

FACULTY OF FORENSIC AND LEGAL MEDICINE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS

The inaugural meeting of the **Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine** was held at the College on **Thursday 13th April 2006 at 14.00 hrs.**

Present:

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| Dr R Burnham | - Registrar, RCP |
| Mr C Constable | - Director of Professional Affairs, RCP |
| Dr LM Al-Alousi | - Senior Lecturer/Hon Consultant Forensic Pathologist/Home Office Pathologist |
| Dr JP Barker | - Consultant to the Medical Protection Society |
| Dr SLP Beh | - Clinical Associate Professor (Forensic Pathology) |
| Dr AD Behrman | - Medico-legal Adviser to the Medical Protection Society |
| Dr SD Bown | - Head of Medical Services (London), Medical Protection Society |
| Dr EJ Carter | - Principal FME to Sussex Police |
| Dr ND Chapman | - H.M. Coroner Nottinghamshire |
| Professor D Cussack | - Professor of Legal Medicine and Head of Dept. of Forensic Medicine, UCD |
| Miss ME Dalton | - Consultant In Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Forensic Gynaecology Examinations For Devon And Cornwall Police |
| Dr N Davis | - Senior Forensic Medical Examiner – Metropolitan Police Service |
| Dr AT Day | - Consultant in Legal Medicine to Medical Protection Society |
| Dr PJ Dean | - HM Coroner for South East Essex and Greater Suffolk |
| Dr AG Dott | - Senior FME for Metropolitan Police Force Area 19 |
| Dr JV Evans | - Senior Consultant Forensic Physician to Greater Manchester Police |
| Dr CGM Fernie | - FME Lothian & Borders Police |
| Dr PG Green | - Principal FME, Metropolitan Police Service |
| Dr RA Hendry | - Medico-legal Adviser: The Medical & Dental Defence Union of Scotland |
| Dr J Herring | - Principal FME for Metropolitan Police Force - Group 19 |
| Dr JD Hickey | - Chief Executive, Medical Protection Society |
| Dr MB Holohan | - Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, Director of Sexual Assault Treatment Unit |
| Dr AJ Irvine | - Forensic Medical Examiner to Cleveland Police and a Consultant in Clinical Forensic Medicine |
| Dr CE James | - Head of Case Decisions and Head of Professional Services (Australia) - The Medical Defence Union |
| Dr SE Josse | - Principal FME, Metropolitan Police |
| Dr MA Knight | - Honorary Consultant, Directorate of Paediatrics and Child Health, Ipswich Hospital |
| Dr L Lord | - Forensic Physician to West Yorkshire Police |
| Dr WDS McLay | - Police Surgeon, K Division Strathclyde Police |
| Dr EC Meyer | - Medico-Legal Advisor, South Africa |
| Dr RJR Moffat | - Senior FME MPS London Freelance Advisor to Legal Profession |
| Dr JE Neild | - Claims Consultant, MDU Services Ltd |
| Dr GA Norfolk | - Principal Forensic Physician, Avon and Somerset Constabulary |

Dr M O'Keefe	- Principal Police Surgeon Q Division Strathclyde Police
Dr RN Palmer	- HM Coroner, Greater London (South)
Dr JJ Payne-James	- FME
Dr JE Pedley	- Consultant Medico-legal Advisor, Medical Protection Society
Prof DJ Pounder	- Professor and Head of Department of Forensic Medicine, University of Dundee
Dr AS Reid	- HM Coroner, Inner North London
Dr REI Roberts	- Senior Forensic Physician to Greater Manchester Police, and a Consultant in Clinical Forensic Medicine
Dr SP Robinson	- Hon Senior Lecturer Clinical Forensic Medicine, University of Central Lancashire
Dr MT Saunders	- Chief Executive of the Medical Defence Union
Dr PK Schutte	- Head of Advisory Services, The Medical Defence Union
Prof CA Seymour	- Medico Legal Adviser
Dr EJE Stearns	- HM Coroner Eastern District of Greater London
Dr CM Tomkins	- Professional Services Director and Deputy Chief Executive
Prof P Vanezis	- Professor of Forensic Medical Sciences, The Forensic Science Service London
Dr IF Wall	- Forensic Physician for Northamptonshire Police
Dr JM Welch	- Consultant in HIV/GUM, King's College Hospital NHS Trust
Dr DM Wetherill	- Forensic Physician to West Yorkshire Police
Dr M Wilks	- Senior FME, Metropolitan Police

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Dr PD Singh, Head of Medical Division, Dr MC Yee, Medico-Legal Advisor of the Medical Protection Society

