

maa news

The Newsletter of the Medical Artists' Association of Great Britain • Summer 2005

Letter from your new Chairman

This, my first piece as Chairman will be brief, since the deadline for copy fast approaches and so too does my departure for foreign parts!

I do feel very excited by the prospect of being Chairman of the MAA for the next two years and hope to use this time to promote the profile of the MAA into the public arena or as close as we can get!

I greatly enjoyed my first Council meeting in May which welcomed Denise Smith and Pascale Pollier-Green on board as Council members. It was a lively meeting with new ideas, suggestions and plans buzzing across the table.

Already, as I write, the Qvist Gallery at the Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons is filled with our medical artwork as an invited exhibition of MAA illustrations entitled 'Drawn from Life'. This is a wonderful opportunity to lift our profile and be literally alongside the new and vibrant Hunterian exhibition which we all admired at our Conference in April this year. The exhibition will run from 26 July - January 2006. The Private View or Official Opening will be on Tuesday 6 September at 6 pm and invitations will be sent by the RCS to all MAA members even if you have not submitted work and further promotion flyers will be available to members to give to friends and professional contacts.

My sincere thanks goes to Angela Christie who master-minded the collection of work, mounts and ordering of frames, aided by a team of willing helpers, many thanks to you all. The original date for mounting was the fateful day of the London bomb blasts, so most of us could not



actually enter London, it was only Mandy Miller who came early and thankfully was safely in the College before the events happened.

We look forward to offering our new President Sir Barry Jackson his first official duty in this small but excellent gallery,

We already have dates for our next Conference which will be organised by Margot Cooper in Bristol on the 21/22/23 April 2006.

The following year is also being planned and will be in Antwerp in October 2007 this will be a joint Conference with our European colleagues in AEIMS and will be organised by Pascale Pollier-Green and will be our second trip 'abroad' since the MAA visited the Netherlands in 1973 !

I do hope to see you all on the 6th, meanwhile have a great summer

Jenny Halstead Chairman

Editorial

Those who can remember back to the Autumn of 2002 will remember that edition appeared somewhat late, in 2002, but only just! This was because an injury meant my hospitalisation and a delay to layout and production.

After three years of near perfect health, yup, hospital time again. So despite the hard working attempts of Ray Evans and willing contributors delivering on time this edition is out in the twilight of Summer, sorry.

Whilst I am here can I thank all members who have written something for the newsletter, now and in the past, your contributions are greatly appreciated. If you have not contributed to the Newsletter please consider doing so. If you are anxious a piece you write will be boring or of no interest please contribute it anyway, Ray and I will support you and ensure it is successful. The MAA needs you!

Alan Waller

Chelsea Medal

The Royal College of Pathologists won a prestigious silver gilt medal at this year's Chelsea Flower Show. The exhibition stand designed by Philip Ball focused on the contribution made by plants to Medicine and the treatment of patients, illustrated by case studies based on real patients.

Prof James Underwood, President of the College said "This display is part of our mission to improve public understanding of the vital work of Pathologists"

More information: www.rcpath.org.uk

56th Annual Conference 2005

The 50th Anniversary was my first conference and I know I shouldn't but I measure all conferences by it, not just by the amount of champagne I consumed but on the experience and awe of the wonderful settings. Although there have been some brilliant conferences and venues, I think this year was just as memorable for a different reason. Not only were we celebrating a record number of graduations but our President Air Commodore Ronnie Brown and Chairman Anthony Rollason were handing over to Sir Barry Jackson, our new President and Jenny Halstead, our new Chairman.

The day began with the AGM and there seemed to be a very positive feel to it this year. The long discussions of dwindling membership figures wasn't mentioned at all and I'm sure there were a few more voting hands raised than usual.

After coffee and a short time to catch up with friends who we hadn't seen at conferences recently, we had a fantastic guided tour of the newly refurbished Hunterian Museum. I had been lucky enough to see the museum a few years ago before it closed for refurbishment and was totally amazed by the new, light and airy feel it has now. Jane Hughes the development officer of the museum, gave us a fascinating and knowledgeable insight into the history behind the William Hunter collection

of skeletons, bones, skulls, dried preparations, historical surgical instruments, paintings, drawings and wax models.

A very nice lunch followed our guided tour and another chance to chat among friends. Then it was straight on into the afternoon sessions, which Air Commodore Ronnie Brown opened. This was his final opening address as our President, which was a little sad as he has worked very hard and given so much of his time over the years supporting our association and our thanks go to him once again.

After the opening address, I gave a short paper on my student thesis Egyptian Embalming which described the physical and spiritual aspects of

the embalming process performed by the ancient Egyptians.

