

PAST PRESIDENTS' PANEL

Julie Meadows

When I look back at my Presidency it was a challenging and exciting time where I worked closely with many colleagues.

I had been Honorary Secretary when John McClean was President and Vice-President when Viv Elton was President. I agree wholeheartedly that the teamwork is a privilege and an antidote to the isolation of our consulting rooms.

On a sad note, it was during my Presidency that John Boots died. John was a valued mentor in the work I and many others did for the Society. His wise counsel as well as his delightful sense of humour are sorely missed.

I saw the role of the President as two-fold, the stewardship of the profession and its advancement.

1. Stewardship of the profession

Firstly - stewardship: I think stewardship requires supporting members in their work as psychoanalysts to keep in front of mind the duty of care we as a profession have to the patients we treat, and to the candidates we train.

In relation to our duty of care to patients - previous administrations - under Presidents John Boots and Maria Teresa Hooke - had developed procedures to ensure that members' clinical work is open to the review of their peers. These procedures for members and training analysts to re-certify their ongoing professional development were written into the bye-laws, and John McClean, Gil Anaf, and I worked to put these bye-laws related to professional conduct into practice.

In relation to our duty of care to our candidates – this requires that we offer them the highest quality training that we can.

My executive put a lot of work into the creation of the new national training body – NEAT - and I would like to recognize the enormous efforts particularly by Matt McArdle and Louise Hird in establishing this.

This Committee is working well, however, there is more work to do here. Each Branch is small so the task of running all aspects of the training separately in each Branch, is hugely resource hungry. As well as this, the presence of unresolved transferences in these small groups makes organisational life at best complicated, sometimes fraught.

2. Advancement of the profession

I saw development of our interface with the public, in particular our web-site, as critically important to the promotion and hence advancement of the profession.

Viv Elton had initiated development of an APAS web-site. This was an APAS site, but each Branch and Institute also had its own site. This meant we had seven sites for some 90 members. Viv's vision had been to include the whole Society including Branches and Institutes on one web-site. Louise Hird in Sydney and Milena Mirabelli in Melbourne and I all saw the huge benefits to one consolidated web-site and we worked together to develop a new APAS site which included each Branch and Institute.

At the same time, we redesigned the Winn Clinic, Psychoanalysis Down Under and Foundation sites.

We funded these web-sites largely through pursuing long unpaid member subscriptions, and sharing costs between APAS and the Institutes. Big thanks here to Adele Carmady who was Treasurer, and the tireless Georgina.

Promoting our events

Developing the web-site and designing an aesthetic to represent the Society to the public gave us graphics and images to use in the email marketing of our events.

I have been very pleased to see that the Society and Institutes are using these graphics so that the advertising for our events that the public sees is readily recognizable. I do think there is room for improvement and would be delighted to work with interested members to continue to improve the image we present and to make it as easy as possible to produce emails for email campaigns advertising our events.

Adelaide Conference

I feel that that it is important for the Society to hold our Annual Conference in Adelaide from time to time, as well as in the bigger centres in Sydney and Melbourne. Adelaide colleagues, were also keen to host the conference in their home city, in order to support the work done over many years in establishing a presence for psychoanalysis in that city. This conference in 2019 was the first conference in Adelaide for over 20 years. Of course, with the conference in a smaller city we risked not covering our costs, as fewer people attended the conference than would have been the case in either Sydney or Melbourne. That was the case, but I think the end result in showcasing the work of the Adelaide Institute and Branch made the event worthwhile.

Asia Pacific

I was fortunate to be the President at the time that the idea of an Asia Pacific region moved closer to reality. This was founded on hard work by many but particularly by Maria Teresa Hooke. It was at the Asia Pacific Conference in Taiwan that the presidents of the groups in

the region met and formed the Asia Pacific Planning committee, of which I became the member representing APAS. In London in 2018 I was honoured to be elected to be the first observer from Asia on the IPA board. It was from this vantage point that I was able to see at first hand the respect with which our society is viewed in the region.

That position is now held by Louise Gyler who is also now Chair of the Planning Committee.

It is wonderful to see the growth of collegial collaboration in the region with members and candidates from groups in Asia attending APAS and Sydney Institute on-line seminars. I sincerely hope that this collaboration will continue to grow.

Committee work

In this conference we will address the psychic dimensions of memory, mourning and reimagining the future, and the processes involved in forgetting.

While addressing the psychoanalytic roots of forgetting is important, we may falsely attribute “forgetting” to the impact of psychic processes, when it may be at least partly attributable to something much simpler.

I suggest good record keeping and attention to handover from one committee to the next certainly needs attention. Without addressing these practical problems, we are doomed to keep reinventing the wheel.