

## President's Newsletter Number 5: May 2021

Dear Colleagues

Although the UK has a successful vaccination programme our colleagues in India are witnessing what devastating effects the latest wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is having there. Our thoughts are with all those affected in India and across the Globe.

I am not sure where the last few weeks have gone since our Annual Congress which was held early last month and what a great success it was! My thanks go to Drs Jason Gill, Lesley Reeve and the Scientific Subcommittee for all the hard work in delivering the 2021 Congress. I would also like to extend the thanks of the Society to our Secretariat, EBS, for the work undertaken behind the scenes.

My thanks to everyone who presented and chaired the very informative sessions. Some key highlights were the Plenary Lecture delivered by Dr Richard Stebbings (AstraZeneca) on "The TeGenero Story – There and Back Again". Dr Steve Cross (Wellcome Trust Engagement Fellow) led a workshop on "The toxic art of public engagement and outreach". Dr Tim Allen (Cambridge University) presented the inaugural BTS Network for Early-Stage Toxicologists (BTS-NEST) Invitation Lecture on "Computational toxicology for risk assessment – linking in silico predictions to adverse outcomes".

Congratulations to our award winners: Dr Bette Meek ( University of Ottawa) for the Barnes Award 2021 and Dr James Thaventhiran (MRC Toxicology Unit) for the Early Career Investigator Prize 2021. Professor Brian Lake who delivered the 2020 Paton Prize lecture and Dr Helen Prior (NC3Rs) presented the 2020 Mid-Career Investigator Prize Lecture.

The oral and poster presentations were excellent and well done to all those who presented their research. I would like to convey our congratulations to Miss Rachel Hardy, MRC Toxicology Unit, University of Cambridge, for her presentation entitled "Mitochondrial dysfunction as an off-target effect of antipsychotic drugs" Rachel was awarded a commemorative certificate and a monetary prize for the BTS Student Prize.

The Scientific Subcommittee have asked that if you have any nominations for the 2022 Paton Prize and the 2022 Mid-Career Achievement Award please forward these to: [meetings@bts/.org](mailto:meetings@bts/.org). These will be considered, and recommendations then made to the Nominations Subcommittee.

The Continuous Education Programme (CEP) organised by the Education, Training and Careers Development Subcommittee (ETCD) provided an insight into "COVID-19 repurposing therapies and vaccines: The evolution of rapid toxicological assessment and regulation".

A link to the presentations can be found here and you will need to log in with your original login details for the Congress:- <https://portalapp.execbs.eventsair.com/VirtualAttendeePortal/bts-congress-2021/btsvirtual2021/login>:

For those of you who were unable to attend the 2021 AGM I would like to introduce you to our new members on the Executive Committee:

- Dr Carol Courage who is the General Secretary and an Office of the Society. Carol is a full member of the Executive Committee.
- Professor Rob Chilcott is the Treasurer and an Officer of the Society. Rob is a full member of the Executive Committee.
- Dr David Woolley is the Chair of Communications Subcommittee and a co-opted member of the Executive Committee.
- Dr Nevine Amer is the Chair of Network for Early Stage Toxicologists (NEST) and a co-opted member of the Executive Committee. NEST will be tasked with coordinating early career networking, as well as career's outreach in universities, giving scientific input to help shape the

BTS Congress, and providing early career representation in the various subcommittees of the Society and in particular Science, Communications and Education, Career and Training Development.

- Dr Lisa Godfrey has been appointed to the position of Membership Facilitator. This is a co-opted position on the Executive Committee.

I am sure that each of them will be providing some updates on various initiatives they will be undertaking over the next year so please do keep a watch on your emails and the NewsFeed and support the work they will be doing on behalf of the membership.

At the AGM the Executive Committee proposed changes to the subscription payable by our retired members to be in line with other Societies. There was not sufficient time to fully discuss this item and for the members to vote. Given the points some members raised during the discussions the Executive Committee have decided to review the proposals as set out below and present the outcome at the 2022 AGM for consideration by the membership. In summary the Executive Committee will consider the following at their meeting in September:

- A retired member is defined as one who is fully retired from paid employment\* on the 1st January of the year in which they are applying for retired membership status.

