



## What will the creation of the national pharmacy boards mean for the branches and regions?

**David Carter** and **John Gentle**, Council sponsors for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society's branch and regional network, discuss the role of the national pharmacy boards and their relationship with the branch and regional network

The new year will ring in some significant changes for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society with the establishment of national pharmacy boards for England, Scotland and Wales as from 21 January. But how will the new boards interact with the branch and regional network?

The answer is that we do not yet know but it is important that the network plays its part in forging important new relationships with the boards.

Why do we need the new boards? They will help the Society to maximise the opportunities that devolution offers, allowing it to represent the profession fully at the highest level in government in England, Scotland and Wales and ensure that in any health context the Society is a key player in the development

of policies that have implications for the pharmacy profession and patients.

What will the boards do? They will:

- Provide strategic leadership and support for pharmacy practice development in each country
- Assist the development of Council policy and its implementation in each country and develop and implement policy specific to each country
- Promote the science and practice of pharmacy and its contribution to health
- Provide professional advice to government and its agencies, NHS bodies and other health and social care organisations in each country
- Support the Society's branches

- Support pharmacists in their professional roles

The boards will bring the Society closer to the membership but, to achieve this successfully, it will be important for them to interact with the branches and, in England, the regions. How these relationships are developed will be a key decision for each board to make, and the branches and regions can help inform the boards' thinking by sending representatives to attend meetings in order to better understand the boards' direction of travel. Branches and regions will be invited to send observers to the national board meetings in the same way that they are invited to observe meetings of the Council and its committees.

## Meeting the challenge of CPD for pharmacists

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society currently has 47,000 members, of whom 39,000 are on the practising section of the Register. Later this year it will become mandatory for all practising pharmacists to record their continuing professional development (CPD).

If you are one of the 39,000 and have yet to take the plunge with CPD, then what better time than at the start of the new year?

Since 2004 the branches and regions have run meetings to support pharmacists with their CPD needs. To date, more than 200 meetings have been held, attended by some 6,000 members.

The Society is encouraging regions and branches to work together to meet the CPD needs of local pharmacists. A model for how to engage with members was provided by the West Midlands region in October 2006 when a one-day CPD conference attracted over 100 pharmacists.

The conference demonstrated that there is still a high level of demand for local CPD meetings. Reflecting on the CPD meeting, Bob Saunders, chairman of the West Midlands regional committee, says: "It was worth all the



**Facilitator Raminder Sihota helping delegates during a workshop at the West Midlands region CPD conference**

effort when the feedback came through to show how valuable members have found the interactive sessions. I would encourage other regions to use our model for running an event and to contact the membership team at the Society, who will be able to offer valuable advice to help organise the event."

Council member John Gentle was one of those who attended the West Midlands conference. He says: "By having the chance to attend conferences and workshops on CPD, pharmacists can have the opportunity for support in an informal setting. The Society has provided a great deal of support to pharmacists wanting to take part in CPD and over 21,000 members have logged onto the CPD website ([www.uptodate.org.uk](http://www.uptodate.org.uk)), yet a large number of members are still not fully engaged with this process. For regions this is an opportunity to work with local branches and offer support to members with this important role."

Any region or branch interested in following the West Midlands example should contact the Society's membership team on 020 7572 2333.

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# Branch programmes, January to June 2007

The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's membership unit has compiled the following provisional programme of branch and regional meetings during the first half of 2007 to help members plan their meeting attendance. Members should note that the details of some meetings are still to be finalised. Additional and revised branch meeting information will appear in the Diary section of *PJ Online* ([www.pjonline.com/](http://www.pjonline.com/)

noticeboard) and in *The Pharmaceutical Journal's* weekly Diary column (in the Society section), which gives details of meetings for two weeks from the following Monday.

Members should also note that they are normally free to attend meetings of any branch and not just the one to which they have been allocated or which they have chosen to join.

