

# **THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE**

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**



**1981 - 2011**

Authors: Anne Field  
Alan Mighell  
John Steele

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1981, a group of individuals, with an interest in oral medicine, decided to form a society to be called the British Society for Oral Medicine. To understand the background to this, we need to look at some of the events that took place earlier and the emergence of oral medicine as a specialist discipline of dentistry.

### **ORAL MEDICINE: THE EMERGENCE OF A SPECIALTY**

Sir Jonathan Hutchinson (1828 - 1900), surgeon to the London Hospital, can probably be regarded as the father of oral medicine and encompassed oral medicine as practised in the totality of medicine. He is particularly well known for describing 'Hutchinson's interstitial triad' seen in congenital syphilis, ie 'interstitial keratitis', notched incisor teeth and deafness.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century oral mucosal disease was only really detailed in textbooks of dermatology and it was not until 1948 when Hubert Stones, of the University of Liverpool, published his book entitled Oral and Dental Disease that the general medical aspects of oral disease were emphasised.

In the 1950s an interest in oral medicine was shared by those who already had clinical expertise and a research interest in oral surgery and oral pathology. However, it was the Nuffield Foundation's decision to fund the first two Chairs in oral medicine that was pivotal in the establishment of the specialty. Martin Boyes filled one of these Chairs in Oral Medicine at Newcastle University and Martin Rushton filled a Chair in Dental Medicine at Guy's Hospital. The Nuffield Foundation also funded Scholarships and Fellowships, which were subsequently awarded to many of those individuals who were attracted to the new discipline of oral medicine throughout the 1950s and 60s. The Eastman Dental Hospital had already become the Postgraduate Dental Institution (1948) and has, since then, played a significant role in the delivery of postgraduate courses in oral medicine for trainees from both the UK and overseas. In Wales, Brian Cooke established his oral medicine unit in Cardiff and, in Scotland, David Mason headed the Department of Oral Medicine and Pathology in Glasgow. David Mason also founded, with Dean Millard of the University of Michigan, the prestigious series of World Workshops in Oral Medicine which continue to flourish.

As diagnostic investigations involving immunopathology, haematology, biochemistry and imaging improved, together with advances in therapeutic interventions such as corticosteroids, it became apparent that oral medicine was gradually separating from oral pathology. It was also increasingly challenging for individuals to maintain the knowledge and expertise required to encompass both disciplines. In the 1990s and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century there were, however, a diminishing number of oral pathologists who were also practising clinical oral medicine. Another factor which separated the two disciplines was the fact that oral medicine was originally linked with oral surgery in training overseen by the Royal College of Surgeons, whereas the training programme in oral pathology was under the auspices of the Royal College of Pathologists.

Oral pathology will however continue to underpin the practice of oral medicine and the establishment of the British Society for Oral Medicine (BSOM) owes much to a group of individuals who were originally part of an informal group calling themselves the Oral Pathology Club. This was re-constituted as the British Society for Oral Pathology (BSOP) five years before the foundation of the BSOM. The BSOP subsequently became the British Society for Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology

(BSOMP).

It was not until 1992 that the General Dental Council Specialist List in Oral Medicine was introduced.

## **FOUNDATION OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE**

At a meeting held in the Royal Dental Hospital, London, on 24 February 1981, a decision was made to form a Society named the British Society for Oral Medicine (BSOM). The term 'Oral Medicine' included all aspects of medicine relating to the mouth or involved in the investigation or treatment of diseases of the mouth.

The objectives of the Society were to promote the practice of oral medicine, through teaching and research, and to encourage communication between those with an interest in any aspect of oral medicine.

Persons engaged in the teaching, research or practice of oral medicine would be eligible for membership of the Society.

