Professor Philip Calder, Flying high

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WINTER 2017

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Professor Philip Calder, President, The Nutrition Society

I am writing my column at 38,999 feet above Russia, as I fly from London to Seoul to join the Korean Nutrition Society Congress. The KNS is in its 50th year, a great cause for celebration amongst the Koreans and the rest of us. The KNS has achieved much in its 50 years, especially around setting the Korean dietary recommendations, and also, like the Nutrition Society, in organising and hosting congresses and in publishing journals. During our Society’s 75th anniversary last year, I recognised that these ingenuity but important milestones are wonderful opportunities for looking back and for sharing memories but can also be a chance for looking to the future and planning. I am really looking forward to the next days with the Koreans sharing the excitement of learning of their future aspirations. Members will be aware that we have a five-year strategy and will be happy to know that I have been working with the Trustees to ensure progress towards meeting the objectives laid down in the strategy and in gathering and documenting the evidence in support of this. I think the Society is doing very well in its progress towards successfully meeting its strategy.

The last four months have been very busy for the Society with regard to conferences. I am fortunate in having been able to attend all of the recent conferences, which have each proven to be great opportunities to meet with members. In June I attended the Irish Section Conference held at Queen’s University Belfast. This was a wonderful meeting with a very interesting programme which focused on European and International Nutrition, chaired by my good friend, Sir John Kingman, Chair Designate of UK Research and Innovation. Panel discussions followed which focused on European and global opportunities for UK science. It was encouraging to hear from the politicians themselves of the strong governmental support for scientific research. This is really important to know at this time of vulnerability pre-BREXIT. You can read more about this event and the Society’s involvement at https://www.nutrition.org.uk/blog/parliamentary-links-day-2017-first-involvement-nutrition-society.

In October I attended the International Congress of Nutrition in Buenos Aires, the four-yearly event hosted by the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS). The six day Congress was enormous, with around 3000 delegates and a vast number of sessions, often with as many as twelve parallel symposia running in parallel. The Nutrition Society hosted a symposium that was well received and members were very prominent during the Congress. Andrew Prentice gave an excellent Opening Lecture, presenting some exciting new science and also raising a number of thought-provoking issues for consideration. Philip James delivered a wonderful lecture as recipient of the IUNS Lifetime Achievement Award. Many other members presented during the Congress. During the Congress I was also a voting delegate, firstly to consider the election of IUNS Officers and Council Members and secondly to consider the venue for the Congress in 2025. The latter was a fascinating contest between Paris, Honolulu and Melbourne. In the end Paris was selected by a clear majority.

I am looking forward to the Winter Conference. The topic of “Diet, nutrition and the changing face of cancer survivorship” is a very important one and the programme of speakers looks excellent. Linked to the Winter Conference are the International Nutrition Student Research Championship and the Annual Reception, which will both take place on Monday 4 December. These are important showcase events for new nutritional science in the UK. The success and a great advertisement for the future of nutritional science in the UK. The success and a great advertisement for the future of nutritional science in the UK. The Society and it is great that we will be hosting these in the distinguished setting of the Royal Society of Medicine. Finally, it is now less than two years until we host the Federation of European Nutrition Societies (FENS) Conference in Dublin. Members will be pleased to know that the themes for the Conference have been identified and that the main speakers are already in place. The programme is beginning to be populated with symposia suggested by both the FENS Conference Programme Committee and the FENS members societies. Activity around the programme will be intense over the next few months. In the mean time make sure that the period 15 to 18 October 2019 is clearly marked “FENS Conference, Dublin” in your diary! ■
By serendipity into nutrition

Professor Catherine Geissler, Past President of The Nutrition Society, Secretary General of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences

D uring my time in Paris following Iran, I returned to California, Berkeley. This was an exciting time of political turmoil, with many social movements including the Black Power movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement and Flower Power, which engaged students and faculty alike. Through some of these activities I met a couple of Professors in the Berkeley Nutrition Department, Doris Callowly and Sheldon Margen, who told me about a research grant available to study the impact of fluoride in fish meal. The context was the current fear of worldwide protein deficiency leading to commercial production of protein concentrate from sources such as microalgae, leaves, and small fish, the latter having a high fluoride content causing concern about its possible toxic effect on teeth and bones. I also completed a Master’s degree in Nutrition.

Towards the end of my time in Paris my mind was set on heading for California, Berkeley. This was an opportunity to come face to face with the world nutrition problems. I was introduced to world nutrition problems.

Iran

I then joined a French fellow student and agricultural economist who was due to carry out his national service in his profession in Iran. Jesus Hedayat, a French professor of nutrition, had a cooperation programme with the Director of the Nutrition Institute in Tehran, Dr Hedayat. It was arranged that we should be doing a lectureship in Nutrition Planning. I was subsequently interviewed on my way to Iran for a further consultancy in Balochistan where I was offered the job.

