

Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 7th July, 2005, Newcastle

Present: T.Ryder (Chairman), J.Moss (President), A.Curry (Treasurer) and 22 members of the Association

Apologies for Absence: Pat Tarpey (Secretary)

Minutes of the AGM held in Amsterdam on 8th July 2004 were approved as a true record (Prop: J.Moss, Sec: R.Moss)

Matters Arising:

Resignation of Secretary: The Chairman reported that Pat Tarpey had agreed to become Secretary following the resignation of Jill Sparke. Pat had already started doing work on behalf of the Association and had attended Padnell Grange to start mapping SKF to NOS.

Treasurer's Report

Alan Curry presented the attached statement of accounts 2005 (Appendix 1) showing that the current balance of the Association as at 27/06/2005 was £2070-27. It was agreed that the accounts be accepted (Prop: R.Moss, Sec: B.Wagner). It was further agreed that alternative sources of funding should be investigated and to this end Dr Roland Fleck volunteered to act as a contact point to the trade for sponsorship.

President's Report:

Jill Moss presented the attached report (Appendix 2) on meetings she had attended on behalf of the Association. The theme of the report was the raised profile electron microscopists now enjoyed as a result of the activities of the Association and the participation of its officers on national committees.

Chairman's Report:

Tim Ryder reported on the activities undertaken by the Workforce Review Team (Appendix 3).

Report on the IBMS Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Practitioner qualifications:

Bart Wagner presented the attached report (Appendix 4) on progress with the new IBMS EM qualifications.

EQA:

Peter Wells-Jordan and Bart Wagner reported on progress developing a technical EQA for electron microscopy (Appendix 5)

Report from the Information & Communications Officer

Liz Curtis presented the attached report on the Association's web site (Appendix 6)

ACEM Scientific Meeting 2006

Bart Wagner announced that the next meeting with Path Soc would be in Manchester in the first week in July, 2006. The precise date would be announced when it had been confirmed. As attendance at the Newcastle meeting (32) was better than the previous meeting (19), Bart will attempt to negotiate free registration for all invited speakers. On this occasion, a combination of own department, ACEM and Path Soc paid. Due to the high expense of larger EM units sending multiple delegates – on an ad hoc basis, individual units could attempt to negotiate a discount for the most junior attendee (either directly with Path Soc or via the Meetings Secretary). The content of the meeting to be discussed at next committee meeting – suggestions for topics and/or speakers welcome from non-committee members.

Any Other Business:

Affiliation with the Royal Microscopical Society: Dr Curtis reported that she had been in contact with the RMS with a view to the Association becoming affiliated. It was agreed that a final decision should be left to the Committee when further details/cost implications were known.

Date of the Next Meeting:

July 2006 immediately following the annual scientific meeting in Manchester (date to be announced).

There being no further business the Chairman thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 17:40h

TAR
7th July 2005

Appendix 1: ACEM Statement of Accounts 2005

Prepared by Alan Curry, ACEM Treasurer, on 3rd July 2005

Current balance from latest RBS statement 27th June 2005 - £2070-27

Expenses paid out:

NetBanx (sponsored by JEOL who kindly gave ACEM £146-88 in 2004 to initiate this electronic banking system)*	-	£25-38
Path Soc speaker expenses 2004	-	£200-00
Path Soc speaker expenses 2005 (so far)	-	£250-00
ACEM Committee travelling expenses (12 th Nov 2004)	-	£28-70
ACEM Committee travelling expenses (24 th Jun 2005) not yet paid out	-	(£29-85 -

Total expenses paid out since last statement of accounts - £504-08

*NetBanx is an electronic banking system that is now functional and allows payment to ACEM by credit/debit card.

Appendix 2: The President's Report

The President thanked both committee and non-committee members of ACEM.

With regard to last year we have come a long way, but thinking back to our start in life we have really come a very long way. It seems that things always take such a long time to implement but in fact with so many Health Care changes going on, then we have done really well. If you remember back it was only in 1998 that Bart organised the Diagnostic EM Conference in Sheffield that was to be our embryo. Following that, a year later in 1999 we held a meeting at the Charing Cross Hospital where the basis for ACEM was given birth. From then on we have had five annual meetings as a satellite group with the Path Soc in Nottingham, Liverpool, Dublin, Bristol, and Amsterdam in 2004.

Most of the items that I reported last year have been updated in your Spring Newsletter of March this year. You will therefore know that the NOS are signed off and, according to Dr Hill, the Healthcare Scientists Career Framework is at the printers right now, with a launch anticipated soon.

It has taken some time to create but there is at last a new modality in ACS called Cellular Science, enabling clinical scientists in electron microscopy to be correctly registered with the Health Professions Council. Workforce planning is underway and with the involvement of ACEM will ensure a national strategy for the future of electron microscopists.

The IBMS higher qualifications in EM will be detailed later by Bart.

