
THE HISTORY OF

The Society of Anaesthetists of the South Western Region



FIFTH EDITION
2022
Celebrating 75 Years

Preface

A first history of the Society, written by Drs Arthur Gorham and Peter Baskett, was published in 1971. An update was produced in 1987 by Drs Alan Clement and Leslie Shutt, who in conjunction with Dr John Powell produced the Third Edition in 1997 to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the Society. The Fourth Edition was produced by Dr Tom Simpson, with a large amount of help from Drs John Carter and Patricia McAteer. This 75th anniversary Fifth Edition has been written by Drs Ed Morris and Mike Kinsella.

The Society of Anaesthetists of the South Western Region was formed in November 1947. The idea of forming such a society originated from a suggestion by the Ministry of Health that regional societies might help to spread knowledge and promote friendship among members. The objects of the Society were to promote the development of knowledge and the art of anaesthesia in the South Western region by means of lectures, discussion, practical demonstrations and films, and in doing so to encourage co-operation and friendships between the anaesthetists of the region.

The arrangements for the inaugural meeting were made by Dr E.G. Bradbeer, Dr G. Leslie Feneley and Dr R. Woolmer. The meeting was held in the Grand Hotel, Bristol and was attended by 41 members out of a total membership of 48 (85%!!). The meeting's organisers were duly elected to the cabinet of the Society: Dr Bradbeer as President, Dr Feneley as Honorary Secretary and Dr Woolmer as Treasurer.

The original plan was to hold meetings three times a year, but this was reduced to two in 1950. The programme would have both scientific and social aspects for members, together with an alternative programme that would appeal to partners. This social aspect encouraging partners to attend has proved to be one of the major reasons for the popularity and success of the Society's meetings over the years. The meeting seems to have quite rightly started with a dinner, and after this the first address to the Society was given by Professor Sir Robert R. Macintosh entitled 'Anaesthesia for research purposes'.

From the inception of the Society it was decided to hold the Autumn Meetings in Bristol since the facilities were deemed better than in other parts of the region at that time of year. The Spring Meetings were to be held in centres throughout the region on a rotating basis.

The second meeting was duly held in Cheltenham in April 1948. A Committee was formed to organise the detailed running of the Society and to make recommendations to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). It was agreed that the members of this Committee should consist of the President, the Vice

President (who should be the immediate past President), the President Elect, the Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer and four ordinary members elected to represent the views of the region. It was decided that the Presidential tenure should be for one year only, and the other officers should serve for three years.

In 1950 Dr Arthur P. Gorham together with the Committee drew up the Rules of the Constitution, which with some minor adaptations still form the constitution of the Society today. At this time it was decided that the Society should be able to elect up to five Honorary Members and Drs R.E. Apperly, S.V. Stock and Mr A. King were awarded this honour. Dr B. Johnson, Professor Sir Robert Macintosh in 1952, and Dr A. Daly in 1955 were also appointed as the Society's first Honorary Members.

By 1952 the membership of the Society stood at a creditable 121. A mailing list was formed in order to open meetings for the Society to anaesthetists and other interested doctors outside the South Western Region, particularly those who had emigrated from the region, but who wished to keep in touch. Throughout the years many of these have attended from all parts of the UK and abroad.

At the AGM held on 25th November 1955, Professor Sir Robert Macintosh was installed as President, and he invited the Society to hold a meeting in Oxford during 1956. This was readily accepted, and a very successful meeting was duly held on 22nd and 23rd June. It was noteworthy as the first meeting of the Society to be held outside the South Western Region, and also as it was honoured by the presence of Viscount Nuffield among the 35 guests.

At the Autumn Meeting of 1956, the constitution was amended to allow Associate Membership. This enabled all anaesthetists in the region who were not holding permanent appointments, particularly trainees, to join. They would not pay annual subscriptions nor have voting rights and would be admitted to meetings at reduced rates. This important step opened the Society's meetings to trainees, and has proved very popular and mutually beneficial. Membership was later opened to all people in professions allied to anaesthesia.

Professor Sir Robert Macintosh and other senior members of the Society had been considering the creation of a presidential badge. Mr K. Banner, who had designed windows at Sir Robert's college Pembroke College Oxford, was commissioned to design and make this. He took as the basis of his design a circlet of poppies, the blooms growing outwards. Between these he put the flat goblets of Hygeia, the goddess of health, generally representing medicine. Dark blue was chosen for the background as the colour of night when sleep prevails. Burning in the centre of the encircling poppies is a tongue of flame on a red background to symbolise the flame of life that burns on throughout unconsciousness. Red is the colour symbolic of life and the spirit. According to legend, drops of the venom of poppies were caught in the goblets of Hygeia, whence they were distilled into the wisdom and science of healing.

At the Spring Meeting held in May 1957 at the City General Hospital, Gloucester, the badge was presented by Dr E.G. Bradbeer to Dr A. Tom, President for that year, as a gift from the first ten Presidents. The gift was received with acclamation and has since been worn by all succeeding Presidents.

A second meeting outside the region was held in Weymouth in May 1959 at the invitation of local anaesthetists, all of whom were members of the Society.

In 1963-64 the Society elected as President for that year Dr Violet Fry, a founder member and the first lady to hold this office.

In 1964 a new membership category of Honorary Membership for life was created, which could be conferred upon members retiring from practice on recommendation by the Committee.

In 1966 Dr John Clutton-Brock, a member of the Society and Lecturer in Anaesthesia at Bristol University became the first professor at the University, and the Society honoured him President for that year.

At the AGM, held at Frenchay on 24th November 1967, it was resolved to award an annual prize of 25 Guineas to any trainee anaesthetist working in

the South Western Region for a 2000-word essay. Professor John Clutton-Brock and Dr D. Pryor of Torquay were elected as judges for the first two years. At the same meeting it was decided that the Society should produce a newsletter for circulation amongst members and major centres. Dr J.F. Pelmore was elected the first editor, with Dr Peter J.F. Baskett, then Honorary Secretary of the Society, Dr G.W. Burton and Dr K.L. Owen as assistant editors. In October 1968 the first issue of Anaesthesia Points West (APW) was produced. The object of the journal was to keep members informed as to the activities throughout the region, to report on the Society's meetings, and to provide a forum for articles of scientific and general interest. Anaesthesia Points West, now bearing a coloured reproduction of the presidential badge on the front cover, is produced every six months. This publication has been the envy of many other regional societies and has been favourably commented upon at meetings of the Association of Anaesthetists of Great Britain and Ireland (AAGBI).

