

European Association of NeuroOncology Magazine

Neurology · Neurosurgery · Medical Oncology · Radiotherapy · Paediatric Neuro-oncology · Neuropathology · Neuroradiology · Neuroimaging · Nursing · Patient Issues

News from the British

Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS):

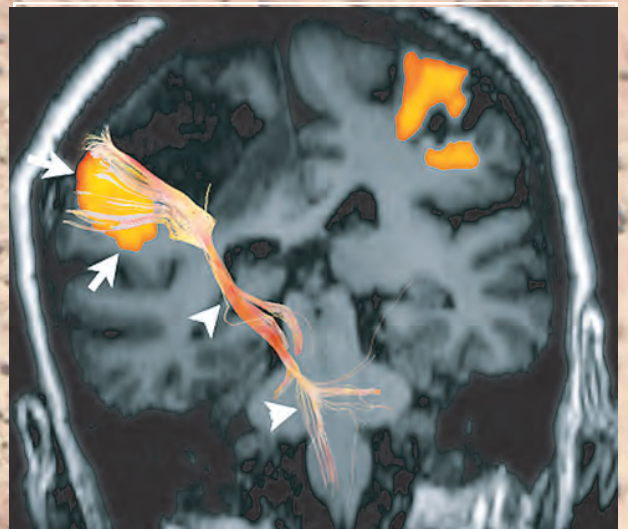
Where Have We Come Since 1980?

Pilkington G

European Association of

NeuroOncology Magazine 2012; 2 (3)

144-145



Homepage:

[www.kup.at/
journals/eano/index.html](http://www.kup.at/journals/eano/index.html)

Online Database Featuring
Author, Key Word and
Full-Text Search



THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF
NEUROONCOLOGY

Member of the





News from the British Neuro-Oncology Society (BNOS): Where Have We Come Since 1980?

Geoffrey Pilkington

School of Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences, University of Portsmouth, UK

In 1980, David G T Thomas, a consultant neurosurgeon at The Institute of Neurology, Queen Square, London and John Darling from David's research team expressed a strong interest in bringing together UK-based laboratory researchers and clinicians involved in the diagnosis and treatment of glioma and to instigate a fairly informal "club" to meet, present, and discuss research and clinical practice. Through his vision, inspiration, and enthusiasm, as well as a substantial input from John, the "British Glioma Group" was born. In 1981, the first of what would become a series of annual conferences was held at Queen Square and, along with a variety of UK speakers, we were joined by Darell Bigner from Duke University, USA. The group gained impetus and these conferences, which were largely research-based, continued to be held at different centres across the UK until 1989 when it was decided to change the name to "British Neuro-Oncology Group" in order to encompass nervous system tumours other than glioma. Through most of these early years John Darling and Geoff Pilkington acted as joint treasurer/secretary/organisers until Robin Grant and Tracy Warr took over the responsibilities. It is, perhaps, gratifying that this format was the first of its kind and more national groups were formed throughout Europe, North America, and further afield. Finally, in 2004, the group became the "British Neuro-Oncology Society" (BNOS), with more structure and purpose. It has continued to grow and prosper rapidly over the ensuing years. We have now met at over 20 different centres and 2013 sees the 32nd annual conference, which will be held at yet another centre, the University of Durham, from July 10–12 (see BNOS website www.BNOS.org.uk for further information). Over the last 32 years we have entertained some of the key international figures in neuro-oncology including Lucien Rubinstein, Darell Bigner, Paul Kleihues, Victor Levin, and many significant others. In addition to the ever-changing spectrum of research and clinical practice being presented, the formulation of conferences underwent changes. In 1997, a series of education days was introduced which resulted in an extension of the meeting to 3 days. These sessions have been a huge success over the years and we have now set up a postgraduate forum in which our younger members can present their work and contribute in a very real way to the society's activities and aims. A young investigator award was established in 2010; prizes for best poster and best oral presentations had already been in place since 1998. Other activities within the conference programmes have included open debates on "hot topics", commercial symposia, "Association of Neuro-Oncology Nurses" (ANON) nurse symposia and, over the past 4 meetings, a neuropathology symposium or international speakers have been sponsored by the "British Neuropathological Society" (BNS), notably evidenced by Dr Ken Aldape's excellent talk at the 2012 BNOS conference in Manchester. We now regularly see

250–300 delegates at conferences as the scope and quality continually increases. Abstracts are now published in *Neuro-Oncology* which reaches a highly appropriate audience of readers. On becoming a society BNOS no longer simply functions as an organisation with a remit of convening annual conferences. Our membership comes from neurosurgeons, neuroscientists, neurologists, neuropathologists, neuroradiologists, neuropsychologists, neuropsychiatrists, clinical nurse specialists, oncologists, radiotherapists, members of charities and many more disciplines. In this context the society is central to promoting all branches of medicine related to neuro-oncology and leads the way in enhancing both clinical practice and research through interaction with appropriate national and international bodies. The current BNOS officers are Dr Geoff Pilkington (President), Dr David Walker (Vice-President), Mr David Jellinek (Hon Secretary), and Dr Jeremy Rees (Hon Treasurer). In addition, BNOS council is now composed of some additional 13 members, who represent many sub-disciplines and geographic locations. We have also been extremely fortunate to retain the services of Jenny Loughlin (administrator@bnos.org.uk) as administrator to the society. Jenny has been an all-important lynch-pin in our activities over the past few years and has not only kept us in focus but has instigated several new, more professional systems which have enhanced the effectiveness of council. In addition, Jenny has now been joined by our new communications officer, Elizabeth Tudball (communications@bnos.org.uk), who is actively advancing awareness of BNOS and developing relationships with other professional societies as well as with the media.