## Aberdeen & NE Scotland to Chelmsford

| Branch                                     | Date                         | Topic   |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Aberdeen and North Eastern Scottish</b> | 22 January                   | Annual general meeting/The new Scottish board                     |
|  | 12 February                  | Obesity   |
|  | 19 March                     | Veterinary pharmacy   |
| <b>Ayrshire</b>                            | 13 February                  | The role of the National Pharmacy Association development officer |
|  | 13 March                     | Continuing professional development                               |
|  | 24 April                     | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Barnet</b>                              | 29 January                   | Myocardial infarction   |
|  | 19 February                  | Advances in treating common eye conditions                        |
|  | 21 March                     | Diabetes and insulin devices                                      |
|  | 9 May                        | Current Society issues  |
|  | 12 June                      | Childhood and travel immunisations                                |
| <b>Bedfordshire</b>                        | 7 March                      | Controlled Drugs update   |
|  | 3 May                        | Code of Ethics update   |
| <b>Birmingham</b>                          | 25 January                   | Public health   |
| <b>Bolton</b>                              | 8 February                   | Annual general meeting  |
|  | 8 March                      | Recent changes to the Controlled Drug Regulations                 |
|  | 3 April                      | Joint meeting with local doctors and dentists                     |
|  | 10 May                       | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                      |
| 14 June                                    | <i>Topic to be announced</i> |   |
| <b>Bradford</b>                            | 6 February                   | Annual general meeting/Current trends in pharmacy                 |
|  | 5 March                      | Alzheimer's dementia  |
|  | 18 April                     | Errors in pharmacy  |
|  | 15 May                       | Mystery topic   |
| <b>Brighton</b>                            | 16 January                   | Skin infections   |
|  | 20 February                  | Paediatric infections   |
|  | 24 February                  | Annual dinner   |
|  | 20 March                     | Travel infections   |
|  | 24 April                     | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Bromley</b>                             | 15 January                   | Nutrition   |
|  | 19 February                  | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                      |
|  | 19 March                     | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                      |
|  | 9 April                      | Annual general meeting  |
|  | 21 May                       | Smoking cessation   |
| <b>Bury and Rochdale</b>                   | 26 February                  | Pain management   |
|  | 26 March                     | Medicines use reviews   |
|  | 30 April                     | Alcohol support services  |
| <b>Cardiff and Vale</b>                    | 25 January                   | Herceptin (joint meeting with local doctors)                      |
| <b>Ceredigion</b>                          | 22 February                  | Smoking cessation   |
|  | 22 March                     | Diabetes in pharmacy practice                                     |
| <b>Chelmsford</b>                          | 19 January                   | Basic life support  |
|  | 1 February                   | Infections and antibiotics  |
|  | 20 February                  | Cardiovascular risk assessment                                    |
|  | 5 March                      | Nutrition, obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes           |
| <i>(continued)</i>                         |                              |   |