In 1968 it was decided at the instigation of Dr Leslie Feneley, to rename the category of 'Honorary Membership for Life'; the term 'Senior Membership' was adopted. At the same meeting it was decided that the number of Honorary Members, whilst remaining small, should not be limited to five. Drs E.G. Bradbeer, Arthur P. Gorham and G. Leslie Feneley, some of the key members who had been behind the setting up of the Society, were accorded this honour between 1968-69.

The year 1969 saw the introduction of additional informal scientific monthly meetings which supported those of the Society and formed the basis of the popular complementary organisation that came to be known as the Bristol Anaesthetic Club. The membership of the Society had increased to 201 by this time which prevented demonstrations in operating theatres – one can only imagine that a full risk assessment had never been carried out in the first instance!

Also in 1969 a visit was made to inspect a remarkable new aircraft, Concorde 001, being assembled at Filton aerodrome, in addition to the meeting being hosted at the nearby Southmead Hospital.

In 1970 the first recorded history of the Society was written by Dr Arthur P. Gorham (who sadly died later in the year) and Dr Peter Baskett.

As a symbol of its firm establishment and growing eminence, the Society adopted a distinctive tie for its gentleman members. The initial design of a Macintosh laryngoscope blade imposed over a geographical outline of the South Western Region on a green background was superseded by the current design of a navy tie with an impression of the Presidential medallion.

In the spring of 1971 a meeting was held in Oxford, again under the Presidency of Dr R. Bryce Smith. This notable meeting was hosted by the Nuffield Department of Anaesthesia whose first assistant was Dr Cedric Prys-Roberts, who was destined three years later to become the second Professor of Anaesthesia in the University of Bristol.

For the Spring Meeting of 1973 the Society again moved outside its own region to the Naval bases at RNH Hasler and HMS Dolphin, Gosport. Demonstrations of diving techniques, with the accompanying physiological changes, led to lively discussions of the medical implications.

The AAGBI held its AGM in Bristol in the autumn of 1973, and the Society was pleased to host part of the proceedings.

Dr Pelmore succeeded to the Presidency in autumn 1974 and took the opportunity to regale the assembled members with some 'jolly singing' at his inaugural dinner – a unique event!!

In May 1975 the Society broke new ground by holding its first foreign meeting at St Jans Hospital, Bruges in Belgium. The meeting was generously hosted by our Belgian colleagues in a beautiful historic city. The meeting coincided with the colourful procession of the Holy Blood. The success of this venture resolved the members of the Society to hold further joint foreign meetings in similarly interesting locations.

The Society elected its first non-medical anaesthetist as President in 1976 – Dr Barbara Weaver, the eminent veterinary anaesthetist attached to the University of Bristol at Langford. She brought insights into aspects of anaesthesia that made the regular human anaesthetist gasp in admiration at the ingenuity with which anatomical, physiological and procedural problems are overcome. A notable joint meeting with the Society of Anaesthetists of Wales was held in Gloucester under her chairmanship in spring 1977.

In 1977 the doyen of London anaesthesia, Professor Sir Ivan Magill, was elected to Honorary Membership of the Society, and this honour was later conferred on Professor T.C. Gray of Liverpool.

The year 1978 saw the second highly successful foreign visit, on this occasion to the Wilhelmina Gasthuis, Amsterdam at the invitation of Professor Doreen Vermeulen-Cranch. Visits were paid to a variety of other establishments, notably the Rijksmuseum and Leidseplein. Sixty-eight members attended this meeting, and Professor Vermeulen-Cranch was presented with a portrait of Sir Humphry Davy and a copy of his book.

Naval influences came to bear again on our sea-skirted Society with the election of Surgeon Captain N.G.B. Hersey as President for 1978-79, perhaps influencing the choice of Barnstaple as the location of an enjoyable Spring Meeting. This was memorable also for a visit to the famous landscaped gardens being created by our retired colleague Dr Smart.

Bath, having been approved to be included in the rotation of venues for the AGM, held its first meeting in 1979. Dr D. Pryer, President for the year, attracted the Society to the resort of Torquay for the subsequent Spring Meeting, held at the prestigious Imperial Hotel.

At the turn of the decade Dr Geoffrey W. Burton of Bristol was installed as President. His term of office was notable for a review of the Society's financial status that resulted in the decision to stay as an independent organisation not restricted by the rules of charitable status.

The spring of 1981 was remarkable in that two extra regional meetings were attended by members of the Society. The official meeting was held in Southampton, but an additional enterprise was undertaken by a group of members attending the Irish Faculty Meeting in Cork - an interesting, lively and convivial event!

Sobriety was restored in 1981-82 during the Presidency of Dr Aileen Adams who, following her inaugural meeting in Bristol, invited the Society to the distant fields of Cambridge for a most enlightening and elegant meeting held in Jesus College, which culminated in a formal dinner accompanied by vocal entertainment.

During 1983 the Society was sad to learn that a founding member and past President, Dr H. Cheetham-Hill had died.

Dr B.J. Muir led a party of 66 to Berlin in May 1983 for our third foreign meeting held jointly with the Deutschen Gesellschaft fur Anesthesiologie und Intensivmedizin. As well as a lively and interesting scientific programme in the impressive International Congress Centre, a wide selection included a foray into East Berlin and to Potsdam where we almost succeeded in leaving one member as an involuntary immigrant! The Society was happy to welcome anaesthetists of the RAMC based in Germany to join our scientific meeting accompanied by their President, Professor J. Payne.

The AGM in Bath in 1983 established an Academic Foundation for the purposes of supporting the development and promotion of anaesthesia by members with assistance in funding suitable projects, especially where other support was unobtainable or limited.

The Spring 1984 edition of APW marked a change from the older block printing process to the more modern and efficient photo-type setting and litho printing. In addition, subject and name indexes were procured for the purpose of binding the journal into three volumes. A cumulative index from 1968-84 was also produced and circulated to members. At the suggestion of the Committee, two sets of

volumes of APW were attractively bound in blue Morocco leather, and embellished with the Society's seal. The first set forms part of the Society's records and the second was subsequently donated to the new library of the AAGBI.

The succession of distinguished Presidents was continued in 1984 by the election of Dr T.B. Boulton, who was concurrently President of the AAGBI and the Anaesthetic Section of the Royal Society of Medicine (RSM). During his Presidency the AAGBI negotiated and opened new premises in Bedford Square, London for the refurbishment of which the Society was pleased to donate £1000.

