

Report from the Chair

It has been a busy initial period at the helm of team GAT. The regular workload is as heavy as ever but we are also trying to evolve as a group to meet the needs of an ever-changing trainee population within a spectacularly uncertain medical landscape. Economic inconsistency is forcing employers to be thrifty with their outgoing costs and that includes anaesthetists. Recent predictions suggest that although a staged cull in consultant jobs is unlikely, new appointments will be infrequent and in certain institutions retirements will not be replaced with new blood.

It is certainly a buyer's market with trainee "sellers" having to impress future employers, employers who hold the purse strings tightly. But maybe it isn't all bad. The UK has long been revered for producing superiorly trained anaesthetists. Competition for jobs will mandate excellence over adequacy in job applicants. Only the very best will get consultant posts. In other professions, the rise to the top echelons is not guaranteed and so it would seem, neither is it in anaesthesia. There is transparency in the maths; insufficient new consultant posts for us all to get one.

On the horizon is a new College trainee group which in many ways will mirror the work that we do at GAT. I will be co-opted onto the group (much as a College is co-opted onto GAT) and am confident it will improve horizontal transmission of ideas between the two

organizations. There will be a bedding-in period during which we explore the overlap between GAT and the College group and equally recognise mutual exclusion but the more trainee representation we can have at a National level, the better.

Traditionally we have used a combination of hard and soft copy survey tools to gather information from you about training issues. All AAGBI trainee members should have received an invitation to complete an on-line questionnaire. In order to stay relevant and up-to-date with trainees across the UK it is imperative that we get your comment and feedback on what matters at the moment. We are using the results to sculpt our efforts for the coming years.

The EWTR (European Working Time Regulations) continue to shape our working pattern. With the new government comes fresh rumour and unsubstantiated claims concerning opt-outs and derogations. At the moment, however, we are bound by its confines and need to ensure that the training time we have is best utilised. Anaesthesia has kept its house in good order as it has been ahead of the game in comparison to most other specialities. The exact implications of the EWTR constraints still remain unclear. It may be that we can train entirely successfully within its borders, but we must not stand on ceremony and assume that this is the case. We know that it remains a concern for you



all and we will keep you informed of any political developments. A GAT member is present on every salient Association and College committee, we provide a trainee voice where otherwise there would be none.

It is becomingly increasingly obvious to me that a lot of trainees in the UK do not know what we do as a GAT committee. This is in part down to outdated modes of information dissemination on our part. Traditionally we have relied on GAT pages in *Anaesthesia News* and website posts on the Association website. This is clearly not enough. Our main *raison d'être* is to represent your views without the same political constraints that the new College group will have. If we don't get your opinion either because you didn't know of our existence or because you are unable to interact with us, then we have failed. In this period of significant economic flux, it is incredibly important that we mould our speciality as best as possible. Once decisions have been made it is much harder to undo them. Jobs are scarce, training quality under threat and there is repeated suggestion of a potentially CCT devaluing "extra grade". We must stick together as a National team of trainees to ensure that we safeguard our speciality. GAT cannot read your collective minds! Over the next few months we will increase our e-mail



correspondence with you and I make no apologies for the extra traffic in your e-mail boxes. Please make sure that we have up-to-date electronic addresses for you by logging into www.aagbi.org with your details. The college trainee committee is under inception and should be formed soon after this is published. GAT will engage with unconditional piquancy and co-operation with this new body. We believe that it is an excellent opportunity to increase trainee representation at senior levels. Both groups will have different remits and constraint of speech, both will have uses in differing arenas. We will have elections for GAT committee members in the Spring of 2011, please look out for the adverts. Anaesthesia needs enthusiastic, sagacious representation.

GAT ASM is in Leeds 2011. ASM numbers have been static at circa 300 trainees for the last decade. We want more ! Educationally and socially we want this to be the best meeting for years. Most of the arrangements have been made and they look exceptional. Make sure you book your study leave early, plan your poster and abstract submissions (your CV back page will always look better with more National presentations) and speak to your peers and junior colleagues. The GAT ASM is approaching its 50 year anniversary and although inflexible existing training landmarks encourage trainees to attend speciality meetings early in their career, it represents a unique opportunity for anaesthesia and critical care education whilst interacting with colleagues from all over the UK.

I am very proud of my team at GAT. They work very hard for you. Good luck with a challenging future, if we can help with anything please get in touch.

Yours sincerely
Dr Rob Broomhead
GAT Chair

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