

Annual Report based on the Secretary's Report to the Annual General Meeting on 29 October 1976

Medical Society for the Study of Venereal Diseases

During the past session, the Society elected 80 new members, 37 living in the United Kingdom and 43 abroad. Six members died and 31 resigned. While 14 members were reinstated once they had paid their subscriptions for 1975, a further 10 lost their membership for failing to pay in 1976. Our membership now stands at 526, an increase of 47 over last year, of whom 333 live in the United Kingdom and 193 abroad. Members are reminded that failure to pay subscriptions promptly places an undue financial burden on the Society when reminder letters have to be sent. In addition, if they lose their membership through failure to pay their subscription, they are liable to be charged for the copies of the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* they have already received during the year at the full commercial rate.

Five ordinary meetings were held during the year, all attracting capacity attendances of members and guests.

The Council of the Society, under the Chairmanship of the President, Dr C. D. Alergant, held five meetings during the session and as is usual, all were well attended. It was with deep regret that the Council decided, at their meeting in November, to cancel the Spring meeting. After much deliberation, the members agreed that it would not be possible to hold the meeting in Newcastle and that it was then too late to make alternative arrangements.

Council noted that attempts were being made to define job descriptions and suitable salary scales for contract tracers (Health Workers in Special Clinics) and that alterations had been made to the Quarterly Returns to provide harmonisation between the home countries and the extra information required by the EEC. Two matters concerning terms and conditions of service were discussed and then referred to the Venereologists' Group of the BMA—namely, the provision of A and B Units to junior medical staff and deficiencies in the venereology service to certain prisons, assessment centres, and List D schools. The Society was represented by Dr R. D. Catterall at the conference on the *Merrison Report*. Council agreed to a revision of the tear-off

portion of the contact slips as proposed by the British Federation against the Venereal Diseases. The Council welcomed the proposal to form a New Zealand branch of the Society and gave it their approval with the proviso that the New Zealand branch would not have the right to nominate a member to the Council of the Society. Council approved the setting-up of a Working Party, consisting of the President and Honorary Treasurer of the Society with the Editors of the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* and the *British Medical Journal*, to consider what rise in subscriptions would be necessary to ensure several years of stability in the Society's subscriptions rates.

They decided to inaugurate an annual Student's Prize Competition in 1977. Entries are to be in the form of a written report, the prizewinner will receive £50.00 and the winning entry may be published in the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases*. The competition will be advertised in the *British Journal of Venereal Diseases* and posters concerning it circulated to members.

Council have obtained agreement from the Department of Health and Social Security for attendance at the Society's meetings to be recognised as postgraduate education sessions for principals in general practice. However, such is the financial plight of the North West Thames Regional Health Authority that travelling and subsistence expenses will most probably not be paid.

The Editor, Dr R. N. Thin and his colleagues, Dr J. Oriol and Dr B. A. Evans are to be congratulated on maintaining the high standard of the *Journal* under very difficult circumstances.

Volume 51 contained 84 papers in 428 pages which was well within the economy required. Volume 50 had only 82 papers in 482 pages. The rejection rate of papers submitted rose from 24% in 1974 to 40% in 1975. At 31 December 1975 the circulation by subscription was 1829 (1798 in 1974) while a further 77 copies were issued free or in exchange (80 in 1974). From the point of view of circulation, the *Journal* is considered a great success, the numbers of subscriptions having risen annually for the past 13

years. However, the increase in circulation has not improved the financial situation as some of the copies sent abroad have incurred a loss.

The deliberations of the Editorial Committee, which met in April, were hampered by the absence of the Editor of the *British Medical Journal* and of the Business Manager or his deputy. The feeling was expressed that had the representatives of the *BMJ* given the Editorial Committee fuller information of the financial position of the *Journal* in March 1975 then the Society would not have needed to raise its subscription rate two years in succession.

The Specialist Advisory Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr R. Morton has met twice and considered the reports of the teams visiting Senior Registrar posts. Almost all have been approved for the full five years but one was not approved, while five others were approved for a limited period only. It is expected that in all these cases, approval will be given when the required improvements have been made. One approved post, to have been shared between the Middlesex and Central Middlesex Hospitals, has not been filled because it could not be funded. The Committee has begun endorsing the enrolment forms of trainees submitted by the JCHMT and has opened a register of such trainees. Despite earlier hopes that all the EEC countries would recognise three specialties, dermatology, the specialty of sexually transmitted diseases and dermatovenereology, Dr R. D. Catterall our representative on the Monospecialty Committee on Dermatovenereology of the EUMS, has not been able to report any progress in this matter.

In conclusion, I think we can congratulate ourselves that even during this period of severe financial restraint, the specialty continues to expand and the Society to flourish. This is in no small part due to the enthusiasm of our members and the diligence of my colleagues on the Council, not least our President, Dr C. D. Alergant, who chaired our deliberations with such skill.

C. B. S. SCHOFIELD
Hon. Secretary