London

Research: I began work at QEC in 1976, teaching nutrition, interventions and policy and, following my Iran experience in energy expenditure, I collaborated in research with a department colleague, Derek Miller, who was a leading authority on energy and obesity, and his team. At that time obesity was not high on the national research agenda and funding was poor. These studies included development of a low cost room calorimeter in which we compared methods of measuring daily energy expenditure, measured thermogenesis and other components of energy expenditure following consumption of caffeine, and thermogenic drugs as possible treatments of obesity. We also compared lean and matched post-obese subjects (the same size but with a proportion of body fat) to which we found lower values in the daily metabolic rate, thermogenesis and basal metabolic rate of the post-obese compared to the lean.

Other studies showed that prolonged mild exercise increased energy expenditure more than aerobic exercise. Most of the results of our joint studies were however published after Derek’s untimely death in October 1986.

After QEC merged with King’s College London my research changed direction to focus on metabolism which started, by noticing a friend’s habit of eating cornflakes with orange juice instead of milk. Wondering what effect this would make to iron absorption, I attended a seminar of the iron group in King’s about using the method to study iron absorption which led to collaboration with Professor Bobi Hider and his group. We went on to investigate methods of measuring absorption, and aspects of iron excess and deficiency including haemochromatosis, control of the related non-ferrous bound iron, as well as its production by the administration of ferrous sulphate in the treatment of anaemia, and the role of meat in iron adequacy. Other research related to the particular interests of other research students under my supervision including the effect of antioxidants on DNA damage and anorexia nervosa.

My early experience of work in Iran led to many other fascinating studies in developing countries, some as short term consultancies with the World Bank, FAO, WHO and other international agencies in China, Ethiopia, China, Hainan, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Senegal, Syria, Yemen. This work was as part of creating research groups and nutritional and health interventions. Other research was with graduate students studying various aspects of nutrition in Argentina, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Yemen. I was also involved in a EU funded project in China, to study adaptation to low energy intakes. The Chinese selected the site in Hainan Island, where it turned out that energy intakes were not very low, but nevertheless provided an opportunity to train young researchers in various techniques of nutrition research and, with John Vaughan, two editions of an illustrated book on food plants. As Chair of the International Nutrition Interest Group and more recently, as President. During this latter period I was also elected Secretary General of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) to promote and disseminate nutrition research through its four yearly International Congresses and also through Task Forces on emerging topics of current importance. All of these roles provide a vast amount of interest in both science and friendships.

Teaching: In addition to teaching undergraduate students, I have supervised PhD students that is the mainly enjoyable and interesting role of most academics. I have also worked with Hilary Powers in the publication of three editions of the Human Nutrition textbook for undergraduate and graduate nutrition students and, as well as a summary version for health practitioners and, with John Vaughan, two editions of an illustrated book on food plants. As Chair of the National Higher Education Academy based at King’s College London, I have a particular interest in conferences on various aspects of teaching including teaching methods, support for other academic staff from various disciplines and ethics, and have produced newsletters for those teaching in Health Sciences throughout the UK.

Administration: On return from sabbatical to the King’s and I, I was appointed Head of the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics. Later Headship of the Department of Health Sciences led to hosting, on behalf of King’s, a learning and teaching support network, the Higher Education Academy. This was set up by the government to balance the main focus of universities on research with more emphasis on teaching. Along with these positions was membership of many teaching and administrative committees. Some of the committee work was important and interesting and through King’s Court of Council I even met my second husband, a Court of Appeal judge.

There was also the wider base of professional societies of which I became a member over the years, including the American Society of Nutrition, while a graduate student in Berkeley, and later on the Executive Committee of its Society for International Nutrition Research; then a member of the Nutrition Society of the UK and Ireland where I had held several officers - as Chair of the International Nutrition Interest Group and more recently, as President. During this latter period I was also elected Secretary General of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) to promote and disseminate nutrition research through its four yearly International Congresses and also through Task Forces on emerging topics of current importance. All of these roles provide a vast amount of interest in both science and friendships.

Conclusion

I have been very fortunate in being able to experience such a wide range of interesting opportunities that Nutrition provides and having had the support and stimulus of so many colleagues and students. However in places where I have worked such as Syria, Sierra Leone and Yemen, it is shocking and disheartening to see the devastation that sets back all progress not just in nutrition. We have certainly progressed in science but unfortunately not in human relations, diplomacy, or conflict resolution, but that is the job of politicians. I look forward to continuing work with the Nutrition Society and with IUNS, where I have been just re-elected Secretary General for another four years.

The International Committee of the Nutrition Society, in collaboration with other societies, has set up the eNA (Electronic Nutrition Academy), an online network in response to the need to support teachers with few resources, initially in Africa. My special involvement is as Chair of the eNA Academic Board and co-chair of the IUNS Capacity Building task force through which we support the eNA amongst other activities.

FOLLOWING THE DECADE OF ACADEMIC STUDY IN CHINA DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION, PROFESSOR CATHERINE GEISSELLER DID NOT TAKE A BREAK. SHE CONTINUED HER INVESTIGATIONS ON THE IMPACT OF DIET ON ENERGY METABOLISM AND ADOLESCENT BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) AND THE ROLE OF IRON IN ANOREXIA NERVOSA.