Regrettably during 1984 Dr 'Jolly John' Pelmore died. The Society commemorated him by the planting of a tree at Frenchay Hospital.

In the same year the Society decided to institute an essay prize for Operating Department Assistants (ODA) and Anaesthetic Nurses in order to encourage their intellectual interest in our speciality.

By 1984 membership had grown to 380, which led the Society to move away from primarily hospital-based meetings, conceived by our founders, towards larger establishments and venues. This was exemplified by the Bristol-based meetings of 1984 and 1985 that were held at the Redwood Lodge Country Club and the Watershed – a converted dockside warehouse in the centre of Bristol.

Dr D.H. Short presided over a highly successful joint meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark in May 1986. The trend towards occupying converted warehouses was maintained even here! Accommodation was provided in the Admiral Hotel, a tastefully-converted 1787 granary on the waterfront very close to the royal palace. Apart from the wonderful hospitality, the meeting was notable for a number of visits, including spectacular new hospitals and Hamlet's Elsinore Castle. Professor M.K. Sykes, also a member of the Society, was invited to give the prestigious Husfeldt Lecture. Afterwards the delegates proceeded to dine with our Danish hosts at the historic Naval Officers Club.

In 1986, the Society suffered the loss of four very distinguished members, Professor John Clutton-Brock and Dr A. Tom (both former Presidents), Dr Christopher Langton-Hewer and Professor Sir Ivan Magill. Furthermore, early in 1987 the Society learnt of the deaths of Dr J.H. Challenger, Dr T.R. Steen and Dr J.A. Smith (all past Presidents).

The 1987 Autumn Meeting in Bath was the 40th anniversary of our Society. The organisational skills of Dr R. Seagger and his colleagues were put to the test when the hurricane-like weather of that autumn damaged the ceiling of the Assembly Rooms and necessitated a last-minute change of meeting venue to the Guildhall. Ninety-two members attended the successful programme, including 14 past-Presidents who posed with Dr J.I.A.T. Clement, President for the year, in a group photograph. Dr T.N.P. Wilton (President 1972-73) spoke on his personal reminiscence of the Society's early years, beginning with a tape-recorded message of good wishes from Dr E.G. Bradbeer, the Society's first President. The meeting was memorable also for the magnificent exhibition of anaesthetic equipment, books and Society memorabilia assembled by Drs J.A. Bennett and A. Fuge to mark the occasion.

In 1988 Dr John Zorab, who had been Secretary-General of the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA) since 1980, was elected to its Presidency. The Society was rightly proud that one of its members had been honoured in this manner. Dr T.N.P. Wilton and Dr Aileen K. Adams were elected to the Society's Honorary Membership, and a new category of Overseas Membership was established. A sum of £1000 was given to the Royal College of Anaesthetists' (RCoA) appeal. The President's medallion was revalued during the year and as a result was insured for £2500.

The lady members of the Society had, on a number of occasions, expressed the wish to have an item of apparel bearing the Society emblem. After discussion, the only feasible item seemed to be a brooch which was produced in silver and at a reasonable price. The privilege of wearing the brooch was extended also to the wives of the Society's Presidents.

In 1989 the Society led by Dr M.T. Inman undertook a most enjoyable visit to Oporto, where we were welcomed by Dr M.S. Araujo and the Portuguese Society of Anaesthetists. The anaesthetic properties of fortified wines were studied with great enthusiasm at the Port Lodges of Croft and Dow under the watchful eye of the Honorary Secretary, Dr Robin M. Weller. In November, when Group Captain C.A.B. McLaren took over the presidency, there was considerable discussion about the colour of the sash of the President's medallion, which was inappropriately Navy, rather than R.A.F. Blue. The highlight of the meeting was the Sir Humphry Davy lecture, given with scholarly distinction by Dr W.D.A. Smith. We were pleased that Dr J.A. Bennett agreed to become the Society's first official archivist. Professor Sir Robert Macintosh, who died that year, was the first of our membership to have been knighted. The membership by now had risen to 330 (at £6 a head) from 121 in 1950.

In 1990 the Society welcomed the Danish Society to Bristol in return for their hospitality in Copenhagen in 1986. Amongst the 100 Danes, anaesthetists and their partners who attended, it was particularly fascinating to meet Dr Bjorn Ibsen and to hear his memories of the 1952 Copenhagen poliomyelitis epidemic that precipitated the birth of modern intensive care. The meeting included a memorable visit to the zoo in the early evening after the madding crowds had departed, and another splendid tasting of port arranged by Mr J. Burnett of Crofts who had played a major part in the Oporto tasting arrangements. Dr John Zorab, at this time not only President of the WFSA but also our President-Elect, gave the Danish Society's prestigious Husfeldt lecture to a packed and appreciative house. This year too Dr Peter Baskett, past Honorary Secretary and past Editor of APW, was elected President of the AAGBI.

The Spring Meeting in 1991 was held jointly with the Anaesthetic Section of the RSM. A splendid dinner at the House of Commons was hosted by Bristol MP Mr William Waldegrave, the then-Secretary of State for Health. Mr J.B.R. Walker of Plymouth won the ODA's prize essay for the second time; this is something of a record as he is the only one of the Society's many prize winners to have won an award more than once. Drs O.P. Dinnick, R.E. Atkinson and T.B. Boulton were elected Honorary Members. Dr Leslie Feneley, whose enthusiasm

and energy had largely been responsible for setting up the Society in 1947, died that year. His family gave funds to the Society to set up a travelling fellowship in his memory. The first award was presented in 1993 to Dr P. Murphy by Dr Feneley's son, Roger.

In May 1992 the President, Professor Cedric Prys-Roberts, led us on a splendid trip to Strasbourg where we were the guests of Professor J. C. Otteni and his department. We visited the European Parliament with its near-empty chamber, and met our local Euro M.P. Mr I. White. The highlight of a very successful meeting was the fine trumpet playing of our President at a private concert in Strasbourg Cathedral.

The Autumn Meeting was held in Bath jointly with members of the Scottish Society of Anaesthetists, who brought their prestigious Gillies Memorial Lecture with them and gave us another chance to listen to Dr W.D.A. Smith, who on this occasion was their guest lecturer, on the somewhat neglected pioneer role of Dr Henry Hill Hickman in the history of intubation in anaesthesia.

