This time last year I was sitting in the audience heckling the President... now I am the President!

Firstly I would like to thank my predecessor, B Sethia, for handing over the reins last year. These are difficult shoes to fill but I would like to assure both him and the fellowship that I will do my best to carry on the work that B did.

Last October saw several Trustees demit office on Council and I would like to thank Professor Sir Andy Haines, Professor James Malpas, Dr Rashmi Patel and Mr Peter Richardson for all they did during their tenure. As with the Sections, so with Council – we rely on Fellows to volunteer their time to ensure the governance of the Society is adhered to, and to produce strategy to keep the RSM at the forefront of medical education in the future.

So I would like to welcome the four new Trustees who joined Council, namely Professor Philip Bloom, Dr Sarah Filson, Professor Nadey Hakim and Dr Suzy Walton.

We were also due to lose our Honorary Treasurer, Miss Rachel Hargest, when she was due to demit office at the end of September. However, in order to ensure some continuity on the Audit Committee, Council passed a Special Resolution allowing Rachel to continue in post for a further year. I would like to thank Rachel for being willing to do this.

I took over as President last July and as part of the Inauguration Ceremony, several eminent individuals were awarded with Honorary Fellowship in recognition of their contribution to medicine and science, namely Baroness Sally Greengross, Professor David Howard, Professor Tilli Tansey and former President of the RSM, Professor Sir Mike Rawlins. In addition to these awards, Professor John Betteridge received the RSM Medal in recognition of all he has done for the Society. Finally Sir Michael Marmot received the Society’s highest honour, the RSM Gold Medal, in recognition of his major contributions to global health.

I previously referred to Council’s role in the governance of the Society. As some of you will be aware, we are currently carrying out a major review of the Society’s governing documents, the Charters and By-Laws. This is a major task being undertaken by the Audit Committee. We are now almost at a point where these documents are reaching their final draft stage. The next step will be to have a consultation with Fellows on the changes, which we hope is will take place in May of this year. Once the consultation has taken place, final amendments will be made and an Extraordinary Meeting of Fellows will be held to vote on the changes, and adoption of the new governing papers.

There are other major changes taking place with regard to IT systems, but I will let Helen Gordon, our Chief Executive, report on those.

Helen has now completed her first year as our new Chief Executive, and in that time has carried out an extraordinary amount of work, particularly with regard to the education strategy. I would like to thank Helen and the Executive Team for their ongoing commitment to the Society and their willingness to help out and answer any questions, however inane they may seem!

I have carried on the custom, started by my predecessor, of publishing a monthly update on the website. I hope that you get the chance to read these and if you have any suggestions or questions that you would like addressing, please do let me know.
I would like to thank all those on Section Councils, without whom we would not have an academic programme. I appreciate all the work they do setting programmes and running meetings, particularly when the majority of them also have a day job! Without these people we have nothing of an educational nature to offer – and as medical education is our core business that would put us in a bit of a bind.

I referred earlier to the education strategy. This has been major piece of work, lead by Helen and the Dean, Dr Fiona Moss, to make sure the RSM is at the forefront of everyone’s mind when they think about CPD. The Dean will report further on this at the meeting but once again I would like to thank everyone involved in this project.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the debt we owe to all the RSM’s staff. They look after the Society, and its members, with an extraordinary combination of skill, kindness and courtesy. Without their efforts the Society would be in a very different place.

Professor Sir Simon Wessely
President