## Chelmsford to Dudley and Stourbridge

| Branch                              | Date                            | Topic  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Chelmsford (continued)</b>       | 22 March                        | Current topic  |
|                                     | 24 April                        | Discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting          |
|                                     | 24 May                          | Annual general meeting/Chlamydia screening/Genitourinary medicines |
|                                     | 19 June                         | Hospice visit and talk on work of the hospice                      |
| <b>Cheltenham and Gloucester</b>    | 17 January                      | Inhalers: respiratory evening                                      |
|                                     | 5 March                         | Polypharmacy in the elderly  |
|                                     | 14 May                          | Pain control with relevance to medicines use reviews               |
| <b>Clwyd</b>                        | 23 January                      | Smoking cessation service  |
|                                     | 29 January                      | Annual general meeting and business meeting                        |
|                                     | 15 February                     | Anticoagulation therapy  |
|                                     | 2 March                         | Wine tasting   |
|                                     | 14 March                        | Medicines use reviews and making the links                         |
|                                     | 18 May                          | Visit to Welsh College of Horticulture                             |
| 26 May                              | Branch dinner                   |  |
| 22 June                             | Guided walk in Rhydymwyn Valley |  |
| <b>Colchester</b>                   | ? 25 January                    | Annual general meeting   |
|                                     | 26 April                        | Nutritional issues   |
| <b>Coventry and Warwickshire</b>    | 13 February                     | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                       |
|                                     | 13 March                        | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                       |
|                                     | 17 April                        | Annual general meeting   |
|                                     | 8 May                           | <i>Topic to be announced</i>                                       |
| <b>Crawley, Horsham and Reigate</b> | 15 February                     | Current affairs  |
|                                     | 29 March                        | Diabetes update  |
|                                     | May                             | Fraud: both sides of the prescription                              |
| <b>Croydon</b>                      | 30 January                      | Annual general meeting/Continuing professional development         |
|                                     | 27 February                     | Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma                   |
|                                     | 27 March                        | Osteoporosis   |
|                                     | 24 April                        | Obesity and weight management programme                            |
|                                     | 22 May                          | Non-medical prescribing and rheumatology                           |
|                                     |                                 |  |
| <b>Derby</b>                        | 12 February                     | Influences on prescribing  |
|                                     | 12 March                        | Pharmacist prescribing   |
|                                     | 2 April                         | Managing long-term conditions                                      |
| <b>Doncaster</b>                    | 20 February                     | Diabetes: latest developments in primary care                      |
| <b>Dudley and Stourbridge</b>       | 5 February                      | Continuing professional development (interactive "show and share") |
|                                     | 20 March                        | Annual general meeting/Work of Dudley Respiratory Outreach Service |
|                                     | 24 April                        | Medicines use reviews  |
|                                     | 15 May                          | Controlled Drugs (talk by Society inspector)                       |
|                                     | 12 June                         | Talk by primary care trust responsible officer                     |
|                                     | June                            | Visit to/talk by "Warehouse"                                       |

## East Cumberland to Ipswich

| Branch                              | Date        | Topic  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|--|
| <b>East Cumberland</b>              | 24 January  | First Aid course   |
| <b>East Metropolitan</b>            | 20 February | <i>Topic to be announced</i>   |
|                                     | 17 April    | <i>Topic to be announced</i>   |
| <b>Epsom</b>                        | 8 February  | Prescribing by pharmacists and nurses                                  |
|                                     | 20 March    | Sexual health and preregistration matters                              |
| <b>Fife</b>                         | April/May   | Annual general meeting   |
| <b>Glasgow and West of Scotland</b> | 1 February  | Ceilidh night  |
|                                     | 22 March    | Crystals, cures and conundrums   |
|                                     | 19 April    | Annual general meeting   |
| <b>Gwynedd</b>                      | 7 February  | First aid (part 1)   |
|                                     | 12 February | First aid (part 2)   |
|                                     | 13 March    | Annual general meeting/Medicines use reviews and making the links      |
| <b>Halifax</b>                      | 25 January  | Annual general meeting   |
|                                     | 15 February | Use of inhalers and nebulisers   |
|                                     | 22 March    | Management of Alzheimer's disease                                      |
|                                     | 23 February | <i>Topic to be announced</i>   |
| <b>Harrogate</b>                    | 8 February  | Therapeutics of allergies  |
|                                     | 19 April    | Talk by cardiac nurse ( <i>to be confirmed</i> )                       |
|                                     | 24 May      | Social evening   |
| <b>Harrow and Hillingdon</b>        | 23 January  | Dermatology  |
|                                     | 27 February | Electronic transmission of prescriptions/New Controlled Drugs register |
|                                     | 27 March    | Risk indemnity   |
|                                     | 24 April    | Annual general meeting/Current news topic                              |
|                                     | 15 May      | Allergies and rhinitis   |
|                                     | 19 June     | Hypertension   |
| <b>Hereford</b>                     | 25 January  | Chlamydia testing and sexual health                                    |
|                                     | 28 February | Blood glucose monitoring   |
| <b>Hertford</b>                     | 17 January  | Counterfeit medicines  |
|                                     | 6 March     | Oncology: new therapies  |
|                                     | 25 April    | Annual general meeting/The autistic spectrum                           |
| <b>Hounslow</b>                     | 1 February  | Licensing, inspections, yellow cards, etc                              |
|                                     | 1 March     | Pharmacogenetics, pharmacogenomics and pharmacy                        |
|                                     | 5 April     | Skin rashes: when to refer   |
| <b>Ipswich</b>                      | 1 February  | Management of neuropathic pain   |
|                                     | 14 March    | Ophthalmic conditions and their treatment                              |
|                                     | 17 April    | Herbal medicines and drug interactions                                 |
|                                     | 16 May      | Annual general meeting/Incontinence                                    |

