

## Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists

### Minutes of the AGM , 4 June 02, Dublin

The meeting was chaired by Alan Curry at the request of Brian Eyden who was unable to be present.

Apologies for absence had been received from Brian Eyden and Jill Moss.

Alan Curry opened the meeting by thanking Bart Wagner for organising such a good scientific meeting. It was very nice that it had been so well attended, despite involving more travel for many people.

It appeared that no minutes had been taken of the previous AGM after the Liverpool meeting.

Alan Curry raised the following points;

Prof. Herrington had contacted the ACEM to offer to publish a series of articles on the uses of electron microscopy in pathology in Current Diagnostic Pathology. As time was short, the job of writing these articles was given to various committee members. The articles are now in press and should appear soon.

Hopefully, similar opportunities will occur in the future and other members of the ACEM will contribute.

We are grateful to Jill Moss who has been to many meetings of the Association of Clinical Scientists and of the Health Professions Council as our representative and to Tim Ryder who has been representing us at the National Occupations Standards Committee.

It is good that the ACEM is now regarded at least to some extent as a Professional Body.

We are all very grateful that Bart Wagner organised the first meeting in Sheffield that led directly to the foundation of the ACEM just in time for the current re-organisation of health care professions.

Brian Eyden has indicated that he would like to step down from the position of Chairman, but would be prepared to carry on until a replacement is found.

He could then act in an editorial capacity for some parts of the ACEM web site.

Bart Wagner has organised the 4 scientific meetings to date and would like someone else to take over.

He would be happy to assist Val James in drawing up NOS Training Programs.

Alan Curry asked for volunteers or nominations for Chairman and Meetings secretary. None were forthcoming at the time and he suggested the matter be deferred in the hope that volunteers might be found in a less formal setting.

#### Treasurer's Report

Alan Curry in his capacity as Treasurer said the bank balance was now almost £1000, whereas a year ago it had been £62. However, this increase was due to a one off bonus of the excess from the trade show at Bart Wagner's original Sheffield meeting.

At the AGM at Liverpool last year members had agreed on an annual membership fee of £10, preferably to be paid by Standing Order. Three members had paid so far to test the system and as long as there is no problem with these, Standing Order forms will be sent to all potential members. The form will also be downloadable from our website.

However, recent experience indicated that this method of payment was not suitable for members living outside the UK. Bankers' Drafts might be a possibility but On Line Banking seems more promising. ( To be discussed by Jim Wetton later in the meeting)

There are 38 current members.

Alan Curry plans to put some of the ACEM funds in an interest paying account.

#### Web site report from Jim Wetton

The ACEM web site is now on Jim Wetton's "industrial strength" web space instead of tucked into free web space

The domain names are now all in one place.

As mentioned at the committee meeting in Feb 2002 , Jim Wetton needs to know in what directions the members want the web site to develop.

There are currently 3 forums. One for committee members, one for all members and one for putting up cases for comment. Guidelines for uploading an image are given and the Web master (Liz Curtis) can upload images for members if they do not have the necessary software themselves.

Comments on the same subject are linked into threads.

There is a summary of recent threads.

When a member logs on, the forums will flag up any threads that will be new to that member.

We are building a background database. This will contain names of members and relevant commercial bodies, passwords, contact information, automatic tracking of membership payments.

The web site needs more input from the members...possibly an "Expertise Register" and also a database of images.

When a new member joins, the procedure for paying the subs and getting a password is set up so that it must involve more than one person.

Payment of subs by online banking has advantages, especially for non UK members. Having this facility gives a good impression, payment can be in any currency and by any major debit or credit card. No card details are ever passed to ACEM. The treasurer would receive regular banking information. It is reasonably cost effective. There would be a setting up cost of approx. £140 and then a monthly charge of either £10 or 8% of the turnover, whichever is greater. By spreading the payment of membership fees over the year we could probably keep the monthly charge to £10. Jeol UK had been approached by Liz Curtis and were possibly willing to sponsor ACEM by paying the initial cost and the first 2 years' running cost. Liz Curtis to contact Pete Lander again and if Jeol is still willing to do this we should do it quickly.