2. Introductory remarks on behalf of the Royal College of Physicians

Dr Rodney Burnham explained that in March 2005 the Council of the College approved a proposal that there should be a Faculty to include those medical practitioners who practise the specialty of forensic and legal medicine. This proposal was prepared on behalf of three constituent bodies:

- o Dr George Fernie President, Association of Forensic Physicians,
- o Dr Elizabeth Stearns On behalf of Medically Qualified Coroners
- o Professor Carol Seymour On behalf of the Medico-Legal Advisers

On the basis that a Faculty of Forensic and Legal Medicine linked to the Royal College of Physicians would:

- o Develop and maintain for the public benefit the practice of forensic and legal medicine by ensuring the highest professional standards of competence and ethical integrity.
- o Develop education in forensic and legal medicine at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

- Promote knowledge, research and the career pathway in the specialty
- Bring to the Royal College their specialist experience in forensic and legal matters, enhancing the College's response to governmental and non-governmental agencies on a wide range of issues.

At the Council meeting on 24th May approval was given to move forward and a group was set up to establish work on the Standing Orders and to make recommendations to Council for the election of Foundation Fellows. That group included Ian Wall, Guy Norfolk, Margaret Stark, Carol Seymour, Elizabeth Stearns, Roy Palmer and Clive Constable.

Dr Burnham publicly recognised the enormous amount of work that Clive Constable has done on behalf of the Faculty and the College in getting this established.

Council approved the Standing Orders and the list of Foundation Fellows on 14th September 2005. It has been 26 years since a Faculty was last established and there has been a longer gap than anticipated but we are now in a position where the inaugural Officers have been elected so that the Faculty can start to conduct business.

3. Formal announcement of the results of the election of Faculty Officers

The Foundation Fellows have elected;

As President	Dr Guy Norfolk
As Vice President, Coroners	Dr Elizabeth Stearns
As Vice President, Forensic Medicine	Dr Jason Payne-James
As Vice President, Medico-Legal	Dr Stephanie Bown
As Registrar	Dr George Fernie
As Treasurer	Dr Peter Schutte
As Academic Dean	Dr Margaret Stark

The Officers were invited to take their places.

4. Introductory remarks by the President

The President began by thanking Clive Constable and his team for organising the recent elections and reminding the Faculty of the background to its formation. The President stated that he would like to join Dr Burnham in thanking all those who were involved in

the formation of the Faculty and deserving of particular mention once again were Dr Roy Palmer, Dr Margaret Stark, Dr Ian Wall, Dr Rodney Burnham and Clive Constable.

The President outlined that his vision was

- For a vibrant and dynamic organisation that is relevant to its members needs
- To be conscious of the diversity of the crafts represented in the specialty
- As a priority key objectives will need to be established for each of the different groups.
- To identify common needs such as the need for robust mechanisms of appraisal and revalidation
- To break down any barriers that exist whether they be perceived or real to make sure that the Faculty works as a coherent whole.

The President explained that a fundamental objective of the Faculty will be to achieve formal specialist recognition for forensic and legal medicine and to make this possible there is a need to set standards, promote research, establish career pathways and to develop a programme of continuing professional development.

Achieving specialist recognition will ensure that forensic medical services will have to be consultant led. Just as it would be inconceivable for an ISTC to provide hip replacements for the NHS by employing overseas doctors who have no specialist orthopaedic qualifications so must it become unacceptable for outsource companies to provide forensic medical services without the proper specialist support.

In recognition of the importance of ensuring the highest possible standards in clinical forensic medicine the Home Office has provided support and resources to the establishment of this Faculty. £150,000 of capital funding has already been provided and as of last month the Home Office have committed a further £150,000 of revenue funding for year 1 with a possibility of further funding for years 2 and 3. The support of the Home Office for the Faculty's aims and objectives is extremely encouraging. In achieving that support the President acknowledged the particular contribution of the unique negotiating skills of Dr Michael Knight and thanked him personally for the work he did in achieving that funding.

The President added that in electing his fellow Officers the Faculty has identified individuals he is confident will take the collegiate aims and aspirations and bring them in to reality. The President said he was humbled and deeply honoured to have been elected the first President of the Faculty and gave his commitment to pursue the aims and objectives of the Faculty with vigour and enthusiasm

5. Establishment of the Board

All Fellows of the Faculty should have received a copy of the Standing Orders of the Faculty and will be aware from those Standing Orders that the Board is constituted of the Officers and four ordinary members who are normally elected four months before an AGM. Obviously it has been impossible to organise those elections in the absence of any

members so the proposal would be that the Board comprising of the Officers will fill the vacancies so that a Board will be up and running as soon as possible and then formal elections will be organised for those members before the next AGM whenever that date is set. The Officers of the Faculty will meet shortly and fill those casual vacancies on the Board.