In 1993 the Spring Meeting was held in Taunton. This was a great success and is to be remembered particularly for the fascinating and amusing lecture Life and Laughter in Old Somerset given by the County Archivist, Mr R. Bush. The Autumn Meeting was preceded in the morning by a meeting of the Society for Computing and Technology in Anaesthesia, which some of our older members found intimidating - not to mention the younger ones.

With the spring of 1994 came the good news that Professor Cedric Prys-Roberts had been elected President of the RCoA. In April the Society visited Newquay. This was the second of two most enjoyable meetings that the Truro department had arranged in 10 years. On this occasion we learnt about the Newlyn School of Artists and visited the exciting Tate Gallery in St Ives. At the AGM in November the Society agreed to support, jointly with the AAGBI, an overseas lectureship once every three years.

The sartorial elegance of the gentlemen members of the Society had never been in question but there were those who felt it could be enhanced. After

protracted discussion on design and materials a silk bow tie with a pattern of Society motifs was now made available.

In May 1995 the Society made a most successful trip to Bordeaux, the city where the Professor of Oenology is attached to the Faculty of Medicine, which seems a splendid arrangement. We were guests of Professor P. Erny and his department. Some of our members drove, and many flew, but Drs P. Griffiths, R. Lenz and A. Simcock stole the show by arriving in France at La Rochelle under sail. We toured the Medoc and tasted some splendid wines at the chateaux of Pichon Longueville la Baron, Cos d'Estournel, Lynch Bages and Beychevelle. Later we visited the Basin d'Arcachon where we learnt about oysters, before enjoying a fine academic meeting. Dinner in the extensive caves under the Chateau Villemaurine at St Emilion was a fitting conclusion to a wonderful visit. At the AGM in November the constitution was changed to allow the Society to vote for its President two years in advance, rather than only one year, on the occasion of an important anniversary such as the Golden Jubilee. Dr Peter Baskett was duly elected as President for 1997-98 under this new rule.

In 1996 the Spring Meeting was organised by the Barnstaple department. It was held in Bideford, where after dinner Dr N.F. Harley, the President and the local committee members entertained us in fine voice. The November Meeting, a return match with the Scottish Society, was held in Glasgow. This was the first time that the Autumn Meeting had been held outside the environs of Bristol and Bath. Dr T.A. Thomas, the newly installed President, was making his second visit to Glasgow within six months, having been honoured in the same way by the Obstetric Anaesthetists' Association at their meeting there in the spring. The 47 members and partners who attended despite the awkward journey enjoyed a superb joint meeting and traditional Scottish fare. The guests visited a number of museums and architectural achievements associated with Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

The year 1997 started with an excellent gathering of South Western anaesthetists at Torbay in May. In July, Dr Gareth Greenslade and Dr Kathryn Holder, erstwhile trainee members of the Committee, organised the inaugural meeting for trainees that was held at Lyngford House Conference Centre,

Taunton. Twenty-nine trainees benefited both academically and socially. 1997 also saw the introduction of a Linkman scheme for the Society, based on that of the AAGBI. Their role was to encourage anaesthetists new to the region to joining the Society and attend meetings. This scheme has been very successful over the last 10 years, ensuring that the membership has continued to grow and the Society has flourished.

The highlight of the year was the Golden Jubilee Meeting held on 28-29th November at the Watershed Conference Centre in Bristol. From the pre-meeting wine tasting and dinner for past and present officers of the Society, to the wind-up lunch time party at the home of the newly installed President Dr Peter Baskett on the Sunday, the meeting was a resounding success. The scientific programme covered the issues of medical simulation in recognition of the fact that the Bristol Simulation Centre had opened earlier the same year, and the past and future of intensive care medicine. The Humphry Davy lecture was delivered by Professor Philip Bromage entitled Sirens of the reflex arc and discussed how the impact of muscle relaxants had lured anaesthetists away from the regular use of local anaesthesia techniques. He finished his lecture by contemplating the role of the anaesthetist in the future, and wisely predicted a possible expanded role of 'peri-operative physician'. The meeting was attended by many special guests such as the President of the RCoA and that of the AAGBI, as well as Presidents of many other regional societies. Of particular note was the attendance of Dr Violet Fry, the first lady and oldest surviving past President of the Society (1963-64).

1998 started with the Society traveling to its most distant destination to date – Malta. Sixty-four members and guests of the Society, along with 27 members of the Maltese Association of Anaesthesiologists, were led from the front by their President. The meeting will be remembered for the high-quality lectures from the trainee delegates, also their vigorous support of the social programme. Dr D. Lockey was awarded the President's Prize in recognition of his efforts.

The trainees' strong contribution to the wellbeing of the Society was continued in the summer with an excellent second trainees' meeting in Exeter. There were updates on training, as well as how Lord Nelson would have fared with ATLS,

not to mention another eloquent after dinner speech by Dr Peter Baskett. The Autumn Meeting returned to the acoustically challenged Assembly Rooms of Bath. Dr Steve Hills controversial presentation Darwin, Disability and Death will be remembered for many years for his dry and polished delivery, as well as his many slides of African wildlife. The dinner at the pump rooms was attended by 154 guests with musical accompaniment from some members of the local surgical division.

To celebrate the bicentenary of Humphry Davy's investigations into nitrous oxide at the Clifton Pneumatic Institute in Bristol, a joint meeting of the Society was held with the History of Anaesthesia Society and the American History of Anesthesia Association. The meeting concentrated on the life and works of Davy, but the romantic poets, John Snow and Sir James Young Simpson also got a mention. The dinner held in the Wills Memorial Building was attended by 190 members and guests of the three societies. It will be remembered for the epic after-dinner rendition of Humphry Davy's life in song and rhyme from the Americans, which sadly failed to spark the imagination of a tiring audience.

Cheltenham hosted the last meeting of the Millennium. It was as ever well attended and was sadly the last meeting to be attended by Professor Cedric Prys-Roberts before his retirement. He delivered the guest lecture and was awarded with a ship's decanter of Bristol Blue glass suitably engraved in recognition of the huge contribution he had made to the practice of anaesthesia in the South Western Region. The conference was also addressed by the then-President of the RCoA Professor Leo Strunin on the hot subject of the era, Revalidation for doctors, in the wake of the Dr Shipman episode.

The Society started the new millennium with 449 members and a healthy bank balance. It marked its entry into a new technological age with the launch of its website. This owed much to the endeavours of Dr Simon Courtman, one of the trainee members.