The standing order form will be downloadable from the web site, for members who wish to pay by this method.

Alan Curry , on behalf of all members, thanked Jim Wetton for all his work on the website.

The ACEM website address is [www.acem.org.uk](http://www.acem.org.uk)  
and also [www.electron-microscopy.org.uk](http://www.electron-microscopy.org.uk)

Tim Ryder gave an account of the NOSC where he is representing ACEM.

The government was worried that there might be people working in healthcare who were not fit to practice, so they have set about developing standards for the whole of healthcare science. ACEM is one of 60 professional bodies working to develop these standards, which will

provide the framework for future training as well as being the standards by which fitness to practice will be assessed and also revalidation of continued fitness to practice

There had been a pilot scheme in which ACEM had not been involved and now there is the full blown £multimillion scheme, sponsored by the Department of Health and the Department of Arts and Education.

This is to set standards, both Common and Generic standards, applicable to several groups, and Specific standards that are applicable to individual groups.

The first step in this had been the awarding of a large contract to Fletcher Consulting for Functional Analysis. Tim Ryder and Ian Shore had spent a day with Shirley Fletcher describing what is done in clinical electron microscopy. She then submitted her functional analysis of this. The first draft of this is on the web site; please look at it to identify errors,

anomalies and omissions. The more people who have input, the more likely we are to get it right and it is important that we do. Any comments can be put on the web site and a revised draft will be posted there.

There is still a long way to go. There should have been a second meeting a few days before the AGM, but when they got to the Department of Health it had been called off.

The whole process was scheduled to take 5 years, two years had already elapsed and there was still the Colleges to consult and the Registration and Revalidation to sort out.

James Ito gave an Account of meetings of

The aim is to put all Healthcare scientists on a single pay spine.

There will be a ballot in autumn 2002. There will be Job Evaluations and then Harmonisation of terms and conditions.

Various aspects of jobs would be assessed, including responsibility for other staff, fiscal management, whether you work unsupervised etc. Each component of the job would be given points and the total number of points determines the level on the pay spine. The amount of weighting to be given to the various aspects of a job remained to be established, but there were likely to be some unhappy people. Appeals would undoubtedly follow.

There are too many different sorts of healthcare professionals. At the moment they are analysing a representative sample of several benchmark jobs. One of the problems for us is that there are at present no qualifications that relate directly to electron microscopy and there are electron microscopists at a big variety of grades.

The MSF web site has some details.

Training Program initiative.

Val James said she had not felt able to start on this until the NOS were more nearly finalised. Other members agreed. Val James will liase with Tim Ryder and Bart Wagner.

Val James asked if members knew of anyone awaiting training; there were possibly a few potential trainees. Training requirements could be posted on the web site.

There was some discussion about the different sorts of training required, (eg, technical, screening, interpretation, non- routine) and methods that could be used, ( eg workshops, visits to labs, SOPs, expertise register, Tim Ryder's resin survey).

It was suggested that it is also important to educate consultants and others who may request EM investigations, to let them know what services are available and in what way these may be of assistance to them.

Tracy de Haro said that in her experience it was easier to get funding and study leave for training if it was more formalised.

Hazel Appleton mentioned that in the PHLS labs there had been an initiative, not yet ratified, insisting on conformity to a single set of SOPs in Virology throughout the service.

Any Other Business

Alan Curry suggested that as Val James is now retired she should be made our first Honorary member. Agreed.

There had been very noisy drilling, apparently immediately above us, for some time and as it was becoming almost continuous the meeting was brought to an end.

The next AGM will probably be at the Path Soc meeting next year in Bristol, if we keep to the arrangement of running a companion meeting.