## Lanarkshire to Portsmouth

| Branch                                  | Date        | Topic   |
|---|-------------|---|
| <b>Lanarkshire</b>                      | 12 January  | Quiz  |
|   | 1 February  | The national pharmacy board for Scotland  |
|   | 10 March    | Ceilidh   |
|   | 19 April    | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Leeds</b>                            | 14 February | <i>Topic to be announced</i>  |
|   | 14 March    | Pharmacy 2020   |
|   | 23 May      | Palliative care   |
| <b>Leicestershire and Rutland</b>       | 30 January  | Continuing professional development   |
|   | 13 February | Warfarin and anticoagulation  |
|   | 13 March    | Pharmaceutical ethical issues: supplies of medicines to developing countries                                    |
|   | 10 April    | Annual general meeting/Quiz   |
|   | 27 April    | Chairman's dinner   |
| <b>Liverpool</b>                        | February    | Management of skin cancer   |
|   | March       | Joint meeting with local doctors  |
|   | May         | Management of long-term conditions  |
|   | June        | Counselling   |
| <b>Manchester, Salford and Trafford</b> | 18 January  | Communication at the interface/Annual general meeting/Discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting |
|   | 1 March     | Diabetes, devices and desires   |
|   | 19 April    | Hot Society topic   |
| <b>Mid Glamorgan East</b>               | 29 January  | Medicines use reviews   |
|   | February    | Bowling   |
|   | 1 March     | Christmas meal  |
|   | 17 April    | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Northamptonshire</b>                 | 24 January  | Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease   |
|   | February    | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Northern Scottish</b>                | 9 January   | Introduction to British Sign Language   |
|   | 6 February  | Depression  |
|   | 6 March     | Current pharmaceutical affairs  |
|   | 17 April    | Annual general meeting/Discussion of motions for branch representatives' meeting                                |
| <b>North Staffordshire</b>              | 11 January  | Annual general meeting  |
|   | 22 February | Medicines-related deaths  |
|   | 8 March     | An inspector calls  |
| <b>Norwich and Norfolk</b>              | 22 February | Advances in oral chemotherapy   |
|   | 22 March    | Management and epilepsy: impact of a new patient-centred service  |
|   | 17 May      | Advances in rheumatology  |
| <b>Nottingham</b>                       | 12 February | Mental health   |
|   | 12 March    | Unlicensed medicines and "specials"   |
|   | 23 April    | Annual general meeting/Clinical nutrition   |
|   | 23 June     | Annual charity ball   |
| <b>Oxfordshire</b>                      | 9 January   | Colostomy care  |
|   | 20 February | Suicide prevention  |
|   | 13 March    | Children's services   |
|   | 17 April    | Diabetes update   |
|   | 15 May      | Annual general meeting/Stroke rehabilitation  |
| <b>Penfro</b>                           | 23 January  | Appropriate use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs  |
|   | 28 February | Clinical governance and incident reporting  |
|   | 29 March    | Medicines use reviews   |
|   |             |   |
| <b>Portsmouth</b>                       | 6 February  | Dementia in the community   |
|   | 6 March     | Coronary heart disease  |
|   | 29 March    | Annual general meeting  |

(continued)

