

## Membership, Marketing & Communications (MMC) Report to AGM 2010

### Marketing

Re-brand project, leading to October 09 launch of the Society.

New website, including members' area for *individual* and *organisational* members.

### Membership

Over 65 Member Organisations

Approx. 11,400 Individual Members:

1595 Fellows (FSB)

7148 Members (MSB)

800 Associate Members (AMSB)

1857 Associate Members, including 1281 student members

Our membership services will shortly be provided through an outsourced service provider. This will lead to cost savings, as well as being able to offer a service that is able to deal with enquiries over the weekend.

### Communications

In order to meet budget expectations for 2010, immediate action had to be taken with regard to placing *Biologist* and *JBE* with new suppliers.

A detailed review of the financial and academic situation with both journals was undertaken. It was concluded that, for *JBE* to survive in the longer-term, it needed the expertise that could only be provided by an academic publisher. An agreement has now been signed with Taylor & Francis (T&F) to publish the journal from 2011. It will then benefit from use of the ScholarOne Manuscript peer review management system, which is one of the most respected in the journals publishing industry, and also from the journal gaining visibility on the T&F web platform. T&F will digitise the full archive at no cost to the Society. In addition, T&F will undertake global marketing and sales efforts, and will include the journal in their various licence schemes, which may well increase revenue.

*Biologist* is a different type of publication, with more scope for advertising revenue. This has been licensed to a company Biopharm. They have taken over publication of *Biologist* and will also publish *JBE* during 2010 until the T&F contract takes effect. Sir Colin Spedding has stepped down as editor of the *Biologist* after long service and we will look to appoint a chair of the editorial board in the near future.

### MMC Committee

We are now turning our attention to writing Terms of Reference for the committee and identifying the initial members. Numbers will be kept small to start with, and all members will be invited for an initial year so that

we can evaluate our requirements. We plan to have a range of people, covering academic biology, teaching, industry, governmental organisations, learned societies, and a range of areas of biology.

### **Journals Committee**

The Journals Committee is a forum for research and discussions on issues surrounding dissemination of biology research, especially relating to Open Access publishing and repositories. It aims to present the views of researchers and learned societies, for whom dissemination of scientific information is often a key objective. The Committee is specifically concerned with the effectiveness and efficiency of dissemination of bioscience research outputs. The Committee put in a response in January to the US government consultation on open access policy. The Committee is also represented on the UUK/RIN group evaluating the practicalities for funders, publishers, universities and authors of implementing paid open access.

### **Media**

Our media effort has been focussed on the Launch of the Society on 25 March 2010. A dedicated launch publication has been produced and is available to download from the website or in hard copy on request.

### **Website**

A new website was developed and launched on 1 October 2009 as part of a new Society of Biology brand. It encompasses dedicated Branch and members only areas. Membership renewal is now possible on-line and first time applicants will shortly be able to use the site. A web-shop is also under development.

### **Science Communication Award**

The 2009 Science Communication Awards were presented to Ceri Harrop (University of Manchester) and Susan Jebb (Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research) for their passion and dedication to communicating biological science to the public. The winners accepted their awards and presented examples of their public engagement work at an event held on the 16th November 2009, which was attended by bioscientists interested and engaged in science communication, press and PR officers, and science writers. Ceri Harrop won the 'New Researcher' category - for research active bioscientists studying for a PhD or Masters, or in their first year following study. Susan Jebb won the 'Established Researcher' category. The award event included a panel discussion "*Press Officers - help or hindrance...?*" chaired by Sue Thorn (Chair of the Society's Membership, Marketing and Communications Committee). The awards will run again this year, and will be linked with a photographic competition that celebrates 2010 as the international year of biodiversity. The Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Pfizer for the science communications award.

### **Launch event - 25th March 2010**

Around 260 people attended the Society's celebratory launch event on 25th March. Guests included 90 representatives from 52 Member Organisations (we currently have 68 in total); 50 individual members from all grades, selected by ballot; 30 representatives from all Branches except Scotland (who held their own event) and additional guests from sister and partner organisations, government and parliament, education and business. Guest speakers represented the inclusivity of the Society: the main lecture was given by Sir Paul Nurse, followed by Sir David Attenborough and Dr Ceri Harrop. Approximately two thirds

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of attendees stayed for the networking reception. We produced a publication to mark the event, containing articles describing the breadth of biology today, the future of biology, and its impact on society, as well as an interview with Sir David. The primary sponsor of the event was Sir Ralph Kohn (Kohn Foundation), with additional sponsorship from Oxford University Press. We are also grateful to a number of Member Organisations, and to Bio Pharm for their contribution: together these contributions ensured the event and publication costs were covered in full. The event has received a number of mentions in the press, and we are now working on dissemination of the publication to key stakeholders, a full-length film of the event for use by Branches, plus edited highlights for wider use.