With regard to the Pathology Alliance that I mentioned last year, it was disbanded very shortly after I spoke to you. However it has been reformed with the same members, IBMS, ACS and the Royal College of Pathologists. The first meeting, which has taken 18 months to organise, has taken place.

With regard to HPC and their proposed CPD requirements, there has been a liaison group and implementation group set up. It is likely that the CPD will not be a point system but based on reflective thinking.

I will continue to attend as many meetings as I can get invited to, since it seems that by raising awareness of our existence we have achieved a much higher profile and we need to keep it. ACEM has a vital role to play in our future as electron microscopists and we must all continue to try and attract new members.

Appendix 3: Chairman's Report

The Chairman had represented the Association at several meetings to discuss workforce planning in healthcare science. Specifically with regard to scientists working in electron microscopy, two major problems have been identified.

- 1) There is a lack of hard data about the current EM workforce. The RCPath have received funding from the DOH to set up a database of healthcare scientists but the information that will be put into the database was expected to come from the professional bodies. In 2004 data on clinical scientists had been obtained by sending out a questionnaire to members. Due to time constraints it had not proved possible to conduct a similar survey of the BMS staff in EM. It is proposed that future surveys could be carried out on-line. The membership was urged to participate in the information gathering, as accurate information was essential to underpin planning for the future.
- 2) The DOH had commented on the lack of a national strategy for EM. It was proposed that the Association should participate in the establishment of such a strategy. The Committee were currently drawing up a list of stake-holders that could be invited to participate.

Appendix 4:

Advanced practice in EM

The IBMS haven't as yet formally asked The Royal College (for whatever reason) if they are interested in having advanced practitioners in histological EM - I will keep on trying to persuade the IBMS executive to do so.

However, according to the IBMS president (Ed Welch) they have started to have meetings with The Royal College of Pathologists, the Department of Health's chief scientist, the Association of Clinical Scientists, in order to agree on comparability of qualifications.

Qualifications in EM

The IBMS have announced, on page 383 of the April 2005 edition of the Gazette, that they have made available a Certificate of Biomedical Practice in EM for those with at least 2 years EM experience (for virologist and histologists), and a Diploma of Expert Practice in Ultrastructural Pathology for those with at least 5 years EM experience. So far, only I have applied to do the diploma – the dead line for application is at the end of August with submission of the portfolio at the end of January 2006. Completion of the diploma won't guarantee promotion but it's good to finally have the opportunity to have some evidence of the expertise acquired over many years of work.

Appendix 5: EQA report

Slightly over half the diagnostic histological EM units in the UK and Ireland have responded positively to the invitation to participate in an EM technical EQA scheme, by filling in the questionnaire sent out a couple of months ago. The Leicester electron microscopists (Peter Wells-Jordan, Tony Sims, & Tracey de Haro) and myself will meet/discuss in September sometime to take the process forward. The practicalities of having a half day winter meeting at the Charing Cross Hospital (in part to give feedback) will be explored. The possibility of inviting the 'trade' to attend (with sponsorship) is much nearer as Dr Roland Fleck volunteered to act as the contact point.

Diagnostic histological electron microscopy EQA (external quality assurance)
As one of the requirements for an advanced practitioner in EM, an EQA scheme should be participated in where one exists.

I would like to have a go at running a histological EM EQA scheme. I propose two runs a year – one technical one interpretative. I am looking into ways of freeing up some of my time to make it possible.

Appendix 5: Webmaster's Report 2004

1. Site statistics

In the 11 months to June 2004 there were 8137 discrete visits and 20,960 pages served, so on average each visitor looked at 2.5 pages.

Renals remain most popular search term.

In view of this, perhaps there could be grounds for expanding this area.

Our page on nemaline myopathy comes in at no. 8 on a Google search.
Last years most novel search term was BW, this year it is AC!

2. Membership

A significant part of the site is the membership database. With the introduction of the online payment facility, most of ACEMs membership administration will be done via this database.

There are currently 115 contacts on the database; after accounting for a number of people who have retired.

Of the 115, 58 people have access to the members' area of the site, having paid some form of membership/joining fee in the past. Currently 19 of these are paid up members. (Although the main payment month is July - so numbers may increase shortly). We will be sending reminders to the lapsed members, giving the option to pay either online or by other means. This 'roll-out' of the online payment facility must be gradual to avoid costs, but will be available to all members in time.

3. For those who have never visited... items in the members' area include:

The discussion forum - everyone is still reluctant to use it. It does have the facility for uploading images.

Programmes of previous ACEM meetings, together with some abstracts. Most abstracts include references.

Thanks to all of today's speakers for their abstracts, these are now up on the website. The list of current members and their speciality. (Note: the list of members given in the password protected area of the site represents only those who are up to date with their payments.)

The facility to update your contact details.

4. The image database

All the programming and infrastructure for the image database has been in place for some time, when the editing / review procedure gets underway, more images can be uploaded.

5. news items

I would be grateful for any relevant news item that could be publicised on the sites' home pages. This will keep the site looking active!