PROFESSOR CATHERINE GEISSELLER PRESENTED HER FELLOWSHIP AWARD BY PROFESSOR PHILIP CALDER

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PREVIOUS PAGE: PROFESSOR CATHERINE GEISSELLER PRESENTED HER FELLOWSHIP AWARD BY PROFESSOR PHILIP CALDER.

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PREVIOUS PAGE: PROFESSOR CATHERINE GEISSELLER PRESENTED HER FELLOWSHIP AWARD BY PROFESSOR PHILIP CALDER.
Why does the Nutrition Society have a Strategic Plan?

Mark Hollingsworth, Chief Executive Officer

FROM THE CEO

The Society’s new Strategic Plan

I arrived in the summer of 2014 and the Honorary Officers (HOs) set me the task of developing a draft Strategic Plan. I decided to start with a blank canvas. Over the next 18 months I presented several draft plans to the HOs, which they carefully analysed and requested further work be undertaken. The draft plans were developed under two key principles:

1. Determine where the Society is
Some organisations see themselves as they want to be, not how they actually appear to others. For an accurate picture of the Society, I conducted external and internal audits to obtain a clearer understanding of the nutritional science and bioscience sectors, the policy and political environments, and the Society’s competencies and strengths (real—not perceived).

2. Identify what is important
My focus then turned to where the Society should progress. This set the direction of the Society over the long term and clearly defined the Society’s 1941 original mission was relevant for today and the future. From this analysis, I was able to determine the priority issues—those issues so significant to the overall well-being of the Society that they require full and ongoing attention.

Finally, in April 2016, the HOs were satisfied we had a robust strategy and Strategic Plan ready. The Plan would be delivered over a five year timeline principally because many of the objectives in the plan would take time to mature and develop. The outcome is a Strategic Plan with five principle objectives, further broken down into 27 sub-objectives. A copy of the full plan can be found on the Society’s website.

Where are we now?

Benjamin Franklin said ‘if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail’—I would add to those words: ‘if you fail to track you are planning to fail’. The HOs agreed that the Society’s Strategic Plan’s implementation must be checked against those words ‘if you fail to track you are planning to fail’. I would add to those words ‘if you fail to plan you are planning to fail’. Where are we now?

During one week in July, I counted 189 OA journals, an increase of about 50% over five years to come. Every Monday the plan is reviewed and the evidence of progress entered against the appropriate objective. Then, at each HOs’ meeting, the plan is formally reviewed as a standing agenda item. The HOs spend considerable time interrogating the data, amending objectives, refining and setting new direction if required. All major directional decisions for the use of the Society’s time, money and resources now emanate from the Plan—it is truly the glue that holds the Society’s direction and growth together.

Summary

Returning to my collection of books, one of the most influential in shaping my thinking on strategy is ‘Who Says Elephants Can’t Dance?’ an autobiographical account by Louis V. Gerstner Jr. of his time at IBM in the 1990s. Gerstner arrived as CEO at the IT giant in 1992 (never having personally touched a computer), when IBM was often months away from bankruptcy. Gerstner saved and turned around IBM. I remember the book for one phrase in particular: ‘I am deep into strategy, I do not have much time for vision statements - instead we need to be hard-nosed on strategy. Vision statements are inspirational only, they do not translate into outcomes’. Although this may read like a classic piece of American corporate hype, it demonstrates the key role leadership plays in strategy and strategic planning.

I suggest a strategic plan is an essential tool. We live in demanding times with non-profit organisations facing increasing scrutiny over their governance, ethics and leadership. Without a structure to guide the leadership of the Society it would be too easy to lose focus, with all the serious consequences that entails. Fortunately the Society is not moving away from bankruptcy or facing a crisis, so its robust strategic plan, led by the focussed Board of Honorary Officers, is playing the shell to gather the mussels of the strong future of the Society, ensuring that its longevity and success continues for many years to come.

O pen Access (OA) publishing has expanded dramatically since the concept began to be explored some 15 years ago. This model for the dissemination of scientific information transfers the cost of publication from the consumer to the producer, with subscription charges being replaced by fees paid by authors. The initial development of OA was to a large extent a response to rapid and unsustainable increases in the prices charged by publishers for academic journals.

There are a number of successful OA journals, of course, of high quality, but OA is not always associated with quality. OA journals, of course, have impeccable credentials, being published alongside those that are behind the traditional paywall. Fully OA journals are proliferating at a remarkable rate, the majority of which are produced by obscure commercial publishers. Many will be familiar with the daily deluge of requests to submit an article to a new OA journal. These solicitations are often written in poor English (despite bearing a UK or US address) and frequently the journal is far from one’s interests and expertise; nevertheless, the email begins with a statement of how much a recent article by the recipient was appreciated. The request for an article regularly suggests a deadline of a few days with expedited publication.

