



THE NUTRITION SOCIETY GAZETTE

Summer 2022



Contents

President's Update	3
Nutrition Greats: John Yudkin	4-5
CEO Update	6
Awards	7
Honorary Fellow: Dr Alison Tedstone	8
Trustee Update	10
Winter Conference 2021 Overview	11
Membership Matters	14
80th Anniversary Reflection	15
Interview with: Professor Susan Jebb	16
Interview with: Ms Heather Kelman	18
A letter from... Japan	20
Student Section Update	21
The Nutrition Society Themes	22
Theme Leader Update	24
Special Interest Groups (SIGs)	25
Irish & Scottish Section Updates	26
A day in the life of... a Post-doctoral Researcher	27
Events Calendar	28

Colour Key
UPDATES
EVENTS
HISTORY

SECTIONS
MEMBERSHIP

Front cover image: L-R Professor Keith Frayn, Professor Paul Trayhurn, Professor Philip Calder, Professor John Mathers



The Nutrition Society is a Registered Charity whose aim is to advance the study of nutrition and its application to the maintenance of human and animal health. Registered Charity no: 27207, Company Limited by Guarantee, registered in Cardiff, no: 1274585

EDITORIAL

Editorial

Dr Carrie Ruxton, Honorary Strategic Communications Officer

There is a palpable positivity in the air which has a lot to do with the fact we can now see each other face-to-face; whether it's at work, social occasions or even Nutrition Society events.

This issue looks back as well as forwards. Back to the life of Professor John Yudkin (pages 4-5) who was instrumental in highlighting the issues of high sugar diets, and back even further across the 80 illustrious years of The Nutrition Society as we celebrate this great milestone (page 15). Make sure you check out our conference report (pages 11-13) and read the reflections of this year's Blaxter award winner (page 7). The article about the challenges of running a clinical trial during the pandemic (page 27) is definitely worth a read.

But we also look forward as we celebrate the leadership of three nutrition professionals as they take up new roles in Food Standards Scotland, the Food Standards Agency (pages 13-14) and the Association for Nutrition (page 9). We look forward, as well, to the International Congress of Nutrition in Japan this December so it's great to hear from two members of the organising committee (page 20).

I hope you enjoy this issue and appreciate, like me, the wonderful achievements of our members and the hard work of everyone who gives their time to make the Society a continued success. ■



Registered Office: Boyd Orr House, 10 Cambridge Court, 210 Shepherds Bush Road, London W6 7NJ

Nutrition Society Gazette © 2022 The Nutrition Society.

Editorial Board:
Dr Carrie Ruxton, *Freelance Dietitian and Trustee for Strategic Communications*;
Cassandra Ellis, *Nutrition Society*;
Caroline Roberts, *Nutrition Society*.

Founders:
Sir Joseph Barcroft, *Chairman of the Food Investigation Board*;
Dame Harriette Chick, *Head of the Division of Nutrition, Lister Institute*;
Professor J. C. Drummond, *Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Food*;
Dr John Hammond, *Animal Research Institute, Cambridge*;
Dr L. J. Harris, *Director, Dunn Nutritional Laboratory, Cambridge*;
Sir Frederick Hopkins, *Professor of Biochemistry, Cambridge*;
Professor H. D. Kay, *Director, National Institute for Research in Dairying*;
Sir Charles Martin, *late Director, Lister Institute*;
Sir Edward Mellanby, *Secretary, Medical Research Council*;
Sir John Boyd Orr, *Director, Rowett Research Institute*;
Professor R. A. Peters, *Professor of Biochemistry, Oxford*.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

President's Report

Professor Julie Lovegrove, President



I am writing this in flight from Istanbul to London, on my first international trip in over two years. I'm returning from the first Georgian International Nutrition and Health Conference in Tbilisi, which was sponsored by The Nutrition Society and hosted by the new Georgian Nutrition Society, founded in 2019. This was followed a few days later by a joint conference between The Nutrition Society and Sabri Ülker Food Research Foundation entitled "*Nutrition for healthcare professionals-Achieving Healthcare Through Diet*". I was delighted and honoured to be invited to open and present at both of these exciting international events, which attracted large audiences from the medical and other healthcare professions.