6. Establishment of sub-committees, including the process for electing Foundation Members

Approximately 270 applications for Foundation Membership have been received but the intention is to advertise widely again to invite more applications for Foundation Membership. A Fellowship Committee will be appointed by the Board to look at those applications and to appoint members as soon as possible.

7. Questions from the floor

Dr Edouard Josse (Clinical Forensic Medicine) stated that the Standing orders mention 2 lay people and asked if it would be the Board's wish to try and identify those and suggested the idea of canvassing the Fellowship to ascertain what sort of people they should be. Dr Josse suggested that Lawyers might be an appropriate group.

The President confirmed that it would certainly be one of the functions of the Board firstly to decide exactly the process of nominating those lay members. The President welcomed suggestions. He added that it is a requirement for the Board of Trustees to have some lay members to satisfy the charity commission and important that they are of sufficient standing to be of help to the Faculty

Dr Rodney Burnham suggested magistrates as another appropriate group for lay members.

Dr Steve Robinson (Clinical Forensic Medicine) started by congratulating the newly elected President and asked what the timescale would be to establish Faculty qualifications.

The President explained that there is a requirement to have a Faculty examination in place within 3 years from the date of the inaugural meeting. The Standing Orders allow the appointment of Foundation Members for the first three years and thereafter only through examinations.

Dr Philip Beh (Forensic Medicine) asked about linkage with existing qualifications for example those offered by the Society of Apothecaries

The President outlined that the Faculty will hopefully be working very closely with the Society of Apothecaries who currently run the Diploma in Medical Jurisprudence, which has been one of the main postgraduate qualifications in clinical forensic medicine. It is anticipated the faculty

will subsume some of the work, subject to negotiations. The President thanked Dr Beh for flying over from Hong Kong and indeed all Fellows who had come from overseas to the meeting.

Dr Peter Green (Forensic Medicine) wished to emphasise that the Faculty should pay due regard to its own community and seek to establish itself as world class. Dr Green also asked if Fellows can express preferences for people on the Board.

The President responded that for the first 6-9 months the Board will appoint on a “pragmatic basis” but if individuals are interested he invited them to let him or the Registrar know.

Professor Carol Seymour (Medico-Legal Advisor) asked if the Board would be looking at the criteria for election to Fellowship as well as election to Membership?

The President outlined that the primary function of the Fellowship committee will be to do this but, in the initial three years, they will also have responsibility for making recommendations about Foundation Membership. The Standing Orders allow for Fellows to be appointed on an annual basis at the AGM once that has been approved by the College Council so it will be an annual process.

Mr Clive Constable (Director of Professional Affairs) raised the question of post nominals and explained that the Standing Orders suggest that they can be used. Mr Constable suggested FFFLM would be a sensible option and for Foundation Fellows the following could be added FFFLM (Foundation). When asked if RCP is part of the post nominals Mr Constable responded that this was implicit not explicit.

Dr Robin Moffat (Clinical Forensic Medicine) enquired whether there was going to be an announcement in the medical press in journals such as the BMJ.

The President confirmed that his intention was to get this known as widely known as possible and that the RCP press office is already working on this. The BMA are keen to promote this in BMA news.

Dr Roy Palmer (Medically Qualified Coroner) suggested that the Faculty serves a much wider public and that the announcement should also be in judicial, magistrates and police circles.

It was agreed that the Law section in the Times would be appropriate.

Dr Ian Wall (Clinical Forensic Medicine) added that the Home Office is also keen for some publicity as a result of the funding they have given.

Dr Neville Davis (Clinical Forensic and Legal Medicine) said that public perception of the profession's legal performance is lower now than it has ever been and asked if the Faculty agreed that now is the moment when the public must be told what is happening and given some indication that we are going to improve the standard of medical evidence in the courts.

The President responded that there is a need for caution as he felt it is not an objective of this Faculty to improve the standard of medical evidence in its entirety in the courts, it is not a Faculty for expert witnesses. It is a Faculty for Forensic and Legal Medicine and certainly one of the objectives will be to ensure that the expert evidence given by Fellows and Members of the Faculty is of the highest quality but we cannot influence the quality of evidence as a whole.

Dr Davis added that he felt that the Faculty must take the lead in showing how doctors can exercise their skill in the legal process. The President agreed.

Dr Denis Cusack (Forensic Medicine) stated that he was pleased that the Faculty is not going to split in to 3 separate groups and will all be working together. He asked if it was appropriate to make initial contact with international Colleges such as America and Australia?

The President agreed on the importance of this.

8. Any other business

Peter Green kindly brought a camera for a group photo on the steps of the College.

The President formally brought the meeting to a close.