At an inaugural meeting of the Society the following were elected:

Founder President:	Professor Brian Cooke
President Elect:	Professor Desmond Farmer
Secretary and Treasurer:	Dr Martin Ferguson
Members of the Council:	Professor Roy Duckworth
	Dr Murray Walker
	Mr John Potts



Professor Brian Cooke, Founder President of the BSOM

## **THE NEWSLETTER**

At the inaugural meeting of the BSOM a decision was made to publish a newsletter bi-annually. The purpose of this was to encourage communication between individuals engaged in any aspect of oral medicine. In addition there was a regular topic review and information about other meetings of potential interest to members.

The first newsletter of the BSOM was circulated in the summer of 1981 and included a topic review on chronic median rhomboid glossitis by the Founder President, Professor Brian E D Cooke. At that time, there was already a consensus opinion that this lesion was a clinical expression of a localised candidal infection and not (as

originally thought) a developmental anomaly, resulting from the persistence of the tuberculum impar on the dorsum of the tongue.

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANNUAL MEETINGS

After the inaugural meeting in the Royal Dental Hospital in 1981, the next BSOM meeting was held in Cardiff on 21 May 1982. This was for one day only and the programme included short papers and a guest lecture, followed by a clinical session involving patients. Since then there has been a BSOM Annual Scientific Meeting every year, with some held jointly with the Oral Pathologists and others with either a European or international oral medicine society. Meetings have been held throughout the UK including Belfast, as well as Dublin and Cork. Programmes of meetings have extended to include two days and include symposia themed to embrace aspects of general medicine, underpinning the practice of oral medicine, as well as orofacial pain and evidence-based medicine.

Research presentations have also been an important part of annual BSOM meetings and in 1987 the first BSOM Research Prize was awarded to Maxine Partridge, for her presentation on 'Expression of Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor and Production of Transforming Growth Factor Alpha by Squamous Cell Carcinoma'.

Since then the BSOM has awarded both Junior and Senior Research Prizes. In 2007 a Research Enablement Travel Bursary was introduced to encourage, and fund, juniors and trainees to undertake oral medicine-related research overseas and to report back to BSOM annual meetings.

## RECIPIENTS OF BSOM RESEARCH PRIZES

	NAME	PRIZE
1987	Maxine Partridge	Combined
1990	Michael Aldred Graham Ogden (shared)	Junior
1991	John Field David Felix	Senior Junior
1997	Alan Mighell	Junior
2001	Tim Hodgson	Junior
2003	Luke Dawson	Senior
2004	Tatiana MacFarlane Martin Thornhill	Junior Senior
2008	Patricia Correia	Junior
2009	Karwan Moutasim	Junior

Meetings have mostly been organised locally by members of the Society attached to oral medicine centres. As time progressed, clinical governance issues relating to patient confidentiality and requisite checks of clinicians, precluded the inclusion of patients as part of the BSOM Annual Meetings; this was considered a retrograde but inevitable step by many members of the Society. Case Reports with digital images have taken the place of patients and the BSOM meeting always provides a forum for lively debate and the discussion of patients presenting with diagnostic or therapeutic challenges.

In 2010 the BSOM held a joint meeting with the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the European Association of Oral Medicine, which incorporated the 5<sup>th</sup> World Workshop

on Oral Medicine. A Transatlantic Study Day was also arranged, reviewing 40 years of oral medicine and highlighting progress and future challenges for the specialty in respect of research and the clinical management of common oral mucosal conditions. The 2010 meeting was the largest dedicated oral medicine meeting ever held, and attended by over 500 delegates. It provided an opportunity not only to showcase oral medicine in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, but hopefully herald the start of increased co-operation between oral medicine societies throughout the world, and an opportunity to pool resources for both research and protocols to manage common conditions encountered, in oral medicine practice.

Oral medicine in the UK and Ireland has now evolved to be an important specialist discipline within dentistry and this success is owed to the early pioneers who founded the BSOM. It is befitting that the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Society will be held jointly with the BSOMP in Sheffield; thus cementing our shared expertise and research interest in orofacial disease.