Healthcare professionals sit at a critical interface between evidence-based nutrition and the general public, placing them in a key position to provide diet and lifestyle advice for the maintenance of health, and prevention of disease. The Society's support of these two conferences highlighted the importance of nutrition science to these professions. Further progress in this area includes the publication of two papers in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, which outline the development of the Undergraduate Curriculum in Nutrition for Medical Doctors which was published last September by the *Association for Nutrition* with support from The Nutrition Society. Thanks to all involved with progressing the Society's ambition to build our relationship with the medical profession, particularly Dr Bernadette

Moore as her term of office as Council Member for Medical comes to an end.

The Society recognises individuals who have made significant and outstanding contributions globally to the advancement of nutrition science by the award of an Honorary Fellowship with the Society, which includes the newly introduced post-nominal 'HonFNS'. It is always an honour to present these prestigious awards at the Annual Reception. We were also delighted to be able to invite all our Honorary Fellows to a lunch at the RAF Club in London before these presentations, it was such a pleasure spending time with so many of our Honorary Fellows. In commemoration of the Society's 80th anniversary, special awards to recognise outstanding service by a Nutrition Society member to the Society and Rising Star Awards were also presented at the Annual Reception. It was lovely to see so many of our members at this event celebrating with our awardees.

It has been a great pleasure for the Society to host a number of face-to-face and hybrid events over the past six months. The first hybrid Winter Conference was held in the Royal Society in London in December on "Obesity and the Brain". This was an excellent event with outstanding nutritional science, and opportunities to meet and socialise with friends and colleagues in person. In the New Year, a joint conference between the French Nutrition Society and the Society, entitled 'Where Urban Policy Makers Meet Scientists' that was to be

held in Lille, was moved online at short notice due to COVID-19 restrictions. Thankfully, the quick response and professionalism from The Nutrition Society staff made the delivery of this impromptu virtual event a success. This was followed by the in person Irish Section Postgraduate conference in Coleraine, which was a very successful event. I never fail to be impressed by the excellent research presentations of our student members, which are delivered with such professionalism and confidence. The Scottish Section's conference on "Nutrition, Immune Function and Infectious Disease" in Edinburgh was another successful hybrid event held in March and we look forward to the Summer Conference in Sheffield on 12 – 15 July.

I am extremely grateful for the advice, support and collegiality of my fellow Trustees. I offer my sincere thanks to Professor Chris Seal, as he comes to the end of his 6-year term of office as Honorary Treasurer. Chris has steered the Society's finances through challenging and unprecedented times with conscientiousness and competency. With the careful oversight of our CEO Mark Hollingsworth, this has ensured our funds are secure and used wisely to help achieve the Society's mission and to benefit its members. Thanks also to Dr Derek Ball and Dr Ann Nugent as Council members, for the Scottish Section and Irish Section respectively, for their helpful advice. I'd like to close by wishing everyone an enjoyable Summer and well-deserved holidays. ■

John Yudkin's life before *Pure, White and Deadly*

Professor Michael Yudkin, Emeritus Fellow of Kellogg College, Oxford University

John Yudkin was born on 8 August 1910, three years after his parents Louis and Sarah had immigrated to London from a shtetl in what is today Belarus. Louis died when John was six years old, leaving Sarah a widow with four boys, of whom John was the third. A fifth child was born posthumously.

Yudkin won a scholarship to Hackney Downs School (formerly the Grocers' Company's School) at the age of 11, and another from there to Chelsea Polytechnic. After gaining his London BSc in 1929, he matriculated as a scholar at Christ's College, Cambridge, and graduated BA in Biochemistry at the age of 20 in 1931.

An interest in bacterial biochemistry prompted him to apply for a PhD in the Department of Biochemistry at Cambridge under the supervision of Marjory Stephenson, the foremost microbiologist of her generation. Stephenson accepted him as a graduate student and arranged a grant to fund his work. However, the grant was cancelled in the economic crisis of 1931 but Stephenson generously paid him out of her own pocket until an official post could be found for him. His PhD thesis on "adaptive enzymes" (subsequently termed "induced enzyme synthesis") was accepted in 1935.

