of the medal.

Professor Dhillon, in response, said that it was an honour and privilege to receive such a prestigious award. She thanked the many colleagues, across a range of sectors, who had supported her and enabled her to succeed.

Presenting the silver medal to Dr Heading, the President said that it recognised her contribution to the profession of pharmacy, supporting and leading women pharmacists and particularly her contribution to the NAWP.

Dr Heading had been a member of the profession for over 40 years and had been involved in the professional areas of pharmacy and pharmacology within industry and academia. Since 1987, she had been a consultant and a freelancer for scientific publishers, pharmaceutical consultancy companies and pharmacy organisations.

She was president of NAWP from 2000 to 2002 and again from 2005 to 2006. She had worked hard to maintain the association's momentum and keep issues alive. She had introduced the concept of mentoring and initiated the association's website. She was an extremely good communicator and this, together with her tremendous enthusiasm, made her an excellent ambassador for NAWP and pharmacy as a whole.

In response, Dr Heading said that receiving the medal was an honour. She thanked her colleagues in NAWP for all their support over the years. Indeed, a hallmark of the association was the support it gave to its members, she said.



The President presents the Charter gold medal to Professor Dhillon



Dr Heading receives her Charter silver medal from the President

undertaken by most hospital pharmacists in the South East of England and had produced many leading practitioners.

Since 2004, she had developed and established an MPharm undergraduate course at the University of Hertfordshire, which would produce its first pharmacy graduate in 2009. Already, the school had facilities and programmes at the leading edge of education practice, driven by her mission to educate the most effective professional practitioners.

She had been a health authority member since 1991 and was currently in her second term as chairman of Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust. In 2007 she was awarded

Gift and tributes as President retires from Council

A gift was presented to the retiring President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Hemant Patel, at the close of a special **Council meeting** held on 21 May before the Society's annual general meeting.

Making the presentation, the Vice-President, Martin Astbury, said that Mr Patel had been a Council member for 15 years and President for four years, a feat not reached by presidents since before the 1939–45 war. He had led the profession boldly, showing vision in developing and leading on projects such as Pharmacy 2020, men's health and reducing health inequalities. He also had a vision to make Britain the safest country in which to take medicines. He was passionate about phar-



The President, left, receives his gift from the Vice-President

macy and cared about those working in pharmacy.

Bob Michell said that, as a non-pharmacist, he had greatly admired Mr Patel's commitment to his profession, particularly his unobtrusive commitment to encourage young people to become pharmacists. He had led the Council in the most difficult of times and had sometimes been up against the most difficult of people, but he had kept his resolve and his vision and had shown true leadership and lasting influence. He should be proud of what he had accomplished and the Council wished him well with his continuing endeavours.

The Vice-President then made the presentation of the gift on behalf of the Council.

DEATHS

Shepherd On 11 May, Thomas Shepherd, aged 90, of 59 Pantain Road, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3LZ. Mr Thomas registered in 1948 and retired from the Register in 2004 (see tribute below).

Stead On 14 May, Keith Collier Stead, FRPharmS, aged 85, of 36 Raleigh Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 5TW. Mr Stead registered in 1945.

TRIBUTES

Shepherd In a tribute to the late Thomas Shepherd (see above), CHRISTINE HODGES, MRPharmS, writes: I first met Tom Shepherd in the summer of 1973 after I had graduated from Manchester and Boots had placed me in Loughborough for my preregistration year. Tom was my tutor pharmacist and he and his wife Rita took me under their wing. We would call Tom these days very much "old school" and I still find myself thinking of a number of his pearls of wisdom during each working day. He was a wonderful tutor and instilled in me the confidence to go forward in the profession and within the company.

He originated from Teesside and I think we shared a north-eastern view on life and a similar sense of humour. He had many interesting stories about this area from his boyhood between the wars.

Tom retired from the Loughborough store of Boots but was then persuaded back into "service" for a short time to do some specific project work. After I had moved on in 1974 we kept in touch and did work together on other occasions. He and Rita were always there to provide a drink, a meal and wise words over these years and also broad shoulders for me to lean on when needed.

Tom had "enthusiasms" and those who knew him were often drawn into conversations about his family, of whom he was immensely proud, amateur radio, gliding, holidays in Scotland and his experiences during the war when he was with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Malta. He was bereft when Rita died and tried his best to carry on, including attending dance classes to help with his mobility. I think the charming female teacher helped with this "enthusiasm". We used to meet regularly for lunch and talk about the old times at the

Loughborough store and within the company.