The BSOM dinner has become an integral part of annual Society meetings; it is always well attended and continues to provide a convivial atmosphere to exchange news and views. In 1985 the meeting held in Glasgow was particularly memorable when the delegates' hotel caught fire and attendees were evacuated in their nightclothes. In 2009 the BSOM annual dinner was held in the internationally renowned Ballymaloe Country House Hotel with its adjacent cookery school, providing world class cuisine for all attendees to sample.



Council members at the annual dinner, held at the Ballymaloe Country House Hotel in Cork – 2009.

In 2011, the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the BSOM, our joint annual dinner will be held in Chatsworth House in Derbyshire.

## BSOM ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS : VENUES

YEAR	MONTH	VENUE/CITY
2010	September	London (joint with European Association of Oral Medicine)
2009	May	Cork
2008	May	Glasgow
2007	May	London (joint with BSOMP)
2006	May	London
2005	May	Cardiff
2004	May	Manchester
2003	May	Dundee
2002	May	Leeds
2001	May	Birmingham
2000	May	Edinburgh (joint with BSOMP)
1999	May	Liverpool
1998	April/May	London
1997	May	Newcastle upon Tyne
1996	August	Belfast (joint with 3 <sup>rd</sup> European Congress of Oral Medicine and the Swedish Oral Medicine Society)
1995	May	Sheffield
1994	May	London
1993	July	Dublin
1992	July	Edinburgh (incorporated into 2 <sup>nd</sup> International Congress on Oral Medicine)
1991	September	Cambridge (organised by Eastman Dental Hospital)
1990	May	Cardiff
1989	April	Bristol
1988	April	Manchester
1987	September	London
1986	April	Leeds
1985	May	Glasgow
1984	May	London
1983	May	Liverpool
1982	May	Cardiff

In Oxford (2003) BSOM joined with the British Society for Oral & Maxillofacial Pathology, the British Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery and the British Association of Head & Neck Oncologists for a Symposium on Epithelial Dysplasia.

### THE COUNCIL OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE

In 1981, when the Society was founded, there were three officers on Council; the President, President Elect and Honorary Secretary/Treasurer, with three members representatives. Over the last 30 years the membership of Council has increased to nine individuals, with representatives of Fellows and Members and also the Fellows in Training and the Juniors Group of the Society. In 2005 the posts of Honorary Secretary and Treasurer were split.

### Officers on BSOM Council over the last 30 Years

President	Honorary Treasurer	Honorary Secretary
Anne Field (2009 – 2011)	Philip Atkin (2010 – )	Crispian Scully (2010 – )
Farida Fortune (2007 – 2009)	Michael Escudier (2005 – 2010)	Alan Mighell (2008 – 2010)
Michael Lewis (2005 – 2007)		Anne Field (2005 – 2008)
David Felix (2003 – 2005)	Mike Lewis (2003 – 2005)	
John Hamburger (2001 – 2003)	David Felix (1994 – 2003)	
Stephen Porter (1999 – 2001)		
Joanna Zakrzewska 1997 – 1999)		
Stephen Challacombe (1995 – 1997)		
Philip Lamey (1993 – 1995)	Joanna Zakrzewska (1992 – 1994)	
David Wray (1991 – 1993)	Philip Lamey (1991 – 1992)	
D Murray Walker (1989 – 1991)	David Wray (1984 – 1991)	
Crispian Scully (1988 – 1989)		
Harold Jones (1987 – 1988)		
Roy Duckworth 1986 – 1987)		
Frederick Hooper (1985 – 1986)		
David Mason (1984 – 1985)		
Roderick Cawson (1983 – 1984)		
Desmond Farmer (1982 – 1983)		
Brian Cooke (1981 – 1982)		

### THE JUNIORS GROUP OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE

The BSOM has always striven to support all those who aspire to undertake specialty training, as well as junior dentists and doctors considering a career in oral medicine. In 1992 the Juniors Group of the BSOM was formed with an elected representative on Council, who is a specialty trainee. In 1995 this representative was granted full voting rights on Council.