During one week in July, I counted the number of requests that I received from such journals and they totalled 43. In some, an invitation to join the Editorial Board accompanies the request for a manuscript, with an offer to reduce the publication charge, or to offset the costs of publication for members. Junior scientists in particular should be aware of these practices and not be deceived by a flattering invitation – publications in, and Editorial Board membership of, dubious journals will compromise, or may seriously damage, an individual’s reputation.

OPEN ACCESS JOURNALS – TIME FOR LEARNED SOCIETIES TO TAKE CONTROL

Professor Paul Trayhurn, Honorary Publications Officer

The Nutrition Society established its own OA journal – the Journal of Nutritional Science – in 2012. The aim was both to acknowledge the move towards OA and to provide a transfer route for the publication of articles submitted to the British Journal of Nutrition (BJN) which while scientifically sound did not quite meet the quality threshold for our flagship journal. This was at a time when the BJN was under considerable pressure in the face of a rapid increase in the number of submissions. JNS, while still receiving articles transferred from the BJN (as well as from Public Health Nutrition and Nutrition Research Reviews) now obtains most of its content through direct submissions.

The model that JNS offers has recently been mirrored by the American Society for Nutrition with publication of the January 2017 of its OA journal – Current Developments in Nutrition. OA journals established, owned, and run by Learned Societies should be the guardians of the quality and longest running scientific journal, the Royal Society’s Philosophical Transactions. Learned societies owned and run by commercial publishers are a relatively recent development, and it is argued that Learned Societies should exercise their moral authority and reassert their guardianship of publishing (1). Indeed, back in 1957 David Martin of the Royal Society stated that ‘Scientific Societies should be the guardians of the quality of scientific publication of original work in learned journals’ (1). Given the development of OA and of predatory journals, this is especially appropriate - and with JNS, taking guardianship is exactly what the Society is doing.

Note: In October 2017 Professor Paul Trayhurn took over as Editor-in-Chief of JNS from Professor Graham Burdge; the Society is most grateful to Professor Burdge for his excellent work on the journal.

WHEN SHOULD THE STUDY OF ‘WHOLE BODY METABOLISM’ BECOME ‘PUBLIC HEALTH NUTRITION’? THE PROBLEM OF ABSTRACT MISCLASSIFICATION

Professor Bruce Griffin, Whole Body Metabolism Theme Lead

THE NUTRITION SOCIETY’s Research Th emes of Public Health Nutrition (PHN), Cellular & Molecular Nutrition (CMN) and Whole Body Metabolism (WBM) were established in recognition of these specialist areas in human and animal nutrition, and as vehicles to engage its membership. Since the inception of Themes in 2010, PHN has always received a disproportionately greater number of abstracts than WBM and CMN. To a large extent, this reflects the greater proportion of our membership working in PHN, but many abstracts are misclassified as PHN when they clearly fall within the remit of WBM. In an attempt to redress this imbalance, we need to understand what makes the Themes distinct, and how they differ and inter-relate to one another. This will hopefully shed light on less well defined areas, which the problem of abstract misclassification may lie.

Our Themes are distinguished by their different experimental approaches; study designs, techniques and measurements, which define the research questions they can address and answer. The Society is dedicated to advancing the scientific study of nutrition and its application to the maintenance of human and animal health, and its Research Themes should ultimately subscribe to this mission.

However, not all outputs from PHN or CMN, will necessarily have immediate or direct implications for human health, and PHN, but build pathways to impact that transform nutritional concepts and practice over many years. Nonetheless, the Themes are still highly integrated and feed naturally into one another with the aim of producing a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. This can be viewed diagrammatically (see Figure) to illustrate areas of, thematic distinction, synergy (7) and grey areas of overlap (4-6).

Examples of research in areas 1-7. WBM (1): this can be distinguished from CMN on the grounds that ‘whole body’ metabolism is anatomically distinct from ‘cellular’ metabolism, and studied by experimental approaches that include measures of extracellular, physiological systems (e.g. vascular, respiratory, gastrointestinal, musculo-skeletal, fat depots). It may involve the quantitative imaging of these systems, isotopic trace labelling of specific metabolic pathways or a multivariate description of metabolism (metabolomics). WBM/PHN (3): this will include aspects of WBM for which there is a direct association with human health and disease, a good example of which is serum biomarkers that are used extensively as surrogates of hard clinical endpoints in nutrition research. Associations between serum biomarkers, health and disease, have been rigorously defined by reference ranges, clinical cut-offs and/or action limits, which provides immediate translation from WBM to PHN. CMN/PHN (6): the same applies to biomarkers of disease arising from cellular events, which could be a cellular protein or the change in expression of a gene (nutrigenomics) or from the influence of a genetic mutation or polymorphism on the response to diet (nutrigenetics). WBM/CMN (4): this could include nutrient-gene interactions that affect a metabolic process and cellular events, such as gene expression. It can also involve the metabolic and cellular activities of the gut microbiota. If there is evidence that research outputs from areas 4-6 impact on health and risk of disease, this might be a case of perfect synergy (7).