The Spring Meeting was held in Plymouth, the first Society visit for 11 years. In this period the department had grown dramatically from 14 to 38 consultants,

with the exciting development of the soon-to-be-opened Peninsula Medical School. The meeting ran with military efficiency even though one of the local organisers, Surgeon Commander Andy Burgess had nearly been sent to Sierra Leone days before the start. Much of the scientific programme centred around local issues such as use of the hyperbaric chamber, and sailing.

The trainees headed to the excellent Woodbury Park in July for another highly academic and social 24 hours with very interesting presentations on issues around whistle-blowing and how to stay on the Medical Register.

The Society meeting of November 2000, organised by a communal committee involving all three Bristol hospitals, was held at a very windswept and wet Watershed. Dr Mick Mercer gave a presentation on teaching intensive care in Fiji, an endeavour that had been supported by the Society's award of a Feneley Travel fellowship. The final lecture was given by the doctor, explorer and extreme sportsman Dr Mike Stroud, who held his audience captivated regarding the nutritional and psychological challenges of endurance events in climates ranging from the Sahara desert to the North Pole.

Spring 2001 saw the Society venture abroad again with a trip to Barcelona for a joint meeting with the Societat Catalana d'Anestesiologia Reanimacio i Terapeutica del Dolor. The meeting had a record attendance of over 100 members and partners for any overseas meeting. The meeting was held in Spanish and English with very accomplished simultaneous translation. The scientific programme allowed comparisons to be made between the two cultures in respect to training, intensive care medicine and paediatric practice. The most notable fact to emerge for our own practice is that no Catalan doctor is allowed to be resident on-call after the age of 43. The final lecture of the meeting was given by the Lord Mayor of Barcelona, Mr J. Clos who had trained in anaesthesia and Public Health Medicine before becoming a politician. The social programme as ever was excellent with much tapas, cava, sight-seeing and shopping.

In November at the meeting held in Bristol Mr Roger Feneley, the son of the inaugurator of the Feneley Travelling Fellowship, made the award to Dr Tessa

Whitton enabling her to attend a pain meeting while working in the USA. In response the President, Dr Robin Weller, recounted the first Society meeting he had attended in 1970; he remembered being welcomed by 'Fen', as Dr Leslie Feneley was known, and was immediately treated as though he belonged. This he suggested summed up the qualities of the Society. Also at this meeting, three Honorary Life memberships were awarded to Dr Geoffrey Burton, Professor Cedric Prys-Roberts and Dr John Zorab.

The Society meeting in Exeter in 2002 saw two new firsts for the Society. The trainees meeting, which had previously been a separate event in July, was becoming less well attended and was thus revitalised with a much-increased attendance on the first day of the Spring Meeting. Second was the introduction of a formal Linkman meeting. This allowed news of the Society to be fed back, but more importantly for the Linkman to air their views on important issues such as attracting new members to the Society. To add to this there were a record 150 guests at the Society dinner with the aptly named Whiskey for breakfast providing the musical accompaniment. The Society lecture was given by Dr Colin Berry on his experiences in competing in the Whitbread round-the-world sailing race.

Later that year in Bath two further Honorary Life memberships were awarded to Dr John Powell, who had been a stalwart of the department in Southmead Hospital, and Dr Barbara Weaver, the first person in the UK to hold the post of Reader in Veterinary Anaesthesia, a regular contributor to the Society over many years and the only non-anaesthetist President.

2003 saw the membership of the Society top 500 for the first time. The financial status was equally rosy and the value of the prizes offered by the Society was increased to £500. The Society came up with a new method of publicity in the form of bone china mugs that have now been liberally distributed over the South West.

The format for the award of the Society prize was changed such that there were three trainee presentations with a question-and-answer session. The judges for this inaugural competition were Dr Andy Black and the President Dr

Leslie Shutt. The winner was Dr Guy Jordan with his presentation Resuscitation following a hypothermic arrest.

Further Honorary life memberships were bestowed on Dr Peter Baskett, a true legend within not only the South West but throughout the world, Dr M.T. Inman who was responsible for setting up the first ICU in Plymouth and a driving force behind development of the Plymouth Postgraduate Medical Centre, and Dr R.B. Hudson who had always been a very prominent member of the Society even though his consultant career had taken him to Derby.

The next sortie to European soil occurred in spring 2004 with a trip to Bologna for a joint meeting with the Societa Italiana di Anestesi e Analgesia e Rianimazione. The meeting as ever combined visits to local places of interest such as houses producing balsamic vinegar, a good scientific programme comparing anaesthetic and intensive care cultures, and a very healthy social programme.

It was with sadness that the Society learnt of the death of Dr Ian Verner, one its longest serving members, who had retained membership and strong contact with a region he had passed through in his training in the 1950's on his way to a consultancy in London.

The Society's trainee prize was further embellished with sponsorship from the pharmaceutical industry in the form of Abbott that increased its value to £1000. In recognition of this it was renamed the SASWR Abbott prize. The first recipient was Dr Mat Molyneux. The sponsorship of this prize finished in 2008, at which point it was changed to a prize for the best trainee presentation at each Autumn Meeting.

At the AGM of the Society in Bristol Honorary Life membership was conferred to Dr C.A.B. McLaren, to date the first and only serving military officer who has been President of the Society. Also at this meeting it was decided that past Presidents of the Society should receive six Bristol Blue coasters embellished with the Society's emblem in recognition of their labours.

The 2005 Spring Meeting was held in Torquay, and many of the presentations demonstrated the excellence of the local services particularly in the fields of day case surgery and pre-operative assessment.

It was reported to the AGM of the Society in November that, with the decommissioning of the Monica Britton Museum at Frenchay Hospital, the archives of the Society had been successfully transferred to the AAGBI at 21 Portland Place, London. The archives were to be catalogued and then made available to members to see on request.

At the Autumn Meeting of 2005 the soon-to-become notorious topic of Modernising medical careers amongst many other current issues, was covered in an excellent Sir Humphry Davy Lecture by Professor Mike Harmer. The Society dinner was a great cultural and culinary success, held in the Royal West of England Academy of Art.