<b>Juniors Representative on Council</b>	
<b>Dates</b>	<b>Fellow in Training</b>
2009 – present	Helen Rogers
2010	John Steele (Acting)
2008-09	Anne Hegarty
2007-08	Richard Cook
2005-07	Tim Poate
2003-05	Rigel Allan
2002-03	Alan Mighell
2000-02	Tim Hodgson
1998-2000	Mike Pemberton
1996-98	Alex Crighton
1994-96	John Gibson
1992-94	Anita Nolan

The Juniors Group of BSOM has expanded considerably over the years and arranges meetings twice a year at which there are guest speakers, clinical updates and the presentation of clinical cases. In 2008 a Juniors Meeting Presentation Prize was introduced for the best oral presentation and this supported the winner to attend the annual meeting of BSOM. Bursaries have also been provided by BSOM for juniors to support their attendance at BSOM meetings.



Juniors Group Meeting with guest speaker in Liverpool - 2010

## **THE EVOLUTION OF SPECIALTY TRAINING AND THE ROLE OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE**

The BSOM has had a significant input and influence on the training pathways in oral medicine since the specialty split from oral surgery. In 1991, a certificate of accreditation in oral medicine was first awarded by the Faculty of Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. Post-Calman, successful trainees in oral medicine were granted a Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training.

In 2010 the General Dental Council approved a Specialty Training Curriculum for Oral Medicine. This was written by a working party convened by the Oral Medicine

Subgroup of the Specialist Advisory Committee (SAC) in the Additional Dental Specialties. The content and learning methods for this curriculum were based on the competency document for oral medicine originally developed by the BSOM, and subsequently approved by the SAC in the Additional Dental Specialties, in 2003.

## THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE WEBSITE

This was first developed by Alex Crighton and was then re-launched by Alan Mighell in 2003. The website has continually been updated and modified to ensure that it provides accessible and up-to-date information for members of the BSOM, as well as publicising the specialty of oral medicine to other healthcare organisations and clinical groups in medicine and dentistry. The website also plays a pivotal role in providing reliable information for the public including patient information relating to oral conditions.



The BSOM Website – [www.bsom.org.uk/](http://www.bsom.org.uk/)

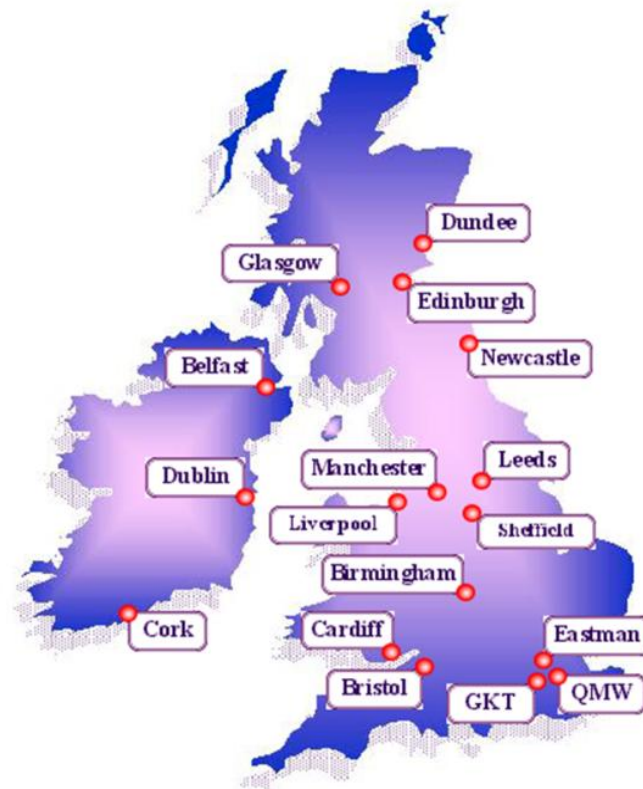
## STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE

In 2003 a working group of the BSOM revisited a document outlining the strategic direction of the Society in respect of service provision, training and career development, treatment protocols, publicity and communications and academic activities. The Mission Statement of the Society was to seek to improve the quality of life of patients with acute, chronic and medically-related disorders of the orofacial region and to encourage research to identify the pathogenesis of these disorders and thereby improve patient care.