An example of a nutrient with potential for representation in areas 4-7, would be dietary long chain n-3 polysaturated fatty acids. These fatty acids produce anti-arrhythmic effects on heart muscle, reduce vascular dysfunction and blood pressure, stimulate extra-cellular lipoysis (accelerate the postprandial clearance of dietary fat), up-regulate the gene transcription and translation of key metabolic proteins (4), reduce coronary atherosclerosis and prevent sudden cardiac death (7).

To consider our research THEMES as a series of overlapping circles is contrived and artificial, but if it succeeds in rescuing just a handful of misclassified abstracts from PHN, it will have had measurable impact.

WHAT FALLS INTO THE GREY AREAS (4-7) OF THE NUTRITION SOCIETY’S THEMES?

I was delighted to be elected to the role of Honorary Programmes Officer at the Summer Conference this year, and I thank you for saying this for us, particularly to those who nudged me to apply, who nominated me, and especially to my predecessor, Alison Gallagher, whose hard work and fastidiousness make Programmes a portfolio in excellent health. I will look forward now to continuing to develop the remit and scope of our programmes over the coming three years. The only downside is that I now have to move on from the role of Theme Leader for Cellular and Molecular Nutrition, which I have been doing, and have loved doing for the last six years.

The Theme Leads’ role is at a level in between the membership and the Trustees who serve that membership. The Nutrition Society assigned three Theme Leads to cover the scales at which nutrition research is undertaken: Public Health (led by Ailsa Welch), Whole Body Metabolism (led by Bruce Griffin) and Cellular and Molecular Nutrition. The Theme Leads (TLs) report to, and sit on, the Science Committee which develops and reviews the forthcoming programme of Society conferences (we start planning for each conference around 18-24 months in advance). Conferences, meetings and the Society’s scientific strategy, which form the lifeblood of the Society’s activities, are developed by this committee; TLs thereby can represent their constituency within the Society by ensuring there is enough relevant content within each conference, and thereby in the Society’s global offer, to draw in interest from across the membership. A key part of the role, and one which I have found exciting and rewarding, is the chance to develop one’s conference experience. In practice, following from Bruce Griffin’s lead, TLs each organise the Winter Conference in rotation, with a broadly medical and health theme, pursuing, developing and enriching subject areas. The high-profile of these conferences and the London location draws in the wider biomedical communities, and forms one of the centrepieces of the Society’s wider programme strategy. TLs also have opportunities to represent the Society, through commenting on consultative papers, and being sponsored to attend and present at external conferences (for example all three current TLs have represented the Society at the annual Megalventio Nutrition Conference in Sao Paulo, Brazil). From a personal development perspective, the role of TL can and should be seen as a career progression: it is ideal for a mid career academic or fellow, seeking to develop and impact upon nutritional science, pursuing opportunities for greater profile and impact beyond their host institution, and with ideas about how to draw upon their extant network capital for research. I am a proud member of the Society. There is unquestionably a concomitant growth in personal profile as a result of this activity. For me personally, although these factors were all very strong drivers in deciding to apply for the role, I have enjoyed it far more than I ever thought I would. The Science Committee is a collegiate group with interesting and supportive meetings and the interactions with Ailsa and Bruce, my peer TLs, have been an absolute joy. I have had the opportunity to attend a greater cross-section of Society conferences than I would otherwise have done and have thereby grown in terms of my knowledge and understanding of nutritional science, as well as having the chance to promote and shape best practice in Cellular and Molecular Nutrition.

The Society will be seeking candidates for the position of CMN Theme Leader in late January. The process and the job description will be made available on the website.

Regulation of the Nutrition Profession

H ow will our relationship with our professional colleagues and colleagues abroad be affected post-Brexit?

A recent meeting of European nutrition regulators hosted by the Association of Nutritional Scientists Austria (VEO) attended by former ANR Registrar, Janet Cadie and ANR Chief Executive Leonie Milner examined this precise issue. Leonie Milner noted, “When discussing the mutual recognition of nutrition qualifications leading to professional registration in different European countries, it became immediately clear that colleagues from across the EU look to the UK to lead this work. The admiration of nutrition regulators from countries as diverse as Norway, Portugal and Austria for the clarity of our professional standards and our rigorous procedures was startling.”

Working with colleagues from equivalent organisations to the ANR, our aim is to establish common qualifications and competence requirements, underpinned by shared expectations for ethical behaviour and commitment to evidence-based nutrition science across the EU. Whilst it will take time to develop a system of mutual recognition, it will be a strong message of unity and a commitment to continue to work together for public good.

It is our aim to reach a position whereby UK Registered Nutricions can automatically register as nutritionists in other EU countries without qualification barriers, and for this to be reciprocal. This would allow qualified and registered nutritionists, for example in Sweden or Denmark, who have equivalent qualifications and competences, to register here with the UKVRN, subject of course to normal visa restrictions.