Latterly Tom's health deteriorated and he spent his last years being looked after in a care home. He died peacefully there and I hope he is now reunited with Rita. My thoughts are with their daughter Carol and the rest of her family.

DIARY

Local meetings

Events listed below are meetings of Royal Pharmaceutical Society branches. Details of all future meetings notified to *The Journal* appear in the Diary section of *PJ Online* (www.pjonline.com/diary)

Monday 2 June

Stockport "Branch planning meeting" Postgraduate Centre, Pinewood House, Stepping Hill Hospital. Buffet. 7.15pm.

Tuesday 3 June

Dudley and Stourbridge "Care of the diabetes patient" by Sue Bacon (clinical nurse specialist, Dudley Primary Care Trust). Dudley Clinical Education Centre, Russells Hall Hospital. 7.45 for 8pm.

South East Metropolitan "Focus Group for England: consultation on the Benevolent Fund" by Jill

Gorin. Clarendon Hotel, Blackheath. Buffet 7.30pm, meeting 8pm.

Wednesday 4 June

Solihull "Treatment and support in smoking cessation" by Alison Trout and Peter Clewes. SIMTR Conference Centre, Spire Parkway (BUPA) Hospital, Damson Parkway, Solihull. Buffet 7pm, meeting 7.45pm.

Thursday 5 June

Huddersfield "First pharmacists with special interests accredited in anticoagulation" by Rachel Urban (Bradford and Airedale Teaching Primary Care Trust community pharmacy development and clinical governance pharmacist). Boardroom, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, Acre Street, Lindley, Huddersfield. Buffet 7.30pm, meeting 8pm.

Medway "A night in pain" by Sarah Coulling (acute pain specialist nurse and non-medical prescriber). Medway School of Pharmacy, Anson Building, Central Avenue, Chatham Maritime. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 7.45pm.

Friday 6 June

Clwyd "Guided walk". The Devil's Gorge, Loggerheads Country Park. 6.45pm.

Scottish Pharmacy Board roadshows

In the wake of the Clarke Inquiry into a future professional body for pharmacy, the Scottish Pharmacy Board is running a series of roadshows across Scotland entitled "Professional leadership — your choice". Dates and venues for the remaining roadshows are as follows:

- 2 June Palm Court Hotel, 17 Seafield Road, Aberdeen
- 4 June Queens Hotel, 105 Leonard Street, Perth
- 9 June University of Strathclyde, 27 Taylor Street, Glasgow
- 10 June Royal Pharmaceutical Society, 36 York Place, Edinburgh

All roadshows will begin at 7 for 7.30pm. They will be hosted by Lyndon Braddick, director for Scotland, and will include presentations from Rose Marie Parr, SPB chairman, and Frank Owens, SPB vice-chairman. Refreshments will be provided.

Monday 9 June

Mid Glamorgan East "Ethical dilemmas and the new code of ethics" by Priya Sejpal (Royal Pharmaceutical Society). Aberdare Hall, Cathays, Cardiff. Buffet 6.30pm, meeting 7.15pm.

Tuesday 10 June

Barnet "Thyroid gland" by Mark Cohen (consultant endocrinologist, Barnet and Edgware Hospitals). Education and Information Centre, Barnet Hospital. Buffet 7.15pm, meeting 8pm.

Crawley, Horsham and Reigate Annual general meeting. Postgraduate Medical Centre, Crawley Hospital, West Green Drive, Crawley. Buffet 7pm, meeting 8pm.

Doncaster "Travel medicine" by Martin P. Brown. Followed by annual general meeting. Holiday Inn (formerly The Moat House), High Road, Warmsworth, Doncaster. 7 for 7.15pm.

Thursday 12 June

Bolton "Brief intervention training: Part 1". Education Centre, Royal Bolton Hospital, Minerva Road, Farnworth, Bolton. Buffet 7pm, meeting 7.30pm. (Numbers limited — telephone 01204 842314 or e-mail keithwilliams@tiscali.co.uk to register.)

Halifax "Summer social evening". Gimbals Restaurant, Sowerby Bridge. 7.30 for 8pm.



Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain

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