By 2003, it had become apparent that the demand for oral medicine services was already high, as evidenced by records of clinical activity and waiting lists increasing to outstrip capacity. The need for service expansion and an increase in consultant numbers and other clinical staff integral to the practice of oral medicine was recognized. The Strategic Document at that time supported a phased expansion towards a target of one consultant in oral medicine seeing no more than one million people.

In 2011, 30 years after the foundation of the British Society for Oral Medicine, there are still only 40 consultants in the UK and Ireland; a significant number of whom are clinical academics and therefore not engaged in full-time clinical practice. This is at a

time when the demand for oral medicine services is increasing and has changed significantly over the past 50 years. Never before have we had to manage such a diverse group of disorders of the mouth and allied structures, this being the consequence of the emergence of new infectious disorders (eg HIV and HCV), the increasing numbers of patients of middle to late life, the oral consequences of systemic therapies and the increasing numbers of persons with potentially malignant or malignant disease of the mouth.



Oral Medicine Units in the UK and Ireland

In 2011 the BSOM will be producing a revised Strategy document outlining priorities for the Society and timelines for these to be delivered.

### **THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR ORAL MEDICINE: HONOURING THE PAST**

In 2003, the BSOM first awarded Honorary Fellowships to those individuals whose contribution to oral medicine was held in high esteem by the Council of the Society. The number of Honorary Fellows was limited as determined by the Council from time to time. Honorary Fellows do not have voting rights nor be eligible for election to Council.

Recipients of BSOM Honorary Fellowships in the UK and Ireland have all played an important role in the establishment of Oral Medicine as a specialty, as well as developing their own units; many were also instrumental in the foundation of the BSOM in 1981.

### Honorary Fellowships Awarded since 2003

NAME	ORAL MEDICINE CENTRE	DATE AWARDED
Professor Roderick Cawson (RIP)	London	2003
Professor Brian Cooke (RIP)	Cardiff	2003
Professor Harold Jones	Manchester	2003
Professor Sir David Mason	Glasgow	2003
Professor John Southam	Edinburgh	2003
Dr William Tyldesley (RIP)	Liverpool	2003
Professor Roy Duckworth	London	2007
Dr John Duxbury	Manchester	2008
Professor Bernard McCartan	Dublin	2009

In 2010, to coincide with BSOM holding a joint meeting with the European Association of Oral Medicine, a decision was made to award Honorary Fellowships to individuals outside the UK and Ireland whose contribution to the specialty of oral medicine was held in high esteem by the BSOM.

### International Honorary Fellowships Awarded in 2010

NAME	COUNTRY
Professor Tony Axell	Sweden
Professor Maeve Coogan	South Africa
Professor Deborah Greenspan	USA
Professor Mats Jontell	Sweden
Professor Peter Lockhart	USA
Professor Peter Reichart	Germany
Professor Roy Rogers III	USA
Professor Sol Silverman	USA
Professor Isaac van der Waal	Netherlands

## **BSOM: A BRIEF HISTORY**

This brief history has inevitably not been able to mention all those involved in the development of the BSOM. The Society, however, wishes to recognize all those who have played a significant role in the development of BSOM, but have not been cited.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The authors would like to thank all members of the BSOM for information they provided for this Brief History. A key reference was 'A History of Oral Medicine', written by Brian E D Cooke and published in the British Dental Journal in 1981, 151 : 11-13.