

## President's Newsletter Number 3: March 2021

Dear Colleagues

As I complete my first year as President at the AGM in April, I have reflected over the last 11 months, and it certainly was not one I had envisaged! Who would have thought that in March 2021 we would be in a third National Lockdown due to COVID-19? Life has certainly been different for all of us due to this global pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2. These have certainly been trying times. Many of you have had to juggle work with home-schooling and caring responsibilities. Others have had to face personal tragedies due to this pandemic and so before I continue with my report, I would like us all to take time to reflect and think about those who have lost loved ones during this pandemic. Our thoughts are with you all.

As I write this letter there is a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel with the news that restrictions in the UK will begin to be eased over the next few months which I hope is something other countries will soon be able to look forward to. Let us hope that with the new measures for lifting restrictions in 2021 we will see some return to "normal," particularly with the rapid deployment of the vaccination programme world-wide.

During this last year we have seen the introduction of new phrases into our vocabulary such as "working from home", "home-schooling" "a hybrid approach," "agile working" "you are on mute!," "is that a legacy hand?" and of course "lockdown". And for me, until the pandemic, bubbles were always associated with champagne (or in my case Lambrusco!!) and tiers were layers of wedding cakes. What a year!

September 2021 marks 50 years since the inception of the BTS. It started from very humble beginnings, when in 1971 (the year decimalisation was introduced) two University of Surrey staff members, namely Professors Jim Bridges and Ron Walker, formed the Toxicology Club. It is amazing how a discussion at 2am in the morning in a KUB (Kitchen, Utility and Breakfast room in Surrey speak!!) at the University led eventually to the founding of the British Toxicology Society in 1979- the Society we know now! Those humble beginnings set out the path for a Society whose remit has always been to promote the advancement of the science of toxicology, for public benefit. The Toxicology Club membership initially was mainly made up of UK based toxicologists as its members, but the Society is proud to have, amongst its numbers, many members from across the world. Members total around 900 currently and work in academic, clinical, governmental, and industrial organisations. To mark the 50th year anniversary a one day meeting is being considered which will take place in the latter part of this year so please watch this space for more information. It may even be a face to face meeting if we are lucky!

The **2021 Annual Congress** will be held as a virtual meeting from the **12th-15th April 2021**. The Scientific Subcommittee has been working very hard with all those who were scheduled to present in Cardiff and a revised programme is available on the website bringing together individuals from academia, industry, the NHS, regulatory science, and governmental agencies with a shared interest, enthusiasm and passion for the science and practice of toxicology. It offers a fantastic opportunity to virtually meet and network with colleagues, industry representatives, and peers across the spectrum of experience and interests within the field. The Continuous Education Programme (CEP) will precede the main Congress on the morning of Monday 12th April. The programme and how to register for the Congress be found here <https://www.thebts.org/bts-annual-congress-2021/>

On the afternoon of the 12<sup>th</sup> April will be the Annual General Meeting which is open to all members, and you should be receiving the AGM papers for this meeting by Mailchimp very soon. I look forward to seeing you at the AGM and for you to be able to hear what has happened over the last year and what there is to look forward to including the outcome of the member's survey and the revamping of the website to allow more interaction with our members. The AGM will also allow us to say our goodbyes to some of the members of the

Executive Committee who have come to the end of the terms of office including Drs Diane Benford and Liz Martin and Professor Baldrick. Between them they have served some 50 years on various committees. My thanks to Diane, Liz and Paul for your support and friendship over the years. More to say at the AGM!

The BTS are hosting a seminar on "**Improving patient safety in the home: the effects of carbon monoxide on cardiovascular disease – developing research**" which will be held on the 10th March, 14.00-16.15 GMT. There will be an opportunity to hear about research funding opportunities from the Gas Safety Trust. More details are available here: <https://www.thebts.org/?s=Carbon+monoxide>

**Your Society needs you – Animals in Safety Science:** We are looking to add testimonials from BTS members describing why and how they use animals in their research. An example on inhalation toxicology by a government scientist can be found at: <https://www.thebts.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Inhalation-Toxicology.pdf>.

Similar testimonials from those involved in this and/or other areas of toxicology across different sectors such as industry, academia, regulatory/government institutes, clinical bodies, contract research organisations, and/or non-commercial research institutes would be much appreciated. This will help us better fulfil our commitments as a signatory on the Understanding Animals in Research Concordat and highlight the excellent work performed by BTS members. If you are interested in helping with this initiative and providing a testimonial, please contact [BTS@execbs.com](mailto:BTS@execbs.com).

The Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP) is recruiting two toxicologists and the Expert Committee on Pesticides Residues in Food (PRiF) are recruiting one toxicologist. Details of each recruitment can be found on the Committee's websites:

ECP – [UK Expert Committee on Pesticides \(ECP\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

PRiF - [Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues in Food \(PRiF\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

For further information on either of these posts please contact [committee.recruitment@hse.gov.uk](mailto:committee.recruitment@hse.gov.uk). Applications must be submitted by **12.00 noon on Wednesday 28 April 2021**.

And finally, as it is March may I wish all our Welsh Colleagues "Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapusa" for the St David's Day (1<sup>st</sup> March) and Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona duit! for St Patrick's Day (17<sup>th</sup> March). And of course, International Women's Day was celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> March.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Shirley Price,

President of the BTS