There has been a massive growth in membership, scope, interest, and activities of BNOS in recent years which catalysed significant changes to the society constitution which were implemented following the 2012 annual general meeting. This constitutional change aims to increase democratic policy and mediate involvement of a greater proportion of the membership in the activities and administration of the society. Where possible council membership reflects the diversity of disciplines involved in neuro-oncology as well as different geographical locations within Britain but essentially such membership infers a considerable level of dynamic input to the society by our council members.

In addition, provision of sub-committees of experts in various areas who report directly to council now serve to reduce the need for long, expensive council meetings and speed up decision-making processes in order to efficiently meet the aims of the society. The new constitution aims to give clarity to the way the society carries out its business and gives greater and fairer access to members wishing to become council members



as well as the introduction of rotation of officer's posts. In addition, it addresses provision of different types of membership to attract both charity and commercial sectors. A number of our new sub-committees are now fully active and pushing ahead with a broad range of developments which will underpin the continued plan of BNOS development. The sub-committee structure seeks to involve those who are not council members or are not able to spend as much time as council members in the society's activities by virtue of their specialist knowledge in some aspect of BNOS business. It is particularly pleasing to report that members of the junior section of the society (the postgraduate sub-committee) have already been active in providing reports for the website and newsletter as well as being central to formulating a postgraduate/trainee session for the BNOS conferences. To help our younger members in their careers we have also recently introduced a bursary scheme for meeting attendances. We are also striving to find a means to integrate the neuro-oncology nurse sector more effectively into society activities and better satisfy their requirements. From 2013 partnership membership will be available to organisations, including registered charities and commercial companies, involved in medical or scientific activities associated with or relevant to neuro-oncology. Each charity or commercial organisation will be offered this grade of membership which will permit persons within their organisations to enjoy all the benefits of membership with the exception of voting rights.

We also wish to forge closer relationships with the brain tumour charities which constitute a significant force in furthering the discipline to the benefit of patients and professionals alike and will aim to engage increasingly with the UK government's All Party Parliamentary Group on Brain Tumours in bringing our clinical and research endeavours to the fore. Brain tumours remain very much the Cinderella of the oncology world; the discipline is under-reported, under-researched, and under-funded, but, through BNOS and the united forces of the charity sector we will strive to change that situation.

Having already forged a fruitful interaction with the "British Neuropathological Society", we are now seeking to develop good working relationships and hold joint meetings with additional neuroscience-based bodies. As a first step in this direction, we are organising a neuro-oncology symposium as part of the British Neuroscience Association's "Festival of Neuroscience" (<https://meeting.tfigroup.com>) which is scheduled for April 7–10, 2013, at the Barbican Centre, London. This will provide both a showcase of British neuro-oncology and address the issues of public engagement in science (in our case CNS tumours). In addition, a second symposium at the festival organized by Dr Anne Leaver and Dr Geoff Pilkington

on scientific aspects of brain tumours is being supported by the "British Pharmacological Society". We are also committed to engaging more with mainstream oncology and, to these ends, we are already organising neuro-oncology symposia jointly with NCRI groups to both educate general oncologists about brain tumours and, perhaps more importantly for us, to learn from those with experience in other branches of oncology and cancer research.

We are also pleased to report that during the NCRI annual cancer conference in Liverpool (<http://www.ncri.org.uk/ncriconference/>) there will be – on Tuesday, November 6, 2012 – a morning NCRI Brain Day Satellite Symposium and an afternoon NCRI Brain Day Workshop aimed at oncologists, surgeons, nurses, and pathologists involved in the management of patients with cerebral metastases on improving the management of cerebral metastatic disease. In this context, it is hoped to investigate whether we can develop a national stratified approach to the management of cerebral metastatic cancer with a greater involvement of neuro-oncologists. Further information on this can be found on the BNOS website events page (<http://www.bnos.org.uk/events.html>).

With regard to current UK representation within EANO, Anthony Chalmers has joined Peter Collins on the scientific board while Geoff Pilkington has joined the executive board. Dr Robin Grant continues as a council member of BNOS and we will look to him for advice and continuity of EANO issues.

The last few years of progress have given some sense of how the "British Neuro-Oncology Society" is growing and undergoing metamorphosis into a strong and meaningful organisation which not only represents the interests of its members from all disciplines involved with diagnosis and treatment of, and research into, tumours affecting the nervous system, but also plays a major role in the co-ordination of, and advice on, every area of neuro-oncology and brings us ever nearer to providing some realistic expectations of improved outcomes for patients.

Correspondence to:

*Geoffrey J Pilkington, BSc PhD CBiol FSB FRCPath
School of Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences
University of Portsmouth
St Michael's Building
White Swan Road
Portsmouth
PO1 2DT
UK
e-mail: Geoff.Pilkington@port.ac.uk*

For more information on the British Neuro-Oncology Society, please visit our website,

<http://www.BNOS.org.uk>