Yudkin had long wanted to study medicine and, in 1934, he began pre-clinical studies in Cambridge, funding himself by teaching physiology and biochemistry to medical students. He undertook clinical studies at The London Hospital since Cambridge had no clinical school at the time. He graduated MB, BChir in 1938, and was appointed Director of Medical Studies at Christ's College. In the same year, he began his research at the Dunn Nutritional Laboratory in Cambridge.

His studies of the nutritional status of school children in Cambridge showed that children from a poorer area of Cambridge were shorter and lighter, and had lower haemoglobin levels and a weaker grip, than those from wealthier areas. Children from large families in poor areas scored particularly badly in these measurements. Studies of children from three industrial towns in Scotland pointed in the same direction. These results made it clear that, in many households, the total family income was not sufficient to ensure an adequate and healthy diet for the children.

During the Second World War, Yudkin served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to Sierra Leone. While there, he studied a skin disease that was prevalent among local African soldiers and discovered that it was due, not to an infection as had been believed, but to a deficiency – of riboflavin – surprising given that the Army had been careful to devise a diet that was

adequate in all nutrients. But Yudkin found that the Army had instituted a uniform diet for its soldiers in the four British West African colonies (Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast and Nigeria). On paper this diet was adequate in riboflavin, which was supplied predominantly from millet. But it turned out that millet, although a staple in the Gold Coast and Nigeria, was hated by the soldiers from Sierra Leone, who would not eat it even if they were hungry.

In those days nutrition was largely considered an experimental science, to do with establishing nutritional requirements for components such as vitamins and essential amino acids. But Yudkin's experiences, first with the nutritional status of UK children and then with the deficiency of riboflavin among Sierra Leonean soldiers, convinced him that this reductive account of nutrition was inadequate. Instead, he came to regard nutrition as having important social and economic components and implications, many of which depend substantially on custom and upbringing.

In 1945, shortly after the end of the war, he was elected to the Chair of Physiology at Queen Elizabeth College in London (then King's College of Household and Social Science). Over the next few years he worked towards the establishment of a BSc degree in nutrition at the College (the first degree in nutrition in any European university). Students were to be taught an integrated series of courses including, not only the natural sciences, but also the relevant principles of the social sciences: demography, sociology, economics and psychology. The first nutrition students were admitted in 1953 and, in 1954, the Department of Nutrition was officially opened and Yudkin's Chair was converted into a Professorship of Nutrition.

During the following years, the Department won an international reputation for the strength of its research in the physiological and biochemical aspects of the subject, and also for work in such topics as nutrition in the elderly, historical aspects of the human diet, nutrition and public health, diseases of affluence, and the psychology of food choice; and it attracted numerous students from outside the UK, many of them from developing countries.

The accompanying article by Professor Jack Winkler overleaf takes up the story. ■



Professor John Yudkin

Pure, White and Deadly: Then, Now, Hereafter

Jack T Winkler, retired Professor of Nutrition Policy, London Metropolitan University and previous Chair of Action and Information on Sugars

Today, Professor John Yudkin is best known for his book *Pure, White and Deadly* (PWD), first published in 1972, linking sugar to obesity and heart disease. Viewed from the current "war on sugar", it seems a foundational, prophetic text. But it did not look that way then.

While immediately popular with its intended (lay) audience, it was rejected by scientists and politicians alike. At the time, Yudkin was serving on the COMA cardiovascular panel, apparently well placed to turn science into policy. But other panel members did not accept his arguments, so he wrote a "note of reservation", saying they placed too much emphasis on fat, not enough on sugar.

At the time, sugar policies focussed on dental issues. For good and bad reasons, they emphasised labelling and consumer education. Well-intentioned nutritionists felt that consumers would share their concern with health, and cut sugar intakes, once they had access to the facts. Cynical politicians and industry groups also liked labelling because it was visible. It looked like they were doing something – and it placed responsibility for change on individuals.

Yudkin's work was completely ignored in the 1984 and 1994 COMA heart panel reports, explicitly rejected by the 1989 sugar panel. The book went out of print before Yudkin died in 1995.