The meeting of May 2006 will be remembered as the most family-friendly to date, held in the delightfully rugged environs of the Cornish coast at the Bedruthan Steps Hotel. The meeting now followed the established route of starting with a morning trainee programme. The scientific meeting was as ever of the highest quality, but the guest lecture by Professor Peter Hutton gave a very honest but rather depressing view on how the whole of the NHS is less than the sum of its parts. There was an opportunity for the Society to indulge its most favourite social activity - wine tasting, as well as sunshine and sandcastles for some of the future members of the Society. The Society Lecture was given by Jonathan Ball, the co-founder of the Eden Project. He held his audience spellbound while he talked, not about large ecological tourist attractions, but the value that he attached to living in and being part of a community, and the importance of the human touch in a world seemingly increasingly more reliant on electronic communication.

The Autumn Meeting of 2006 was held in Bath. The meeting organisers put together a scientific programme of which many national meetings would have been proud. There were talks from world experts in the fields of resuscitation,

disaster management and the management of the difficult airway, but the two most memorable presentations were from Dr Archie Brain, anaesthetic inventor, and Dr Rob Casserley, a surgical SHO from Bath. Dr Brain delivered the Humphry Davy Lecture detailing the story of his trials and tribulations of developing the laryngeal mask airway. Dr Casserley's very emotional talk entitled Summit, tragedy, close calls and fewer brain cells recounted his various assaults on the world's highest mountain, including one on which a close friend died, and the subsequent climb to attempt to retrieve his body. The superb photography and his moving delivery really made the audience feel that they had been through this ordeal with him, and I am sure the presentation will long be remembered by all who were present.

The next overseas venture for the Spring 2007 meeting saw the Society venture behind the Iron Curtain to Budapest, a destination that would have been unimaginable to those who attended the inaugural meeting of the Society 50 years before.

One hundred and two members and partners were the guests of the Society of Anaesthetists of the Central Hungarian Region. The meeting as ever gave the opportunity for a comparison between two anaesthetic communities; the fields of intensive care, anaesthetic training, acute pain management as well as architecture were all extensively covered on the banks of the Danube. The social programme was as ever very strong with the Gala dinner being held in the library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The 60th anniversary meeting was the first time that the M Shed was used. It was presided over by Dr Sir Peter Simpson, who had been knighted in 2006, and was very well attended including by dignitaries from the RCoA.

In 2007 the untimely death of Dr Ross Davis, a SpR from Plymouth who died while cycling home from work, shocked the anaesthetic community. In his memory, Ross's family and friends launched the 'Ross Davis Adventure Bursary' with up to £1000 a year to be awarded to fund 'exciting endeavours in anaesthesia'. SASWR were asked to help advertise and administer the bursary, and over the following ten years many trainees benefited from the generosity shown by Ross's family and Kate, his partner.

The 2007 Fourth Edition of the history of the Society recorded the deaths of the following members in the preceding ten years: 1998 Dr John Miller; 2003 Dr Violet Fry; 2004 Dr Ian Verner; 2005 Dr Basil Muir; 2006 Drs Roger Bryce Smith, John Zorab; Pamela Counsell and Ross Davies; 2007 Dr Tessa Whitton.

The 2008 Spring Meeting was another opportunity for members of the Society to spread their wings with the decision by the Plymouth and Guernsey departments to hold a joint Spring Meeting in Guernsey. Aply-organised by Dr Martin Wolfe of Guernsey and with speakers from both departments, guests arrived by plane, ferry, and – led by Drs Andy Burgess of Plymouth and Colin Berry of Exeter – sailboat, in what must be SASWR's first documented yacht race.

As autumn arrived Dr Sir Peter Simpson handed over the presidency to Dr Tricia McAteer from Bath at the Autumn Meeting in Bristol, again held on the top floor of the @Bristol Museum. This was the last meeting for Bristol's current Professor of Anaesthesia, Kai Zacharowski, who was moving to Frankfurt to take up a chair there. His department of able young scientists impressed the meeting with detailed but understandable descriptions of their work in molecular signalling mechanisms and the Professor extended an invitation to the Society to join him in Frankfurt, which was taken up only a few years later.

2008 also saw the departure of one of anaesthesia's great personalities, Dr Peter Baskett. Peter died in the spring and his obituary, published in the APW as well as in the BMJ, reminded members what significant contributions this past-President had made to our speciality and to medicine in general.

There were several handovers of responsibility during 2009. Dr Chris Monk succeeded Dr Ed Morris as Honorary Treasurer; Dr James Pittman passed the editorship of APW to Dr Fiona Donald; and Dr Steve Mather succeeded Dr Tricia McAteer as President. There were two very successful meetings that year. In May the Cheltenham and Gloucester departments hosted the Spring Meeting at the Cotswold Water Park, which as well as an excellent scientific programme gave delegates the chance to try their hand at either a variety of watersports or team-building activities such as duck-herding, which provoked great hilarity.

In November the Exeter department hosted the Autumn Meeting for the first time. This marked a decision by the committee to rotate the Autumn Meeting further afield than Bristol and Bath. This decision proved to be a good one as a record number of delegates and trainees attended the meeting, a trend that encouraged and rejuvenated the Society over the coming decade.

The SASWR website was relaunched with a new website manager Dr Ben Howes, and this was marked with the award of the President's Prize.

Organised by incoming Honorary Secretary Dr Chris Monk, the triennial SASWR overseas meeting in 2010 was held in Rome, but not before a concerning moment for the Society when the dust cloud from the Icelandic volcano Eyjafjallajökull had closed most of Europe's airspace a few days before the meeting. Nevertheless delegates from across the region enjoyed an excellent scientific meeting in conjunction with Italian colleagues and visits to the Forum, Colosseum, and Tivoli gardens among other attractions.

Back at home the Autumn Meeting was held in central Bristol in the Baker's and Cutler's Halls for the first time, part of chef Raymond Blanc's new complex there, and ably organised by the Southmead department. Particularly enjoyed was the guest lecture by Ms Pamela Murison, from Bristol Veterinary School, who challenged the traditional wisdom that animal airways are less difficult than human ones. SASWR has had a long and strong relationship with our veterinary colleagues, and it was good to be reminded of this.

With Dr Peter Ritchie of Cheltenham at the helm as President, the Spring Meeting in 2011 was held in Taunton at the well-appointed cricket ground. By now it was common to see over a hundred delegates at each meeting of the Society, and the regular additional income had provided a useful financial buffer after the anxieties of the nearly-cancelled Rome meeting.

