

## Pamela Dale



Pamela June Dale was a British Pharmacological Society (BPS) legend who sadly passed away after a long illness on 5 April 2020. Pam will be affectionately remembered by many senior members of the BPS for her role as assistant to the Honorary Meetings Secretary for the Society between 1989-2002. During this period, Pam was the lynchpin, the go-to person, the problem-solver, the assertive fixer for the pre-clinical and clinical Honorary Meetings Secretaries and later the Vice-President of Meetings.

Many of those who were under her wing and tutelage have added their memories of Pam to this article in appreciation of her unconditional help and guidance during their tenure as Meetings Secretary. The BPS had no central office at the time, and Jenny Maclagan and Pam, together with Sarah-Jane Stagg (Executive Officer) and Mike Simmonds (Hon. Treasurer) established a BPS office in portacabins at Bart's Hospital.

In those halcyon days of the BPS, there were four meetings a year, three in University Pharmacology Departments up and down the UK and a winter meeting in a conference centre in London, Brighton or Harrogate, along with international meetings in the USA (San Diego) and EU (Galway, Lyon, Porto, Milan), attracting over 1,000 delegates and international society members from all parts of the world.

Pam was there to plan, organise, and meet and greet international delegates, with many of whom she maintained longstanding friendships. Her organising ability, intellect, and good humour was what made these meetings so successful over many years. It was during this time that the Society

transitioned officer titles from Honorary Meetings Secretary and General Secretary to President and Vice Presidents of Meetings, to align with other international pharmacological societies. Pam played an important role in this strategic review, with Nigel Baber and me.

Pam joined the BPS in 1989 as an assistant to the new Meetings Secretary, Jenny Maclagan. Their initial office was a small room in the Pharmacology department at the Royal Free Medical School. Jenny reminds us of the enormous mountain of paperwork then required for each BPS meeting. They were both computer novices, but determined to reduce the paper load using more modern methods and the recruitment of a professional mailing house. "It was an intense period, often chaotic, but due to Pam's wonderful sense of humour, always fun," Jenny said. "The events of the last week have caused me to think about the amazing changes in methodology which Pam encountered during her lifetime -- from computer novice to the recipient of an internet funeral in 30 years!"

After Jenny moved on to become Honorary General Secretary, Professor Norman Bowery took over the meetings role. Sadly Norman Bowery (1992-1994) is not with us to comment, but Norman's wife Barbra recounts that Norman cherished his time working with Pam and her wicked sense of humour during his term in office. I followed Norman as Meetings Secretary (1995-1997), and during my tenure I found Pam to be such a warm, wonderful and fun person to be around. I often think of her and the fun moments we had planning and organising meetings up and down the country and farther afield. Nothing was too much trouble and she was always there for you, anticipating your needs. She became a very dear friend over many years.

Professor Rod Flower (term of office 1998-2000): "Pam was both my instructor and companion when I became Meetings Secretary all those years ago, and we had many hilarious adventures travelling around the country visiting host departments to help with their preparation for upcoming meetings. She also was the major force behind the scenes when we launched PA2. Pam was always on the ball and had a terrific sense of humour. I think that the BPS owes her a debt."

Professor Graeme Henderson (2001-2004): "Pam was a great help to me when I was Meetings Secretary. She ignored my daft ideas for change and just got on with making the meetings a great success. She let me take all the credit. A wonderful lady!"

Professor Phil Routledge (1988 -1992): "I remember her with affection, not only as a superb member of the BPS team, but as a warm, supportive colleague with a great sense of humour. I know that she will be remembered fondly by many others in the Society, who will very be sad to hear this news."

Throughout her time at the BPS, Pam was aided and abetted by her colleague and dear friend Michelle O'Gorman-Dujardin (Membership Administrator and Assistant to the Hon. Treasurer). Michelle says, "Pam was my best friend and accomplice in all things BPS; I met Pam when I started work at the BPS. I was a bit intimidated at first, but we quickly became firm friends. Her very acidic and wicked sense of humour was awesome. We stayed friends when she left London for Wales (the land of my fathers-in-law, she wrote in the then BPS Bulletin). We wrote to each other and spoke on the telephone frequently. I am bereft. I have lost my best friend. How can I lose my self-importance now that Pam is not here to shake me a bit? 'A best friend is the sister life forgot to give you' (anonymous)."

Pamela June Dale was born on 6 June 1936 in London. She married Lindsay Dale, a filmmaker in the advertising industry; they had two daughters, Harriet and Sophy.

In this celebration of Pam's life, the BPS wishes to send its sincere condolences to Pam's family and sister Susan on the loss of their mother and sister and the our dear friend and colleague.

**Michelle O'Gorman-Dujardin, Chelmsford**

**Tom Blackburn, President Emeritus British Pharmacological Society**