## Portsmouth to Thames Valley

| Branch                              | Date          | Topic  |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Portsmouth</b>                   | April         | Childhood rheumatology   |
|                                     | May           | Out-of-hours treatment   |
|                                     | June          | Primary care   |
| <b>Reading</b>                      | 25 January    | NHS Ombudsman  |
|                                     | 12 February   | Infections   |
|                                     | 7 March       | Herbal medicines   |
|                                     | 24 April      | Cardiovascular pharmacotherapy   |
| <b>Sheffield</b>                    | 9 January     | Respiratory medicine   |
|                                     | 6 February    | Parkinson's disease  |
|                                     | 7 March       | Lipid update   |
|                                     | 4 April       | Treatment of depression  |
|                                     | 9 May         | Ophthalmology/Annual general meeting   |
| <b>Shropshire</b>                   | 2 June        | Opioid prescribing   |
| <b>Slough</b>                       | 23 January    | Obesity management   |
|                                     | 22 February   | Legal responsibilities   |
|                                     | 20 March      | Update on treatments of depression   |
|                                     | 26 April      | Hot topics   |
|                                     | 15 May        | Annual general meeting/Aspects of diabetes care  |
| <b>Southampton</b>                  | 18 January    | Annual general meeting/Oral health and cancer  |
|                                     | 13 February   | New perspectives in herbal medicine  |
|                                     | 12 March      | Consultant pharmacists   |
|                                     | 10 April      | Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency initiatives to promote adverse drug reaction reporting |
| <b>South Cheshire</b>               | 23 January    | Medicines and patient safety   |
|                                     | 28 February   | Palliative care: the team and the drugs  |
|                                     | 29 March      | Annual general meeting/Pharmacy: looking forward to the future   |
| <b>South East of England region</b> | 4 March       | Regional conference: long-term conditions  |
| <b>South East Metropolitan</b>      | 10 January    | Annual general meeting   |
|                                     | 21 February   | Pandemic flu: service continuity plans for pharmacy  |
|                                     | 21 March      | <i>Topic to be announced</i>   |
| <b>South Staffordshire</b>          | 7 February    | Foot care  |
|                                     | 13 March      | Annual general meeting/Veterinary pharmacy   |
|                                     | 25 April      | Paediatric pharmacy  |
| <b>South West Metropolitan</b>      | 13 February   | Alternative and complementary medicine   |
|                                     | 13 March      | Skin care campaign   |
|                                     | 17 April      | Independent prescribing  |
|                                     | 15 May        | Travel medicine/Annual general meeting   |
| <b>Sunderland</b>                   | 18 January    | Annual general meeting   |
|                                     | 3 February    | Dinner dance   |
|                                     | 8 March       | Ethical dilemma (1)  |
|                                     | 15 March      | Ethical dilemma (2)  |
|                                     | 22 March      | Ethical dilemma (3)  |
|                                     |               |  |
| <b>Teesside</b>                     | ? 21 February | Dermatology  |
|                                     | ? 21 March    | Migraine and neural pain   |
|                                     | ? 25 April    | Annual general meeting   |
| <b>Thames Valley</b>                | 29 January    | Drugs in pregnancy and breastfeeding   |
|                                     | 9 May         | Supervision requirements and current reality   |