We may not know exactly what will happen in the wider Brexit negotiations led by our government, but we have demonstrated that within nutrition, we have more in common with our colleagues in the EU than separate us.
following a successful bid, The Nutrition Society has the privilege of hosting the Federation of European Nutrition Societies (FENS) 13th conference, themed ‘Malnutrition in an obese world: European perspectives’. This is an opportunity that all of those involved look forward to and takes place at a time when the research and public interest within nutrition is ever stronger. Together with Professor Stefan de Henauw, I co-chair the Science Committee which is tasked with developing the scientific programme for the conference and as such, I am delighted to update you on developments.

The conference will take place at the Convention Centre Dublin (CCD) in Dublin, Ireland from 15-18 October 2019. This award-winning venue will serve as a fitting back-drop for the scientific content on offer, whilst the vibrant city of Dublin will be a great place to visit outside of the scientific sessions.

The early developments of the conference have been fast-paced and with positive outcomes. The Society has been fortunate in acquiring representation from across Europe, USA, Canada and beyond on the FENS 2019 Executive, Local and Scientific Committees. Despite the logistical restraints of such an international conference, the Society has been fortunate in acquiring representation from across Europe, USA, Canada and beyond on the FENS 2019 Executive, Local and Scientific Committees.

Dr Juliana Kiio with her poster at the IUNS-ICN International Congress by any means. I only imagine how costly the trip from Kenya to Argentina would be. However, I was determined to attend this important international Congress by any means.

I feel privileged to have received the travel grant to attend this international conference from which I benefitted greatly, and I believe it has contributed to my career growth. Thank you to the Nutrition Society.

From my presentation, I learned how to make the presentation concise whilst ensuring the findings and ideas could be easily understood by the audience. Attendance of the conference was an eye opener for me considering the high level and quality of the research which was presented. I learnt much on new research methodologies and tools, and this will greatly enhance my future research experience. Finally, this was also an opportunity to network and I was able to establish new links with other researchers with the possibility of future research collaborations.
The Student Conference, now in its second year, provides a unique opportunity for students of all levels to come together to learn and share ideas. This year’s Student Conference held on 8 and 9 September at the University of Reading continued this concept with a focus on nutritional science and transferrable skills.

Over 100 delegates attended across the two days taking part in nine Oral Communication sessions, 36 lightning sessions (pithy three minute slots for students to summarise their research projects) and 10 Nutrition Society Summer Studentship presentations. This combined with CV workshops, career panel discussions and plenty of networking, made for an energetic, thought-provoking conference.

There was strong support from senior academics, with Nutrition Society President, Professor Philip Calder opening the conference, Professor Julie Lovegrove, Hugh Sinclair Chair in Human Nutrition, University of Reading, gave an edifying keynote lecture on fats and heart disease. Setting the scene, Professor Lovegrove discussed global levels of heart disease and the rapid increase in low and middle income countries, before considering the role of dietary fats in cardiovascular disease.

Our President took centre stage again to encourage, please email membership@nutritionsociety.org with your expression of interest.

www.nutritionsociety.org/about/committees/student-body-council If you are interested in joining, please email membership@nutritionsociety.org with your expression of interest.

CONFERENCES

SUMMER STUDENTSHIPS

2017 Summer Studentship: Michelle Young

University of Roehampton
Dr Sue Reeves (Supervisor)

Each year, The Nutrition Society offers a number of Summer Studentships to undergraduate members interested in a career in nutritional science. The Studentships provide students with the opportunity to undertake a period of research in a university, research institute or industrial setting over the summer months. All winners are supported by an academic supervisor.

Michelle Young, University of Roehampton, supported by Dr Sue Reeves, was one of the 2017 Summer Studentship winners. Michelle’s project entitled ‘The nutritional value of children’s meals in restaurant chains in the UK’ analysed the nutritional content of children’s menus at full service and fast food restaurants in 22 restaurants across the UK. With help from Michelle’s supervisor Dr Sue Reeves, she applied for the research grant and what she learned from the experience.

What inspired you to apply for the Nutrition Society Summer Studentship?

This project was driven by experience of eating out with my son. In general, I have been unimpressed by the poor choice of vegetables available on children’s menus, and the large portion sizes. The poor choice inspired me to carry out a rigorous investigation into the nutrient content of children’s meals. I was aware of the Society Studentship but understood that it focused on laboratory-based research projects until my supervisor, Dr Sue Reeves, approached me and suggested I apply. My undergraduate study has instigated a career change so I am keen to get as much practical experience as possible. This project provided an ideal platform for me to gain relevant experience over the summer.

Were there any challenges you had to overcome during the project?

I was over-optimistic about how smoothly the project would run, particularly the timeframes. Some phases of the project took longer than expected, especially the data analysis. Throughout the project I needed to manage large data sets to create the meal combinations. I expected this to be the most challenging aspect of the project, but once I worked out the methodology, I could replicate this across the data.

