



## Faculty of Forensic & Legal Medicine

of the Royal College of Physicians of London

### REGISTRAR'S REPORT 3 JUNE 2008

#### Board Meetings

There have again been three formal Board Meetings throughout the second year –

1. 4 October 2007
2. 10 January 2008
3. 3 June 2008

This frequency will probably require to continue in preparation for the Membership Examination which will supersede Foundation Membership and there is a proposal before the AGM from Dr Jason Payne-James to amend Standing Order 2.2.3 to extend the period for Foundation Membership by another six months giving a little more breathing space to the Academic Dean in what, at times, seems an immense task.

It is with sadness that I remind our membership of the death of both Michael Knight MBE and Ivor Doney, both of whom contributed in their own very significant ways to our speciality and were dear friends to many of us present.

There has been one change to the constitution of the Board in the last year due to the decision of Michael Wilks to resign on 8 May 2008 citing the very taxing time for forensic physicians in London and a wish to give his colleagues' interests complete and impartial attention.

The Board fully understands his rationale in wishing to devote more time to the Society of Forensic Physicians and hopes to be able to continue to draw on Michael's knowledge and experience, particularly, in the ethical arena.

As promised last year, it has been possible to appoint two lay members to the Board and Mr Stephen Ward and Mr Pat Conneely were introduced on 10 January 2008.

Progress has been made on a number of the key targets previously identified -

- Application for specialist status
- Identify core competences for Forensic and Legal Medicine
- Establish process for doctors to relicense
- Develop Faculty CPD system
- Develop process of voluntary re- certification
- Set curriculum for exam
- Develop framework for exam

- Appoint examiners
- First examination

– The only one where no significant movement has been possible, despite it being a priority, has been the application of specialist status due to events outwith our control and where strenuous attempts have been made by the President who has taken a personal interest in the subject.

The Board will continue to work assiduously to overcome the current impasse.

### **Fellowship Committee**

This Committee has once more met physically and has had a more recent teleconference meeting.

Current membership at the time of writing is –

Fellows –	123
Foundation Members –	269
Affiliates –	222
Total –	614

The Board and the RCP have now reaffirmed on a number of separate occasions that it is no longer procedurally possible to have further Foundation Fellows. The number of appeals in this respect and over Foundation Membership applications is now minimal. We are maintaining Minutes of decisions made so that there will be clear precedent that we anticipate should help avoid future confusion. Once more, I would emphasise my willingness to speak to any applicants in order to advise them on pertinent issues and I can be most readily contacted via my email address on the website [registrar@fflm.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@fflm.ac.uk)

Obviously, our new body encompasses 3 related specialities but the global number is encouraging for the future and this has occurred at an earlier juncture than was anticipated by the Board.

### **Fellowship and Membership Diplomas**

You should all now have received your revised Diploma with a seal which has been signed by the Presidents of the Faculty and the Royal College of Physicians.

## Premises

Our premises at 116 Great Portland Street are now fully functional although we did, until recently, have some remaining teething problems with the IT connection to the College. It has been possible to hold virtually all the committee meetings here although we do still decant to the College for full Board Meetings. We continue to aspire to eventually being located on the College 'campus' at a future date.

## Staff

The initial staffing problems experienced have now been resolved very satisfactorily with the appointment of Clare Pillinger as Faculty Manager and Sarah Llewellyn as Administrator, both full time. Their support in the last year has been absolutely outstanding and we have been able to develop robust systems that should avoid the administrative hiccups that bedevilled our start up phase. There will obviously still be occasional problems that one finds in any medical membership organisation but they are now approaching a level that I believe is acceptable for our period of gestation.

## Website

This is accessible at <http://fflm.ac.uk> and has progressed significantly in the last year under the stewardship of the IT Steering Group comprising Sanjeev Gaya as Editor, the Registrar, our administrative staff and a representative from Lucid Web Design who continue to provide valuable technical support albeit more and more of the day to day work is undertaken in-house. The Journal access online is now fully functional and increasingly used by the membership.

Our policy is to use electronic means of communication whenever possible and, likewise, electronic committee papers will be the preferred medium.

Board Meeting Minutes are now available on the Faculty page of the site in keeping with our intention of transparency so that the whole membership is aware of the issues being discussed.

From 1 July 2008 it should be possible to make payments to the Faculty by credit card and in very early course, hopefully in time for the next membership subscription round, we will have finalised our own arrangements for Direct Debit payments.

These changes have not been straightforward to achieve and have required sustained efforts on behalf of our Manager.

## Journal

The *Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine* goes from strength to strength and payment has been made to the Faculty of the sale proceeds from the Association of Forensic Physicians.

The Editor will, as usual, also provide a report and speak to the AGM but the evolution of our flagship publication continues to assist in promoting the Faculty's academic credibility.

### **David Jenkins Chair in Forensic and Legal Medicine**

The inaugural lecture delivered by Lord Justice Auld was a fitting one to mark David's tremendous contribution to Clinical Forensic Medicine and we now have a particularly apt first Professor in Ian Wall to follow on with this prestigious lecture, where there is no doubt that David would have approved of his appointment. You will have noted from the website that Professor Wall's successor has been selected and will be presented at the AGM.

### **W G Johnston Memorial Fund**

The Trustees (Dr A Irvine, Dr R Roberts & Professor A Busuttill) remain in post to administer this Fund and also the Jenkins Trust reporting to the Treasurer. I would be happy to direct any applicants for financial support for research to the appropriate resource so that the speciality continues to thrive from these generous bequests.

It is hoped that publication of the new edition of *Clinical Forensic Medicine*, once more edited by Dr David McLay will bolster the W G Johnston Trust.

### **Representation on Other Bodies**

The Faculty continues with constructive contribution to a wide range of consultation documents and by having a supervising Board Member for each document and by inviting comment through the website, believe that we can properly reflect the membership's views on these matters.

The Board is mindful of the need for representation of the various crafts and, in particular, forensic physicians where the Faculty has disengaged from this role previously performed by the AFP as it would be incompatible with our charitable status. However, it continues to actively liaise with the British Medical Association. There will be a BMA fringe meeting on the Thursday morning of the annual conference where any attendees will be welcome to attend.

### **Conclusion**

Another hectic year has been completed where we have moved further forward in our strategic plan. Much remains to be done and there are extraneous factors, some of which we did not anticipate, impinging on our speciality but we do appear to be on track to having a Faculty fit to face the challenges emerging. The Board will endeavour to meet the targets set and do this in as open and inclusive a way as possible.

Dr C George M Fernie  
Registrar