



Greetings from the Chair

Dr Paul Filmore, Chairman
chairman@scimednet.org

I'd like to wish you all a happy Christmas from the office, officers, and the Board. We hope you will continue your support in 2017 as we have an exciting programme of events. Your support also helps advance our work e.g., sponsorship for student ambassadors, projects such as the Extended Science project, development of white papers on key issues, and the scientist questionnaire. Finally, we are developing our website site so you can publicise your books and papers, have access to more talks and online learning material, and dialogue in a greater number of subject forums.

We look forward to welcoming you at one of our meetings. Warmest regards for 2017.



Chris Lyons

Dr Peter Fenwick, President, writes:

I would like to express the gratitude of all Network members to Chris Lyons, who devoted so much of his life to being with and helping the Network. Chris, as many of you know, was a GP and so brought a true coal-face experience to the Network. One of Chris's greatest assets for us all is that he was a materialist with non-material leanings, always able to remind us of our commitment to science if it seemed that flakiness was gaining the upper hand. He helped us maintain the balanced outlook necessary for our survival and his contributions in both committees and conferences were always wise, positive and to the point.

We discovered another area of his expertise, one for which we owe him a special debt of gratitude, when we became re-registered as a Charitable Company. One of the problems we faced was an urgent need to upgrade our accounting procedures and acquire a much tighter control of expenditure. It was not clear where this expertise could come from, where we could hope to find someone adequately trained who was also willing to do this on a voluntary basis. I still remember the meeting at which we discussed this and Chris rather tentatively offered his services. It seemed we were lucky enough to have as a council member probably the only GP in the country who was also an accountant. Then began a relationship with the Network, which was amazingly supportive to us all, and helped us achieve a more encouraging level of financial viability. When Chris finally retired from the Network after over 10 years the members, the Board and the Trustees all missed – and still miss - his wisdom, his balance and his company.

Frank Lyons (brother) writes:

I once had a clear 'Telepathic-ish' experience that involved Chris. Many years ago, Chris was in Australia (1985ish) and I was in the UK. I got a letter from him - he was going through tough times so I wanted to be close with him. At that time letters were taking weeks and international phone calls rare, plus he did not have a phone. Then I realised that he was doing medical training in hospital, so I called directory enquiries for the phone number of Sydney Hospital. They told me there were 12 hospitals. Chris lived in North Sydney, so I asked if there was a hospital there, she said there are two. So I took those numbers and called the first. I didn't know what to say when the girl answered the phone, so as a long shot, I just said "can I speak to Dr Lyons". She said, "Just a minute, I'll put him on." He said "Hi Fran, how did you know I was here?" I said I didn't know where you were working, but I wanted to chat with you. He said "No, how did you know I would be walking past reception?" At the time we both shared the amazement of such a communication across the world. In his more rationalist years, though, he did not like me to relate that story.



Looking Back - 30 Years with the Network

David Lorimer

In the summer of 1983, I was teaching modern languages and philosophy at Winchester College when I received a letter from George Blaker inviting me to join the Network – I had never heard of it. The letter was accompanied by a photocopied sheet of paper describing its aims and aspirations. I duly responded and sent off my cheque for £10. It was not long before George contacted me to invite me over for lunch in Ockley. We immediately became friends and he took me to the Crown at Capel. After about 10 minutes he told me that I was just the kind of person they were looking for to run the Network! I soon joined the Council, then chaired by Dr Peter Leggett, who also became a close friend and valuable mentor.

In 1986, George formally invited me to take over after I came back from giving a seminar in the south of France with Sir George Trevelyan. This was November 1986, and I was equipped with an electric typewriter - my first - although I had been an early adopter of a BBC computer in 1984, complete with floppy disks. I was then living in Gloucestershire, and set up my office with the Network files and records. Member records were kept on individual cards, where subscriptions paid were also noted along with a few handwritten remarks by George himself. Accounts were for many years recorded and reconciled in a book and the annual audit ordeal took place at Lake House.

The post began to arrive, maybe 3 to 6 letters a day, including application forms. I wrote to each new member, enclosing the basic newsletter (No 31, 24 pages) and the Members' Directory. Twice a week, I would go down to the Northleach post office late in the afternoon to send all this out. In February 1987, I went to India for a conference for three weeks and was taken aback, on my return,

to find a sack of 150 items of post, although many were conference applications. Even this was a relatively light administrative burden compared with the torrent of emails we now have to deal with daily - it takes up to 2 hours simply to stand still and keep information overload at bay. And if one takes a couple of days off, then half a day has to be devoted to catching up, as we all know.

The first conferences I arranged were the 1987 May Lectures on Emerging Models and Values in Western Science, with Arthur Ellison and Chris Thomson – over 150 people attended, with very little publicity. In July, Larry LeShan spoke about Healing and the Clairvoyant Reality, while in November I arranged another conference - Do We Need Enemies and Scapegoats? This would be just as relevant today! Along with Dr Peter Fenwick, who had taken over as chairman, I set up some autumn lectures at St Thomas's Hospital: Creativity and the Renewal of Civilisation, with William Anderson, Beyond Reductionism in Evolution with Brian Goodwin and Psychoneuroimmunology with Dudley Tee.

I found a printer – A.J. Green - in Cheltenham, who produced Newsletter 32 in December 1986 (32 pages). I remember being mortified when I saw that I had missed a typo in the contents, so wisdom appeared as wisdom! As we did not have our first computer until 1988, Paul Filmore used to produce the labels and send them to me and we stuffed all the envelopes by hand. I remember that there were just over 400, and sometimes I would go down to Cornwall to get technical help from Paul, especially when we transitioned to having our own computer and database and had to produce the Members' Directory, which was quite a task!

Working with Network members since that time has brought me many invaluable friendships, and I have learned a great deal from conferences I have organised and attended and of course from the thousands of books I have read and reviewed. Since 1996, there are about 5,500 books on the database! In the meantime, I look forward to another exciting year and send every Member my very best wishes for 2017.