Chris Rynn gave a fascinating paper comparing the accuracy of three methods of reconstruction of the same skull. The three reconstructions were a 2D pencil drawing, a 3D clay reconstruction and a computer generated 3D reconstruction.

When reading the programme for Philip Ball's paper I thought what on earth could RCPATH have to do with the Chelsea Flower Show? But all was explained in Philip's presentation. Philip and his colleagues at Addenbrooke's had an idea of recreating a laboratory at the show raising awareness of allergies. Every last detail was brilliantly thought out even down to the view out of one of the windows showing many of the common allergens today. The exhibit certainly went down well with the judges at Chelsea as it won them a silver medal.

Alan Waller gave an interesting paper on his new job, which was producing tactile diagrams for the visually impaired. Until I listened to Alan's presentation, I would never have known that there were people working on simplified graphic diagrams to enable blind and visually impaired people to use maps and be able to appreciate art. He explained how to simplify graphics in a certain way that would allow the blind and visually impaired to understand nearly as much as someone with good vision. Alan also raised awareness that the blind and visually impaired have an equal need for maps and that



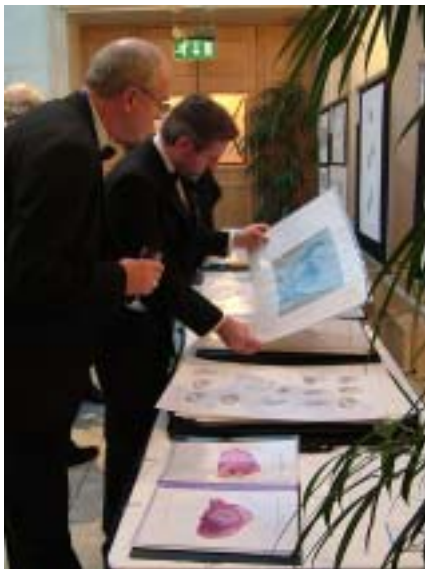
Gossip after the museum guided tour

producing a tactile one using raised line and braille would assist that person to understand the environment around them..

Following Alan's presentation was a very dynamic paper given by Professor Susan Standing who undertook the enormous task of producing the new edition of Gray's Anatomy. It was certainly a huge undertaking trying to take the new edition forward by using a number of new colour illustrations, some produced by members in the audience, but still keeping some of the beautiful black and white illustrations we've come to know through the years.



Professor Susan Standing



Looking at the excellent students' work

During the day we had the chance to view an exhibition of our students' work that was outstanding as usual. There was a prize for the best exhibition piece that was awarded to Jane Simants.

After the papers there was the opportunity to view some rare and in many cases very old and fragile books in the Royal College of Surgeons Library. In this wonderful room a



Royal College of Surgeons Library



selection of books containing surgical, anatomical and biological illustrations had been especially displayed for our viewing. Having donned a pair of protective white gloves you could carefully examine a 400 year old anatomical book. What a privilege.

The evening ended with a very special black tie awards dinner. Everyone gathered in their best dresses and suits for the dinner reception in the conservatory.

We all took our places in the very grand Webb Johnson Hall for dinner. Our retiring President Air Commodore Ronnie Brown was the first after



The Annual Dinner

dinner speaker. Richard Neave had been sneakily working on a surprise gift for Ronnie by sculpting a bust of Mrs Brown, which he presented to a clearly delighted Ronnie during his speech. Ronnie also handed over the Presidential reins to Sir Barry Jackson who we gave a warm welcome to during his first after dinner speech.



Our new President, Sir Barry Jackson



Ronnie and Margaret Brown with the bronze gift from the MAA

Anthony Rollason gave his final speech as chairman and handed over the position to Jenny Halstead whom I'm sure will make an excellent chairman. Even though it was an exciting evening with a new President and Chairman, I really feel that the evening belonged to the students and tutors. Anthony's last duties as Chairman was to award Emily Evans, Auriole Prince, Chris Rynn, Jane Simants, Kelly Wilkinson and Amanda Williams gaining their MAA diploma and membership to a rapturous applause.



Anthony Rollason gives his final speech



It is a huge achievement for so many students to reach their final exams all at the same time and in the same year. Not only for the student working so hard to produce the work, but also to those who organise and give their time during seminars and assessments, and then give up their own time for panicking students late at night over the phone, the evening belongs to them too.

Six new members!

The evening continued with old friends and new...



Peter van der Maaden



Never again, no chance!

Saturday dawned and the hardy had the opportunity to look further into the Hunterian Museum after breakfast. An unexpected bonus was the Qvist Gallery showing some of Mark Gilbert 'Living Faces' work who spoke to conference in 2000 in Bristol. At this time little did we know the gallery was

going to offer the MAA such a marvelous showpiece opportunity.

