

The Association of Clinical Pathologists

Winter 2008

acp **N**ews

Storm Warning?
preliminary opinions on
the final Carter Report

short codes for skins
old animal bones
Las Vegas

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Calendar of Forthcoming Meetings

Date 2009 & Organisation	Title	Venue	Contact Details
26 February Association of Clinical Pathologists	Liaison and Branch Officers Meeting: More Hot Management Issues for Consultants	Institute of Physics 76 Portland Place, London	Jacqui Rush Tel: 01273 775700 jacqui@pathologists.org.uk
16 May	Problems in Tumour Pathology	Postgraduate Education Centre, Christie NHS Foundation Trust	Mrs Liz Ryan Tel: 0161 446 3277 liz.ryan@christie.nhs.uk
11 - 12 June Association of Clinical Pathologists	ACP Annual Scientific Meeting - Histopathology	RIBA 66 Portland Place, London	Alison Martin Tel: 01273 775700 alison@pathologists.org.uk
1 - 2 July Association of Clinical Pathologists	ACP Annual Scientific Meeting - Chemical Pathology	Taunton Conference Centre	David James david.james@tst.nhs.uk
2 - 4 September Association of Clinical Pathologists	ACP Management Course	Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgefield London	Jacqui Rush Tel: 01273 775700 jacqui@pathologists.org.uk

The ACP accepts no liability for errors or omissions in this calendar of meetings. Readers are reminded that advertised meetings may be cancelled. Those intending to attend are obliged to check the details on booking with the organiser in every instance. There will be a £25 administration fee per issue for entries in this table.



Dr Burton is Assistant Editor of acp News and Lecturer in Histopathology at the University of Sheffield



Prof Kerr is Assistant Editor of acp News and Consultant Microbiologist at Harrogate District Hospital



Dr Twomey is Assistant Editor of acp News and Consultant Chemical Pathologist at Ipswich Hospital

acp News

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Cover Story



Troubled Water

The waters of the Swan River in Perth change almost minute by minute. This photo was taken in late Winter last year, walking along the East Perth cycleway one blustery evening. It should have presaged some lousy weather but the following few days were mild and sunny.

Invitation to Contributors

In addition to the constant flow of material from ACP Council, ACP committees and ACP branches, *acp News* needs new material from you, the members of the ACP.

Pathology news items (1200-1500 words): Any items related to the ACP or the College, pathologists in general, or medical and management matters that may have an impact on pathologists.

Articles (1500-2000 words): These can be papers, reviews, essays, commentaries, critiques or polemics. Submitted articles are always very welcome, as well as suggestions for articles and/or details of people whom the editor may approach.

Reports (1000 words): These may be personal views and reports on interesting meetings, travel or anything else of interest to the readership. Travel reports are specifically for holders of ACP travel fellowships; however, other reports from abroad are welcomed.

Columns (600 words): Regular and irregular columnists exercise their thoughts. Please feel free to rant.

Pathological creative writing: All literary forms, including short stories, serials, surrealism and even poetry.

Appreciations (1000-1500 words): We prefer appreciations on retirement, rather than obituaries. Please discuss these with the editor before submission.

Photo-journalism: Favoured subjects include pathologists doing something interesting, or College and ACP officers doing anything at all. Interesting or artistic photographs are welcomed.

Cartoons: Suggestions are welcomed.

Curetings: Jokes and humorous titbits are always needed.

Debate: Letters to the editor are welcomed, but may be shortened for publication, or even converted into articles. Please try to refrain from writing unless you are prepared to be published. All criticisms of organisations or named individuals will entitle the parties to a right of reply. Please bear in mind the UK libel laws!

Trainees: Trainees are especially encouraged to submit material in any and all of the above categories. These will normally be placed in the trainees' section. Appointments committees in particular value publications in *acp News*.

Editorial Policy: The editor would particularly encourage overseas contributors, material from trainees, material from non-histopathologists, commentary on current affairs in pathology, occasional columnists, innovations in pathology, humorous writing on pathology-related topics, and anything downright cantankerous.

Format: The *acp News* style guide was published in the autumn 2005 issue, pages 11-12, and copies can be obtained from the editor. The publication is a magazine, not an academic journal, and long lists of references are generally considered unnecessary. Where given, references should be in the Vancouver style and should be kept to a maximum of around six per article, unless absolutely necessary. Alternatively, authors may prefer to give a recommended reading list, or a list of relevant internet links. The editor prefers these as they take up less space.

All suggestions are welcome; however, the editor's decision is final.

acp News is published quarterly. Regular publication dates are:

Issue	Publication month	Copy date
SPRING	February	5th December
SUMMER	May	5th March
AUTUMN	August	5th June
WINTER	November	5th September

Copy is best submitted by email, or on disc if the file size is large, in any version of Microsoft Word, although it should be possible to accommodate other formats. Submissions on paper by snail mail will also be accepted. Illustrations can be sent as transparencies or prints, but high-quality digital images (TIFF or JPEG) are preferred.

