It is a pleasure to be able to provide a Council Report from the 191st Session of the Royal Medico-Chirurgical Society of Glasgow. In general, meeting attendance has been very similar to last year with 20-30 members and guests attending the meetings. The process of advertising meetings to relevant groups of non-members continued successfully, resulting in a productive mix of perspectives at the meetings.

The year got off to a traditional start with the Presidential Address from Professor Jim McKillop, the Muirhead Professor of Medicine and Head of the Medical School at the University of Glasgow. His talk about “What makes a good doctor” concentrated on the history of undergraduate training to date and considerable emphasis on factual learning in the past. He described the changes to the undergraduate course, with their emphasis on teaching knowledge and skills which would be relevant to clinical practice and the impact that it was hoped these would have on training new doctors. This was followed by a talk from Professor Sir AM Breckenridge, Chairman of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency. His talk titled “For the good of the patient: risks and benefits of Medicines” outlined the role of the Agency in regulating new medicines. His talk coincided with a period of considerable criticism from the media over the agencies handling of the prescribing of seroxat. He outlined his vision for the future of medicines prescribing in the UK with an increase in availability of medicines from the general sales list, a reduction in prescription only medicines and greater emphasis on prescribing by healthcare professionals other than doctors. In November, Dr Rowena Arshad, the Equal Opportunities Commissioner for Scotland and Director, Centre of Education for Racial Equality, gave a talk about “Equality in practice”. She gave a fascinating talk about equality and discrimination highlighting it with examples from modern history such as the Steven Lawrence Enquiry. She outlined the relevant legislation which has been introduced and amended covering sex, disability and racial discrimination. She outlined how some of this legislation might impact on the National Health Service. This provoked considerable thought among the audience as evidenced by the lively debate which was had by members and guests and the end of her talk. Towards the end of the year the Society played host to the 2 traditional dinners. The Joint Dinner was held with the Edinburgh Society in the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow and was extremely well
attended. We were very fortunate to receive an inspired talk from Sir Alan Langlands, The Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Dundee, who talked about “Universities, professionals and the NHS – can the whole be greater than the sum of the parts?”. During his talk he gave a fascinating insight into the relationship between the Universities, the National Health Service and Government. He was brave enough to outline how he sees this relationship developing, particularly in the context of the current political debate within the National Health Service and ongoing difficulties in delivering a quality service. The Annual Christmas Dinner was held on a Friday this year for the first time in many years. It was extremely well attended with more than 50 members and guests. The dinner was followed by an address from Sir Muir Russell, the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Glasgow. In an entertaining speech he outlined his own career path to date before concentrating on the development of the new Medical School Building within the grounds of the University of Glasgow and the profound changes which we have seen in the undergraduate course in Medicine.

The first meeting of the New Year was held in January and was the Joint Meeting with the Glasgow Southern Medical Society held in the Ebenezer Duncan Centre at the Victoria Infirmary when Dr Dorothy Logie talked on “Struggling for health: a global perspective”. This was an extremely well attended meeting. Dr Logie talked passionately, and from personal experience, about health in the developing world and the financial and political constraints which these countries find themselves under. She outlined the risks around HIV and AIDS and the difficulties of delivering medicines in the developing world. This challenging and sobering address left members of both Societies to ponder what has the potential to become a global catastrophe. At our joint meeting with the Undergraduate Society we were fortunate to be addressed by Professor Peter Rubin, Chairman of the GMC Education Committee who talked about “What’s really important about training a doctor?” continuing a theme which had begun with the Presidential address. He gave a fascinating insight into the GMC perspective on undergraduate and postgraduate training. His talk came at the time of considerable change in the undergraduate curriculum, the introduction of modernising medical careers for the junior grades, difficulties in forming a cohesive strategy for appraisal and revalidation for Consultants. The meeting was held in the New Medical School building which afforded members the opportunity to view what is an innovative and award winning building. Later the same month Professor Alistair Macdonald, the Head of Product Design Engineering, and Glasgow School of Art addressed us on “Inclusive approaches to design in the medical field”. The Society welcomed a number of guests to his meeting highlighting the widespread interest among a variety of healthcare professionals in product design for people with disability. The Research Prize
Night followed this meeting. On this occasion 15 abstracts were submitted, all of which were of an extremely high standard making it difficult to select the final 10. There were 4 oral and 6 poster presentations with Dr McGrane being awarded the 1st prize of £300 for the best oral presentation with a talk about ‘Oxidative stress influences in endothelial progenitor cell [EPC] numbers in patients with coronary artery disease [CAD]’. The best poster presentation, with a prize of £150, was won by Dr Rea from the Laboratory of Human Anatomy in the University of Glasgow who poster was titled “The surgical anatomy of the extra-temporal portion of the facial nerve in relation to parotidectomy”. The final meeting of the 191st Year was addressed by Dr Brian Sweeney, Freelance writer and consultant on disability who presented a talk on “Holistic modelling in disability”. He talked about the differences between disability and impairment as well as public and media perceptions of people with disability. He presented a new model which could facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach to assessing patients with disability. Like many of the talks, over the year, this stimulated considerable debate among the members who, within their day to day jobs, face patients with disability on a regular basis.

During the year Council has been meeting regularly. The immediate Past President has been co-opted onto council to provide continuity and support for the incoming President. This has been very valuable and it is hoped that members will make this a permanent position on council at the Annual General Meeting. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the new Membership Sub-Committee which continues to update the membership database and has been looking at strategies to increase membership and more importantly attendance at meetings. Council has also been considering the future of the new website with the loss of the Cyber College and has been reviewing the need for a Society member to have oversight of the Society archives.