Then it was on to Starbucks for a mass coffee burst. A few then visited the last event of the day, the John Soames Gallery just 300 metres North of the RCS. This is an amazing place, so unassuming you would walk past without realising it was there, er, as some of us did!

In a domestic Town House, extended by bizarre corridors, halls, gazebos and random rooms – all with individual exotic roofs and turrets, an extraordinary collection of artifacts, furniture and artworks lay to be discovered. Those who sneaked off early will never know what you missed!

I'd like to thank Phil Ball and team on behalf of everyone who attended the conference for organising a very memorable day and evening. I felt that this conference showed us all what a wonderful association of people we are.

Ruth Eaves

Photo credits to Ray Evans, Pascale Pollier-Green and Alan Waller

The Students' Exhibition at the Royal College of Surgeons

The conservatory in the Nuffield building was an unexpected oasis of light, providing an attractive setting for a selection of student work. The exhibition consisted of a good mix of colour, black and white, half-tone, 3 dimensional and computer generated artwork.

The first year contributions comprised mainly of well-observed, competently drawn femurs and a colourful eye-catching piece of artwork from Matthew Briggs. His conceptual illustration of a motor neurone was exciting, original and executed with care. A successful piece of work should, I feel, catch the eye from a distance and also stand up to closer inspection - both these qualities achieved by Matthew. A personal favourite was the half-tone sequence of illustrations depicting kidney surgery by Amanda Williams, expertly rendered in watercolour and with some use of digital imaging.

There have been few occasions when students' work is shown together, so this exhibition was able to provide not just a useful exercise in teaching, but also an overall indication of what direction artwork is taking, especially with increased confidence in computer work. It was a display enjoyed by all and I felt honoured to be presented with a prize for my half-tone surgery illustrations. My grateful thanks go to my tutors over the last two and a half years.

Jane Simants



One room in John Soames Gallery



Jane with her prize for best exhibition piece

Council

Council has met at Conference and on 31st May 2005.

There were no new enquiries about membership although a 6th Form college had asked via the website for information.

The conference final account remains in credit. This is a big success for Philip Ball and a relief as the costs charged by the Royal College of Surgeons are fairly high and potentially there could have been a significant loss. The Conference Chairman and the Treasurer had felt that this rather special conference should be held in an appropriate venue, despite the financial risk.

Thanks are due to Mandy Miller who is busy finalising an up to date membership booklet.

Mandy is also investigating using Indexed Visuals to allow members to post examples of their own work on the website. There would be a one off setup fee paid from central funds and members would then only have to pay a nominal personal fee.

Angela Christie reported the possibility of having a MAA exhibition in the Hunterian Gallery.

She also mentioned the possibility of reviving the filmwork carried out at the 50th Conference. This material has never been used and although some of it is inappropriate now much could still be used. Plans afoot...!

Talking Soap

Hello Annie, how's things?

Ah, Jim. Busy, busy. How's the Smith Clan?

What? There's only me, well and the cat.

Yes and how is that huge ball of ginger fur, umm and the cat?!!

Ho, ho ho. I'm shaking with mirth. The beard is well trimmed and has been ever since that paleontologist at the conference before last kept insisting I must be a geologist. Anyway why are you in such a good mood?

Oh you know, I still enjoy a trip off abroad. Off at the weekend.

Oh, week in Majorca?

No, no. Its not holiday. I'll be working in Australia.

Oh tough, real tough. Do you want me to carry anything?!

No, Dave can carry the stuff.

Your husband's going as well? I thought he was an interior decorator. How does that, Australia and medical art forensics all add up, on this 'working trip'

Oooo, is someone just a tinsy wincy bit jealous?

Of course I'm jealous. The last work trip I had was a 90 minute train journey to London on a seriously overcrowded train with no buffet that took six hours.

Yes I remember you moaning about that. The delay was caused by points failure outside Belfast or Fort William wasn't it?

Yeah something plausible like that. Look I'm really calling about that 3D anatomy proposal we were going to put to the museum.

Ssspphewwww...

I'm sorry but did you really just suck air in like a garage mechanic or a plumber?

No just thinking.

Oh right, I was just wondering when we could get together to plan it?

Yup, that was what I was thinking.

Oh?

Umm, bit busy, away in Australia...

Two weeks time?

Er no, in the States at a conference most of that week.

Look we, I need to get together. I'm a bit green on 3D modelling techniques, you were going to be my guru, remember?

Don't panic, I'll get my secretary to schedule something.

Secretary? I didn't know you had a secretary. What about next month?

Well there might be time after Egypt.

Egypt? Good grief, when, November?

No, that's Helsinki. I'll email from Oz...

MAA News

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Caroline Wilkinson, (Hon. Sec.)
Alan Waller (Hon. Treasurer)
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