The Autumn Meeting returned to the Assembly Rooms at Bath. Scientific themes included the reduction in peri-operative complications and risks. Mr Martin Bromiley spoke about error mechanisms and his Clinical Human Factors

Group. The final session was a presentation by Mr Mike Pitts, an underwater cameraman who has been involved in many of David Attenborough's documentaries. At this meeting Dr Kerri Jones was inaugurated as President, and Dr Ed Morris was awarded the President's Prize for his work on trainee engagement as well as organising the 2006 Budapest meeting. The Ross Davis Adventure Bursary was awarded to Kate Sharpe. The evening involved a starter of champagne at the Roman Baths before dinner in the Pump Rooms.

The year 2011 was again tinged with sadness following the death from bowel disease aged 54 of Dr Geoff Morris, a much-loved and well-respected colleague who had trained and been a consultant in the region and was a regular attendee at SASWR meetings. Geoff's memorial service in Christ Church Clifton was full of medical colleagues, nursing staff and midwives, Geoff having been a much-respected obstetric anaesthetist.

2012 saw the APW editorship pass to Dr Vanessa Purday and meetings in Torbay and Bristol. The latter meeting was a joint meeting with the Anaesthetic Section of the RSM in the Council House in Bristol. The meeting was to have been held in the usual M-Shed venue, but with six weeks to go the organisers were informed that the Queen was to visit the M-Shed on the day of our meeting and we would have to move. The organising committee from Frenchay produced an excellent, trauma-based meeting – their last one as an independent department before their department merged with that at Southmead to enter the newly constructed Brunel building two years later.

Dr Kerri Jones handed the presidency to Dr Mike Durkin, Dr James Pittman took over as Honorary Secretary and after six years as treasurer, Dr Bill Harvey passed on the purses to Dr Ed Morris.

May 2013 saw the Society taking up the kind offer of ex-Bristol academic Professor Kai Zacharowski and travelling to Frankfurt for the Spring Meeting at the Goethe University Hospital. As well as an excellent scientific meeting and a 'workshop' format one afternoon to allow members to practise various practical skills such as ultrasound scanning and bronchoscopy, the social programme in and around Frankfurt was much enjoyed.

Anaesthesia Points West gained a new editor Dr Richard Dell. For a period the journal was so secret that it had to be supplied in a plain wrapper featuring scurrilous 'news stories' of the great and the good of the Society.

It was however another year tinged with sadness for SASWR as two more young consultants lost their lives. Bristol ICU consultant Dr Guy Jordan died in a cycling accident aged 41 – despite resuscitation attempts by his colleagues and friends at Frenchay hospital – and Dr David Penney in Swindon died suddenly from coronary artery disease aged 45. It is at times like this that the anaesthetic community comes together, and both departments organised fitting tributes to their colleagues.

At the Autumn Meeting in Bristol, now back at the M-Shed in the absence of any further royal visits, Dr Durkin handed over the presidency to Dr Chris Johnson at an excellent meeting that culminated in the Sir Humphry Davy lecture being given by BRI Dr Rachel Craven on her work travelling to conflict zones around the world to deliver health care.

The Truro Anaesthetic department organised the Spring Meeting in 2014 at the beautifully appointed Headland Hotel near Newquay. Trainee involvement in SASWR was continuing to grow strongly and in keeping with a national trend to more organised trainee research, two regional trainee research groups were established around this time – the South West Anaesthesia Matrix (SWARM) and the Severn Trainees Anaesthetic Research group (STAR). It was agreed that both groups would receive ongoing funding from SASWR and that the SASWR meetings would provide an ideal forum for the research to be presented in the future.

At the Autumn Meeting, again in Bristol that year, Dr Chris Johnson passed the presidency to Dr Chris Monk.

Spring 2015 saw the society meet in Plymouth – the first time in several years after 2008's Guernsey trip – with Dr J-P Van Besouw and Dr Ellen O'Sullivan, respectively the Presidents of the RCoA and the College of Anaesthetists in

Ireland. The Society dinner was a very special event, hosted by the Officers' Mess of Stonehouse Barracks, home of the Royal Marine Commando forces. After being called into dinner by the Corps of Drums dinner was served in the splendid surroundings of the Officers' dining hall, beneath a picture of Lord Nelson framed by timbers from HMS Nelson.

The Autumn Meeting in Bath, at which Dr Rob Sneyd took over as President, was of the usual high academic standard of the local department. Dr Kay Spooner took over from Dr James Pittman as Honorary Secretary, and planning began for what was to be the final overseas meeting (for now) of SASWR.

In 2016 Dr Kay Spooner led a lively and interesting trip to Toulouse in the company of a band of exuberant trainees, a dozen or so retired members, and the stalwarts of the SASWR committee. With an excellent scientific programme involving speakers from the UK and guest lecturers from the local anaesthetic department, the science was complemented by trip to the ancient village of Carcassonne and the huge airbus factory nearby. When Surgeon Captain Andrew Burgess RN, found a 'rum bar' directly opposite the hotel entrance it was clear that there would be few early nights and the highly social nature of overseas meetings was a reminder of the important part they had played in SASWR's history. However, the overall relatively low attendance figures (only around 30 people travelled), the reduction in study leave budgets, and the needs of the younger membership with families led the committee to conclude that for now at least overseas meetings would be replaced with more spring meetings around the South West region.

As if to prove this point, the Spring Meeting in 2017, organised by the Cheltenham and Gloucester departments and with Dr Fiona Donald as President, took place at Cheltenham Racecourse and was attended by well over 100 people. The meeting occurred in the week of the Manchester Arena terrorist bombing and a minute's silence was held by the Society for those killed and injured.

This Spring Meeting also marked the ongoing modernisation of SASWR as the dinner (held in a local cinema which had been converted into a restaurant) was the first one where black tie was not stipulated. There was a feeling that

this change of dress code, for the spring meetings at least, was a welcome innovation and would encourage more younger members of the Society to attend the dinners.

A period of ill-health led Dr Kay Spooner to step down as Honorary Treasurer and Dr Ed Morris, the previous incumbent, stepped back into the role pro tem. Fortunately the organisers of the Autumn Meeting, held in Bristol, were old hands and with Captain Andy Burgess now President another highly successful and well-attended meeting took place at the M Shed with dinner at Bristol Zoo in Clifton. Among the excellent local and national speakers the Society heard from Dr Sheila Tose, a consultant anaesthetist from Manchester who had been on call the night of the Manchester bombing. Her much-considered talk on managing staff before, during and after a major event such as this was very sobering and warmly applauded by the delegates.

Dr Richard Dell was awarded the President's Prize for his work as Editor of APW, as well as his role in the band Dellstars.