Prior to starting the project, I thought I would relish working independently on a large project, however I missed discussing aspects of my work and sharing ideas with fellow students. That was a surprise for me and taught me a lot about the value of collaboration, and also about how I prefer to work.

What did this project teach you about research and being a researcher?

Writing the final report really forced me to condense my writing style and be precise. It was arduous, but an excellent opportunity to learn how to edit my own work. Collecting the data and creating the dataset were tasks I could complete independently, however for the data analysis I really benefitted from my supervisor’s input and her suggestions on the direction of the analysis.

You presented your study at the Society’s student conference, was this a valuable experience?

I enjoyed presenting at the Student Conference and sharing my findings. The other students seemed interested in my study and asked questions which were rewarding. It was also interesting to learn which aspects of the study others pick up on, as these differed to what I thought the most important findings were.

How do you feel this opportunity will enhance your study and future career?

I have learned a lot from this project. Writing the abstract and presenting at the Student Conference was excellent practice for learning how to be clear and concise when presenting results. I think this will serve me well both academically and professionally. The studentship reminded me that, whilst I very much enjoy research, collaboration is very valuable, and enjoyable. This project confirmed my interest in public health nutrition and highlighted how the environment can influence positive food choices. I am definitely spurred on to try to make a difference in this area.

The emphasis shifted on day two with a greater focus on career development and transferrable skills. Honorary Training and Education Officer, Penny Hunking, opened the day with informative insights into being a Freelance Dietitian and Nutritionist. With a vast amount of experience, Penny had lots of valuable advice for those thinking about freelance careers including, find a professional identity which is marketable, be bold and create work opportunities, keep your knowledge up to date through CPD and, networking is key.

Career panels played a key role in the developmental focus of the conference with representatives from across the nutrition community discussing a range of career options available to graduates. A second panel of experts gave tips on CV writing, interview preparation and how to sell yourself with key take home messages: focus on your strengths; always ask for feedback; be aware of the information you have on social media, a prospective employer could search for you. Supporting the sessions were five CV clinics held during the breaks giving students the opportunity to receive feedback on their current CV.

Michelle Young presenting at the Student Conference

Dr Danielle McCarthy, a Registered Nutritionist, and Anna Wheeler, Nutrition Freelance Consultant, both with over 15 years’ experience working in the food industry, instigated a career change so I am keen to get as much practical experience as possible. This project provided an ideal platform for me to gain relevant experience over the summer.

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**Update from the Irish Section**

Professor Lorraine Brennan, Secretary, Irish Section

Looking back on 2017, the Irish Section has had a successful and exciting year. The Postgraduate Conference in February, hosted by Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), was a success. As usual the standard of the presentations was excellent and it was a pleasure to see so many questions for the speakers from fellow postgraduate students.

The Irish Section Summer Conference was held in Riddell Hall, Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) from 19-21 June. Dr. Michelle McKeigh and Professor Jayne Woodsie did a superb job in putting together a very exciting programme for “What governs what we eat?”. The conference was very well attended with 175 delegates and an excellent series of speakers. I very much enjoyed the range of talks and of course the opportunities to catch up with fellow members of The Nutrition Society. The social events are always a highlight of the Irish Section conferences and this year the Gala Dinner was held in the beautiful surroundings of Riddell Hall. As always, fun was had by all and the dancing continued into the early hours!

The Irish Section was delighted to be in a position to sponsor travel for eight members to attend the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) in October in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Furthermore, the Irish Section had the privilege of being a host country for the event and this was reflected in the quality of the presentations to publicise the Society and the Irish Section.

The Irish Section conferences and Summer School in Riddell Hall, Queen’s University Belfast, on 19-21 June will be held at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow, on the 26-27 of March 2018. The aim of the conference is to present the latest cutting-edge research on interactions between nutrients and the consequences of these interactions on health and disease. Specifically, it will address how the competition between nutrients may affect bioavailability of dietary compounds, report on possible mechanisms of nutrient-nutrient interactions and demonstrate their role in protection from disease. The programme will be structured around the following topics: (i) how nutrients may affect bioavailability of dietary compounds, (ii) report on possible mechanisms of nutrient-nutrient interactions, and (iii) demonstrate their role in protection from disease. The Scientific Programme Organisers are Dr Emilie Combat and Dr Stuart Gray from the University of Glasgow. The programme has now been finalised and the speakers confirmed; please visit the Society website for further information (https://www.nutritionsociety.org/events/conferences). As all Irish Society conferences, the Spring Conference is Association for Nutrition and British Dietetic Association endorsed. The deadline for original research presentations to be submitted is 4 February 2018. We will be looking forward to welcoming you to Glasgow.

We have started thinking about the 2019 Spring Conference which will be held in Abertay University Dundee, with a likely theme on “individual differences in nutritional responses”. Dr. Karen Barton from Abertay University and Dr. Jo Cecil from St Andrews University are the Scientific Programme Organisers and will be glad to hear your suggestions. We will be able to provide more detail as the programme develops.