## Warrington to Worthing and West Sussex

| Branch                          | Date        | Topic   |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Warrington</b>               | 30 January  | Pharmacy technicians and registration   |
|                                 | 15 March    | What is the Society up to?  |
|                                 | 18 April    | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>Weald of Kent</b>            | 8 February  | Annual general meeting/Developments in chemotherapy   |
|                                 | 15 March    | Paediatric asthma   |
|                                 | 10 May      | Sports injuries   |
| <b>Wessex region</b>            | 1 March     | Annual general meeting (Romsey)   |
|                                 | 28 June     | Regional meeting (Isle of Wight)  |
| <b>West Cumberland</b>          | 10 January  | Annual general meeting  |
|                                 | 14 February | Dealing with conflict in the pharmacy and other health and safety issues  |
|                                 | 14 March    | My first year as a member of Council (David Carter)   |
|                                 | 11 April    | <i>Topic to be announced</i>  |
| <b>West Hertfordshire</b>       | 18 January  | Dermatology   |
|                                 | 21 February | Aromatherapy  |
|                                 | 15 March    | Hypertension  |
|                                 | 18 April    | Annual general meeting  |
| <b>West Surrey</b>              | 13 February | Hypertension and dyslipidaemia  |
|                                 | 13 March    | Pharmacy 2020   |
|                                 | 10 April    | Annual general meeting/The new Surrey Primary Care Trust and pharmacy support, with update on Connecting for Health |
|                                 | 8 May       | Common skin complaints  |
| <b>Wigan</b>                    | 18 April    | Annual general meeting/Clinical presentation  |
|                                 | 20 June     | New Controlled Drug arrangements/Enhanced services update   |
| <b>Wirral</b>                   | 18 January  | Annual general meeting  |
|                                 | 15 February | <i>Topic to be announced</i>  |
|                                 | 15 March    | <i>Topic to be announced</i>  |
|                                 | 25 April    | <i>Topic to be announced</i>  |
| <b>Worthing and West Sussex</b> | 1 February  | Diabetes update   |
|                                 | 20 March    | Pharmacy medicines management   |
|                                 | 23 May      | Cardiology nurse-led clinic at Worthing hospital  |

### The following branches and regions have not yet finalised their programmes for January to June 2007

**BRANCHES** — Bath; Bristol; Bro Myrddin; Buckinghamshire; Chesterfield; Cornish; Dorset; Durham; Grimsby; Hastings; Hull; Isle of Man; Isle of Wight; Lincoln; Moray and Banff; Morgannwg; Powys; Sefton; Solihull; Somerset; Swindon; West Metropolitan.  
**REGIONS** — Border; Chiltern.

### The following branches and regions are not holding any meetings during for January to June 2007

**BRANCHES** — Burnley; Cambridge; Enfield; Guernsey; Macclesfield; Mansfield; Scunthorpe; South Essex; South Lincolnshire.  
**REGIONS** — Anglia; Mersey; North West; South West; Yorkshire.

### No programme information for the period January to June 2007 has been received from the following branches and regions

**BRANCHES** — Central Lancashire; Dumfries and Galloway; Dundee and Eastern Scottish; East Kent; Edinburgh and Lothians; Exeter; Great Yarmouth and Waveney; Gwent; Huddersfield; Jersey; Lancaster; Medway; North East Lancashire; North Hampshire; Northumbrian; Plymouth; Scottish Borders; South Cumbria; Stirling and Central Scottish; Stockport; Torbay; Walsall and Wolverhampton; Worcester; York.  
**REGIONS** — Sherwood; West Midlands.

## PROFILE OF A BRANCH

# Sunderland

The Sunderland branch has gone from strength to strength in the past decade. From being moribund in the 1980s, it now attracts around 100 members to its meetings. **Mark Burdon**, branch chairman, writes

The Sunderland branch is medium sized, with just over 300 members, many of whom are active. As well as educational meetings, the branch enjoys a vibrant social calendar. The annual dinner dance is extremely popular and each year there is always a waiting list for tickets.

In 2004, the Society announced the Future Branch pilots to be conducted across Britain. The Sunderland branch was one of the pilot sites. This provided a major impetus for the branch to review its functions and look to meet the needs of the membership more effectively. Additional funding was provided, which allowed the branch to function without the need to obtain pharmaceutical industry sponsorship. Although this project made little difference to operations of the branch in the long term, it initially allowed the committee to focus on developing its educational infrastructure. Some investments were made, such as the purchase of a data projector, and the branch committee decided to adopt a policy for partnership working with the industry. This policy sets out the branch's terms for this work, and was based on that used by the NHS. The Industry funding stream has enabled the branch to continue to provide high quality educational meetings without influence from outside.

The Future Branch pilot provided a clear direction for the branch through the aims and objectives. These objectives have been met: providing local leadership, promoting continuing professional development (CPD), communications with the membership and supporting prescribing. The branch website is the focus of communications with the membership. This is maintained by the branch vice-chairman, David Carter, who is also now a member of the Society's Council. Included in the website are news and announcements, a history of the branch and copies of presentations given at meetings.