Taunton Cricket Club was the venue for the Spring Meeting of 2018. After many lectures on topics medical, the guest lecturer was Mr Jonathon Bradshaw who talked about his participation in extreme activities including walking to the South Pole, a presentation on the boundaries of human endurance that was debilitating just to listen to! Hestercombe House hosted the Society Dinner.

The Autumn Meeting in Bath was held at a new venue, the Apex Hotel in the city centre. This is a modern building with a small conference centre attached, having good audio-visual facilities and acoustics, though slightly marred by the chat from the trade stands filtering through the partition wall. Dr Mike Kinsella took over as President. The scientific programme featured many presentations from Bath anaesthetists, and the Humphry Davy lecture was given by Professor Carol Peden, previously of RUH but currently at UCLA, on her world-leading work on peri-operative patient outcomes. Professor Ravi Mahajan, the RCoA President, who lectured on anaesthesia workforce issues, was the only professor in attendance not linked to the South West! The dinner was once again held

in the pump rooms. Dr Ed Morris was again awarded the President's Prize for taking up the mantle of Honorary Secretary for a second time.

The Ross Davis bursary ended after 11 years having provided welcome support to many trainees.

In 2019 Dr Johannes Retief took over the editorial reins of APW. The Spring Meeting was held at the Saunton Sands Hotel and organised by the Anaesthetic Department of Barnstaple Hospital. This venue had been found to be successful for previous meetings of SODIT the Society of Devon Intensive Therapists. With everything on-site, there was no need to stray outside the hotel grounds apart from the attraction of an over-three-mile-long beach in glorious and continuing sunshine. The beach was also visible from the lecture room, however the quality of the presentations provided enough stimulation to keep attention firmly fixed within.

The invited lecturer was Mr Kevin Carr who detailed the extraordinary organisation (let alone motivation) necessary to break the record for running round the world – 600 days, beating the previous record by 15 hours. The hazards of extreme cold, extreme heat, and black bears (not all on the same continent) might daunt even a transient well-supported traveller!

The Autumn Meeting organised by North Bristol Trust was again held at the M Shed. Dr Kathryn Holder was appointed as President, and Dr Thomas Barrett as Honorary Treasurer. Dr Ben Howes was awarded the President's Prize for a second time for his work in establishing a new online membership system and a revamped website. The Humphry Davy lecturer was Dr Cathy Stannard who gave an insight into the opioid abuse crisis, and the interaction between the medical profession's well-intentioned prescription of analgesics and the potential for vulnerable members of the population to develop addiction and abuse. The Society dinner was held at Bristol Zoo for the last time, as it closed in autumn 2022.

Also in 2019 a generous but anonymous consultant member of SASWR provided funds for a new trainee travel bursary of up to £1000; the recipient

was Dr Madeleine Storey for a trip to India in January 2020. This thoughtful initiative prompted the Committee to continue this as an annual award.

2020 was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the time a situation that seemed would change the world permanently. The Spring Meeting was cancelled as were virtually all national and international meetings; travel was banned and anaesthetists and intensivists were all on standby to provide clinical care. In fact, there were more hospital admissions in the autumn than the spring, but in spite of this a shortened one-day virtual Autumn Meeting was held, organised by the Exeter Anaesthetic Department. Of course there were a number of lectures on the conversion of the health system in the South West region to cope with the pandemic, although other more normal topics featured as well. The Sir Humphry Davy lecture was given by Henry Marsh CBE, retired neurosurgeon and now popular author.

Dr Colin Berry was appointed as President at the meeting, with the President's medal being mysteriously teleported from Bristol to South Sudan, and Dr Peter Valentine started as Honorary Secretary.

Two eminent ex-Presidents of SASWR died in 2020, Drs Colin McLaren and Trevor Thomas. Their obituaries can be found in APW and the BMJ.

The virtual-format 2021 Spring Meeting was organised by the Exeter trainees. Themes of the sessions included wellbeing and care for colleagues, as well as environmental concerns. The Humphry Davy lecture was given by Professor Paul Myles, dialling in from Sydney, on his international research on peri-operative medicine.

The Autumn Meeting saw the eagerly anticipated return to a face-to-face meeting, at the regular venue of the Bristol M Shed. The President's Medal had in fact not made it abroad, so was presented to Dr Colin Berry who then passed it on to the new President Ted Rees a brief time later. Eight sessions of content over two days were absorbed by a capacity audience, who also enthusiastically imbibed the food, wine and music at the Society Dinner held at the Avon Gorge

Hotel. The President's Prize was awarded to Dr John Hickman for his sterling work on promoting environmental sustainability within the region. Also this year a special token of the Society's appreciation was given to Dr Tom Perris, APW wine columnist, for his many years of contributions – a case of (guess what?).

2021 saw the deaths of two well-known Bristol anaesthetists, Drs John Powell and Derek Faulkner. Early in 2022 we learned of the death of Dr Laurie Marks, ex-Barnstaple Consultant and an AAGBI Pask medal winner, who had worked tirelessly to develop anaesthesia in Zimbabwe, especially during the dark decades of civil disintegration at the end of the 20th Century.

The 2022 Spring Meeting returned to the Bedruthan Steps Hotel in north Cornwall, organised by the department of Treliske Hospital. As usual there was a wide range of topics to cater for all tastes, including peri-operative care and surgical outcomes, the environmental impact of anaesthesia, working overseas, and SWARM and STAR updates. We also learned from Dr Ryan Jackson about his work designing oxygen systems for extreme altitude parachute jumps. The outside environment was as beautiful as expected in this part of the world if one glanced outside the windows; inside the social ambience was as warm as ever. 2022 also marked the 25th year in post of Kate Prys-Roberts, the Society's administrator, who has been closely involved in the management of meetings across the region in her remarkable quarter-century in the role.

This update of the Society's story ends after 75 years of bringing the region's anaesthetists together. At the moment of writing, we await the November Autumn Meeting in Bath and the accession of a new President, Dr Ed Morris. We leave you with the final paragraph from the Fourth Edition of the Society's history, which remains as true now as it was then: There is no doubt that whatever the NHS may throw at us in the years to come we will all find some solace in the Society of Anaesthetists of the West of England. The interest, enthusiasm, and above all the friendliness of the members and their partners, which is evident at our meetings and which was stimulated by the founders of the Society, provide a solid guarantee of good health for the Society in the next 50 years.