We are always looking to engage with our membership; we do not currently have vacancies on the committee, but if you are keen to join in the future, or you have ideas for future symposia topics, please get in touch at office@nutrition-society.org. The Scottish Section of the Society exists to provide a forum for nutrition education and research in Scotland, and arranges research meetings easily accessible to Scottish members.

**Update from the Scottish Section**

Dr Spiridoula Athanasiadou, Secretary, Scottish Section

Since the last Gazette, the members of the Scottish Section have been busy putting together the programme for the 2018 Spring Conference. The conference will be on “Nutrient-nutrient interactions” and will be held at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Glasgow, on the 26-27 of March 2018. The aim of the conference is to present the latest cutting-edge research on interactions between nutrients and the consequences of these interactions on health and disease. Specifically, it will address how the competition between nutrients may affect bioavailability of dietary compounds, report on possible mechanisms of nutrient-nutrient interactions and demonstrate their role in protection from disease. The programme will be structured around the following topics: (i) how nutrients may affect bioavailability of dietary compounds, (ii) report on possible mechanisms of nutrient-nutrient interactions, and (iii) demonstrate their role in protection from disease. The Scientific Programme Organisers are Dr Emilie Combat and Dr Stuart Gray from the University of Glasgow. The programme has now been finalised and the speakers confirmed; please visit the Society website for further information (https://www.nutritionsociety.org/events/conferences). As all Irish Society conferences, the Spring Conference is Association for Nutrition and British Dietetic Association endorsed. The deadline for original research presentations to be submitted is 4 February 2018. We will be looking forward to welcoming you to Glasgow.

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**Membership update**

As you may be aware, in 2016 the Society took membership services back in house with the aim of getting to know our members better and providing a more personal and efficient service, especially for anyone contacting the membership team in the office. We have now had the opportunity to meet or speak with many of you, either at conferences, via the membership helpline, or through email, and we hope you feel that there is a more efficient, individual, and friendly approach.

Based on your feedback, we have changed the membership from a calendar year to a rolling year, representing better value for new joiners, and better services for those renewing. This has resulted in a better spread of the busy periods around renewals and has enabled members to join at any time of the year, although autumn remains our busiest time with new students starting at universities across the country, and some existing students recognising the value of being a member.

We are now also offering a 3-year membership for members who are currently studying, starting in 2018. This approach has been introduced in order to encourage students to join the Society and we welcome the different perspectives and experience they bring. All of our members are looking for the same thing – (i) the prestige of belonging to a long established and well-regarded Nutrition Society; (ii) access to the very best current nutritional science via scientific journals and conferences and (iii) opportunities to network and collaborate with peers and world renowned scientists.

All of our membership activity is supported by the website and database, and it is our intention to continue developing both of these in order to further improve and enhance the membership experience. One goal we are working towards is a more personalised way of communicating with members leading to you only receiving information about things you are interested in, rather than the blanket approach we have had to use previously. Additionally, we are working hard to ensure we comply with the new data protection regulations (GDPR) coming into force next May. We will keep you updated on progress with this as the launch date approaches.

How can we help you improve our service to you?

- You can log into your membership account on the website and ensure your details and preferred professional interests are up to date via the “my membership” button and “edit my profile” tab.
- Tell us what we can do to help you and how we might improve the membership offering – just email membership@nutrition-society.org
Currently the world is facing an incredibly costly epidemic of obesity. Almost two thirds of UK adults are either overweight or obese and estimated costs to the UK economy are £27 billion/year. Fundamentally obesity is a disorder of energy balance, yet several decades of research has demonstrated that maintaining energy balance is much more complex than the ‘Calories in, Calories out’ equation that was once touted.

Symposia will address topics in detail such as: whole body metabolism, molecular mechanisms, and the public health implications and clinical considerations in the management of energy balance. Furthermore, the sustainability of food production and dietary recommendations will also be examined. There will be ample time for networking around parallel sessions, refreshment breaks and the drinks reception. The gala dinner will be held in the historic and beautiful Leeds Town Hall.

The abstract submission deadline will be 8 April 2018. Visit the website for guidelines on preparing your abstract and registration fees.


The Winter Conference in 2018 is being organised on ‘Optimal diet and lifestyle strategies for the management of cardio-metabolic risk’.

Cardio-metabolic risk makes a significant contribution to cardiovascular mortality in free-living populations, through its expression in central obesity and type-2 diabetes. While cardio-metabolic risk has a multifactorial aetiology, the chronic overconsumption of food energy is a major determinant, and therapeutic target, of two of its central features; excess visceral and ectopic fat. These expanded fat depots and their associated metabolic dysfunction, may also originate and be influenced by qualitative changes in macronutrients, specific foods, dietary pattern, and related lifestyle factors.

The aim of this conference is to address the latest evidence, and any consensus, in support of the role of these dietary and lifestyle factors, as therapeutic modalities for the management of cardio-metabolic risk factors.

Further details will be available on the website soon.