*\*Employment is defined as a state of having paid work*

- A membership fee of 50% of the full membership fee will be levied on retired members. This is a change from the current levy of 40% but in line with other learned/professional Societies.

If any member has comments to make on these two proposals as detailed, please send them to [president@thebts.org](mailto:president@thebts.org). All comments to be received no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2021. The Executive Committee will then take these comments into consideration during their deliberations.

The BTS website is being updated by Insights Design and Printing Ltd. Further information will be provided through the NewsFeed and Social Media on website developments over the next few months.

The NewsFeed (Editorial Team: Drs Guy Healing, David Woolley, Rani Ghosh and David Jones) work hard to produce the NewsFeed and are always keen to hear from you. Drs Julianna Berrie and Kemal Haque have been working behind the scenes to promote the various social media platforms the Society uses so if you are not already on the LinkedIn platforms or Twitter please do consider these outlets to promote the work of the BTS. Our Twitter account is [@BritToxSoc](https://twitter.com/BritToxSoc) so do please use it to promote the Society. The BTS also has a LinkedIn page and this can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.thebts.org/news/bts-joins-linkedin/>

Of course, if you have anything you would like me to promote in my next Newsletter, which will be in June, please send the item to [president@thebts.org](mailto:president@thebts.org).


In the past year, the Public Communication Steering Team, chaired by Dr Phil Botham, has produced several public statements (<https://www.thebts.org/publicstatements/>) which provide authoritative, educational comment on a toxicology related topic of interest. The Public Communication Steering Team also commissioned a video on [What is toxicology – video?](#) which has had some fantastic feedback and we are about to launch a new video on Hazard and Risk. Please do take a look at the BTS website for more details.

The Official Journal of the BTS, **Toxicology Research** (Editor-in-Chief, Professor Heather Wallace), published by Oxford University Press (OUP), provides a discount for our members for online subscriptions to the journal. The cost to BTS members is just £60, which is less than 4% of the institutional subscription. If you would like to take up this offer, you can apply at: <https://academic.oup.com/toxres/subscribe>. Do please consider Toxicology Research for publication of your research. Review articles are most welcomed.

Before I close, I wanted to inform our members of the very sad news that Dr Frank Sullivan, HonF BTS passed away in April. Our thoughts are with Sue and family. I knew Frank for many years as he was one of my lecturers at the University of Surrey. It was always a great pleasure to meet with Frank and Sue at the Congress each year where Frank was a familiar face at the BTS meetings.

Frank graduated in 1955 from the University of Edinburgh, with an Honours Degree in Pharmacology. He then spent the next 40 years as Lecturer in Pharmacology and Toxicology in Guy's Hospital Medical School, University of London, which merged in the last few years with St Thomas's Hospital Medical School, retiring in 1995. When the thalidomide disaster happened in 1959, he was already working on the effects of drugs on fetal development, and he subsequently led a research team investigating the mechanisms of action of teratogenic substances. He initiated interest in the reproductive hazards of industrial chemicals, writing a book on the subject with Sue. He collaborated with the National Poisons Information Service in Guys Hospital, to set up a Teratology Information Service (TIS) to give advice and collect data on pregnancy outcomes in women exposed to high doses of drugs and chemicals during pregnancy. On his retirement, the Service was transferred to Newcastle Poisons Service and continues today as the UKTIS. Frank served on several UK Government Committees as a reproductive toxicity expert covering pesticides, food, and consumer products, and was an advisor to the WHO. Frank was the UK Specialised Expert in Reproductive Toxicology to the EU and chaired the committee which introduced the Classification for Toxicity to Reproduction in 1990. He was a founder member, and President, of the European Teratology Society and later the European Network of Teratology Information Services. He received the BTS Paton Prize in 2010 and was made an Honorary Fellow of the BTS in 2019. Frank will be sorely missed by the BTS Community and by so many who knew and worked with Frank.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shirley". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Professor Shirley Price,

President of the BTS