The branch programme is structured into two series of three meetings each year, with other ad hoc meetings as necessary. The local CPD facilitator, Raminder Sihota, has been particularly valuable to the branch. She has helped organise a number of CPD events using the information technology facilities at the School of Pharmacy in Sunderland. There is also a joint meeting with pharmacy technicians. The topics of the meetings are usually clinical and are aimed to support CPD within the membership. Meetings are planned to be relevant to the needs of members, as well as taking into consideration educational support provided by other organisations such as the Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education. Attendance has grown steadily and significantly since the Future Branch pilot began. Around a third of the local membership attends each meeting and many use this as the basis of their CPD planning.

The Future Branch pilot has been a huge success for the Sunderland branch. It has provided an impetus for the branch to develop into a major provider of high quality educational material and a focus for CPD in the area.

## INTERVIEW

# Brian Curwain

In this feature *Network News* interviews a new member of the Society's Council, **Brian Curwain**, who is a champion for his local branch

**Your full name?** Dr Brian Peter Curwain  
**Your job?** Chief pharmacist and research and development lead, Hampshire Primary Care Trust (West)  
**Your branch?** Southampton  
**Pharmacist since?** 1969

**Why did you decide to become a pharmacist?** I was working as a technician in an industrial pharmacology laboratory and the head of department, David Brown (a pharmacist married to a pharmacist) told me about the choices of career available to pharmacists. I had three science "A"-levels and applied, and was accepted at Brighton School of Pharmacy. The best advice I have ever had.

**What inspires you most about the pharmacy profession?** The ability of so many to put patients before the demands of business.

**What are the best things about being involved in your local branch?** Meeting colleagues and learning from each other.

**And the worst (if any)?** Only downside is giving up the occasional evening, which is not much of a problem, especially in the winter.

**Why did you decide to run for Council?** I realised that the Society was not properly familiar with primary care pharmacy and because those of us in primary care are a vital link between community pharmacy and its main business partner, the NHS.

**What happened at your first Council meeting?** It was pretty much as I expected — a lot of detail and complex issues that the Society has to get right.

**Do you think being involved in your branch enables you to bring any extra dimensions to the Council member role? If so what?** It is important to be in touch with as many pharmacists as possible and this is one way of doing so.

**What would be your vision for the future of pharmacy at branch level?** Branches need to continue and be vigorous with programmes that contribute to both continuing professional development and to the political issues that face the development of the profession and its work. It cannot all be driven from the centre and branches are an important part of the information flow to the Society.

**Who is your hero, mentor or person you most admire and why?** Bob Dylan, for completely changing popular music so that it can include really important political and ethical issues and for his support of those who are disadvantaged or subject to injustice. Also, the late Pamela Holton, reader in physiology and my PhD supervisor, for showing me how young professionals should be supported in their development, and for her integrity and absolute respect for the truth. She was fantastic.

**Is there one event or decision in your life you wish you could go back and change?** Nothing so far. I have been a lucky man.

## New toolkit will help with drafting motions for the BRM

A new toolkit has been compiled to help branches with drafting motions for the Society's annual branch representatives' meeting (BRM). It has been developed as part of the ongoing review to help branches make the most of the opportunity to submit motions to the BRM and thereby to influence Council policy.

Branches may submit up to two motions. The closing date for motions for the 2007 BRM is Monday 12 February. An electronic form for submitting motions is available online at [www.rpsgb.org/societyfunctions/peopleandstructures/branchmotionsform.html](http://www.rpsgb.org/societyfunctions/peopleandstructures/branchmotionsform.html). It would be helpful if branches use this form when submitting motions for 2007.

## Help from other branches

Branch secretaries and committees who would like advice on any matters they encounter in their branches can benefit from the experiences of other branch secretaries.

To be put in touch with a branch secretary who may have the answer to your query, contact the Society's branch and regional administration team (e-mail [b&ra@rpsgb.org](mailto:b&ra@rpsgb.org)).