Please send email submissions direct to the editor at simon.knowles.acpnews@gmail.com

Editorial

The Second and Final Carter Report

Lord Carter of Coles has an impressive track record in business. He has also established a reputation as someone with an ability to cut through a great deal of nonsense to deliver concise and pragmatic reviews on a variety of public sector issues. He was the founder of Westminster Health Care and maintains commercial interests in insurance, healthcare and information technology. In short, his credentials are impeccable and his recommendations on the future of NHS pathology should be taken seriously by the Department of Health and by us all.

The report on the second and final phase of the Carter Review of pathology is now in the public arena. A brief overview and some rapid responses are included in this issue and we will continue the analysis in the Spring issue of the *acp News*. Your contributions will be critical to the debate. Carter is not wholly prescriptive in his view of the future landscape but we should be left in absolutely no doubt – the status quo is not an option.

At a first glance, there is little to suggest that Lord Carter has got it broadly wrong this time around, although his suggestion that the NHS should scrap all its plant and procure from scratch may raise a few eyebrows at Treasury. Sorting out transport, logistics and IT connectivity will – without even starting to address laboratory productivity – go a huge way to improving clinical, service and system quality. The main headline for the report is, of course, the recommendation for three or fewer “megalabs” per SHA. However, Patrick Carter maintains that he does not advocate a “one size fits all” approach to laboratory reconfiguration.

Interestingly, there are some genuine tensions within the report. While Carter appears to have little truck with “command and control” culture he also seems somewhat intolerant of the independence of Foundation Trusts, which is seen as a barrier to implementation of an ambitious scheme of laboratory consolidation. If the proposed reforms can be demonstrated to yield the benefits that the Carter Report promises then such resistance, where it exists, is likely to be very short lived indeed. Business, when all is said and done, is business.

A word of caution here: many of the Carter recommendations demand direct activity at the Department of Health. Past history would suggest that, if the DH is left to its own devices, one size is precisely what will be recommended as a “guideline”, coupled with a hand-washing claim that all such decisions have been downward delegated already. Maybe. But the PCTs will have more than enough on their fiscal plates in 2009 without getting embroiled in a painful reconfiguration of a service which is perceived as peripheral to their core business. Meaningful reforms that are “Carter Compliant” are likely to stem from thoughtful local initiatives. We need to be sure that Clinical Pathologists take the lead.

Elsewhere in this issue

We explore old animal bones and take a closer look at Ian Chandlers Y-chromosome and remind ourselves of the amount of work done in 2008 to launch National Pathology Week. We’ve added a bit of tradecraft from Bob Mathers with the first of a series of articles on improving your presentation skills. And all the usual suspects are banging away in the columns. This Winter edition was put on hold, pending the official launch of Carter, providing an excellent opportunity to wish all readers a very successful 2009.

Position Vacant:

The current Editor of the *acp News*, conscious of his limitations (humour, sense of), seeks applications for the highly prestigious, newly created position of

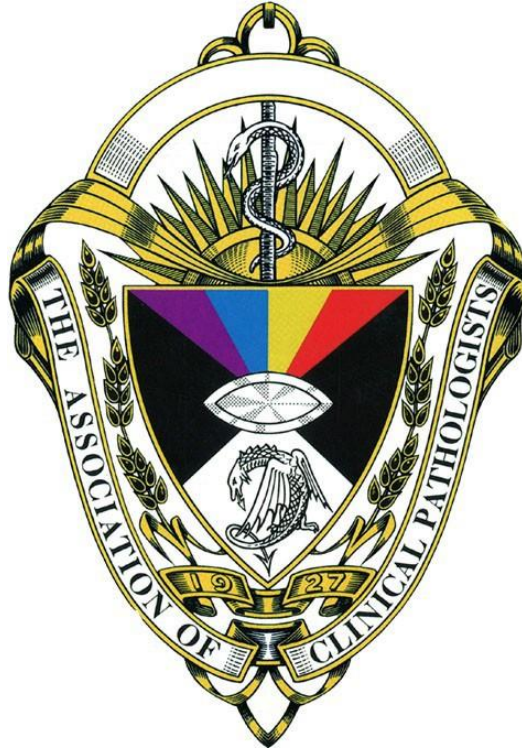
Assistant Editor (Curetings)

The successful candidate will be responsible for trawling potential sources of visual and written humour, identifying smutty typographical errors or malapropisms, soliciting material from regular and occasional contributors and then explaining it all to the humourless old git in the editorial office. With regard to inclusion of such material, the Editor retains exclusive authority and will randomly exert such with ruthless pomposity.

Expressions (of interest) to the Editor who may elect to publish such expressions if they are sufficiently colourful.



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