

Christmas 2011

Dear Members

The festive season is nearly upon us, a time when many of us reflect on the past year and contemplate the future. Your Education Trust Programme Director is no exception!

So, highlights of this year. We were the first Education trust in the Severn Deanery to be 'Quality Assessed' and our assessors found many positives. *'The success of the events can be gauged from the thriving membership numbers of the Trust and the healthy attendance numbers achieved'*. With over 60 events during the last year, they also valued our programme. *'There is also a superb overarching plan demonstrating a recurrent structure to educational events'*. And they liked the way we incorporate a *'broad based acquisition of learning needs'* into our planning. All the Educators and admin team were very proud of this QA, our first ever formal assessment, which required us to reflect, document and discuss how we work individually and as a team.

My other 'favourite things' about 2011 – expanding our team to include Phil Whitaker, a GP, Trainer and published author, resulting in an even greater variety of meetings, including Creative Writing, and an enhanced understanding of GP Training in relation to combined event planning. We have had many exceptional moments at educational events, such as Wendy Peek's 100% 'excellent' speaker rating for her fantastic Ultimate Journal Club. She had rave reviews from members, and we plan to repeat the formula twice each year. Another highlight for me is working with BANES CCG for GPF+ where education is valued alongside innovative Primary Care business management, work for which we have been independently contracted. One member wrote praising the teaching by colleagues of such calibre – citing BLS tutored by Jerry Nolan, our own 'local', national expert. We also took part in UWE research this year, confirming what we had suspected informally: that there is much to be gained by GPs learning with STs.

What I enjoy about my involvement in GP education is being there for the unique and inspirational moments of interaction that occur in a live event. We can read and work on line, but the interactions between us all which happen around a meeting enhances the learning experience. It's such a good opportunity to engage with colleagues, learning from each other and being able to discuss issues.

This brings me to coffee/tea time, when we have the opportunity to talk to colleagues, and when we educators encourage you to talk to pharmaceutical industry sponsors, as well. Your subscriptions have been kept at the same rate for a number of years and one of the main reasons is we have significant financial support from all the companies who work with us. I appreciate there are various opinions on the use of external sponsorship money, but we have very few 'no free lunch' members who chose to opt out. We have a difficult financial environment, where venue costs have been rising but pharmaceutical budgets have been reduced. We will continue to actively seek, and rely on, their support; but we will also need to increase membership fees for next year, to £180 for Direct Debit and £210 for payment by cheque. This is in line with other Severn Deanery Education Trusts; and, sorry, current reciprocity rules still apply.

Cost saving is important for BGPRT in difficult economic times, too. We have initiated some changes such as targeted meeting evaluation, rather than universal evaluation, but we are always happy to answer queries, suggestions and comments from our members. Now my most 'unfavourite thing', lack of courtesy. You may have noticed we have taken warnings of fines for DNAs off the meeting invites. There are a small number of regular offenders, and we will speak to you personally instead. We ask that when you RSVP, please put the date in your diary and consider those who are affected if you don't bother to come. Phone or email to let us know if you have a problem.

Back to my favourite things again. *When was the last time you looked at the website presentations?* I just did and read through Tim Bates's excellent Urogynaecology talk, which I hadn't been able to attend – great protocol for haematuria, too. You can also have a look at Wendy Peek's Ultimate Journal Club slides, these make perfect reading over a cup of coffee. Whenever we can we obtain presentations so you can view them on line. They are useful to share with your practice colleagues, and are a unique facility to BGPert.

Lastly what's on my radar educationally for the forthcoming year? Our initial collaborative event on Dementia for the Primary Care Team. Also for teams the annual Respiratory and Diabetes days. For GPs, four Reflective Practice meetings in the year; continued GP/ST Topic teaching afternoons; and continued evening meetings at Bath Clinic and Circle. We'll be continuing a lively programme of evening GP meetings in Wiltshire, as well as our regular collaborations such as Joint Injections, Basic Skin Surgery, Basic Life Support and Child Protection. Watch the website as we will be putting up dates for all our 60 meetings in the New Year.

Wishing all our members and their families a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,
Nicole and Linda, Anya, Phil, Ali, Julie, Fran, Tina & Iris
BGPert Administration