The tide began to turn shortly thereafter with a proliferation of "low carbohydrate diets", led controversially by Robert Atkins, ironically a cardiologist. Excessive sugar intakes became a popular issue through the work of numerous journalists, especially Gary Taubes. But it was a much-viewed YouTube lecture in 2009 by paediatric endocrinologist Robert Lustig that made sugar the dominant nutritional issue of public concern.

The "war on sugar" began. And with it a revival of interest in PWD. A new edition was published in 2012, with an introduction by Lustig, who was more generous than others in acknowledging his intellectual debts, saying: "I am proud to be a Yudkin disciple". A Wikipedia entry on PWD followed.

Yudkin always recognised the social and economic components in nutrition (see accompanying article by Professor Michael Yudkin (page 4)). Practical action has to involve more than just saying "eat less sugar". For policy, the turning point was the 2003 WHO report on diet that recommended limiting free sugar intakes to less than 10% of energy. Major sugar producers and sweet product manufacturers tried to get the proposal removed, but failed. That was when industry realised that the sugar issue was not going away.

The outcome was a splurge of "health and wellness programmes" intended to reformulate thousands of major brand products around the world. Results varied with companies, products and markets. And waned over time. One positive aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it reinvigorated reformulation strategies. Some consumers became more interested in obesity and healthy diets – and companies responded.

Another change has been the introduction of food taxes. Now widespread around the world are soft drinks taxes. They split between (a) excise taxes trying to suppress demand (with mixed results) and (b) graduated levies on the sugar content of drinks intended to stimulate reformulation. The UK's Soft Drinks Industry Levy is the most successful example, with most mass market products eliminating-or-reducing sugar to evade the tax. Elsewhere, especially sub-Saharan Africa, broader taxes on processed foods, often high in sugar, are common.

Even labelling has changed, with the spread of various "front-of-pack" systems. Grading schemes rank the nutrient profiles of products, rewarding the good and shaming the less healthy. Warning labels or symbols on "bad" products do the job more bluntly – stimulating reformulation to avoid public discredit.

So PWD has transformed the science and public perception of sugar. But practical action to reduce sugar intakes will take a long time. Reformulation in drinks was the easy bit, because sweeteners were already accepted. Changing the formulations of sweetened foods is technically more difficult, a process that takes decades, not months. Change has to be made in small, incremental steps. Too much, too soon shocks consumers' expectations and they reject the reformulated product. Heinz has been reducing sugar across its range since 1986...and still continues.

But the "war on sugar" has also stimulated research into "alternative ingredients" for sugar that may speed the process. These go well beyond the familiar "artificial" sweeteners to include new "natural" sweeteners, superior polyols, better dextrins, improved oligo/poly-saccharides, sweet proteins, flavour enhancers, modifiers of taste receptors, even new forms of sugar itself. Not all will be technically or commercially successful. But some might, making mass market products easier.

Sadly, John Yudkin did not live to see the radical effect his book had on both science and policy. But none of the readers of this article will live long enough to see the final success – sugar intakes reduced to healthy levels. Led by growth in Asia, last year global sugar consumption reached a new record high. ■

Are Learned Societies Still Relevant?

Mark Hollingsworth, CEO

Despite having a role that entails significant travel, I do not travel well. Waking up in a hotel room having slept badly is not an uncommon experience for me – jet lag, a stuffy room, dehydrated, even one too many Negrinis, are often to blame. However, I recently awoke in my hotel room, on a trip to Istanbul, having slept poorly because of a vivid nightmare.

I recall entering a very large conference hall, with seating for 1,000 people, all empty. On the central screen the slide welcomed everyone to The Nutrition Society Summer Conference. I sat and waited, and waited. No one came. In a panic I rushed out of the room and asked a member of the event staff why no one had arrived for this learned society scientific conference. The member of staff looked at me and said “What is a learned society?” A nightmare!

We live in our sector in a world of uncertainties post-covid, and costs rising exponentially. Will membership of the Society decline? Will people stay away from face-to-face conferences? Will Plan S completely change the funding landscape of journals? Is travel, even modest distances, a thing of the past? Will budget pressures continue? I suspect these many concerns are so much on my mind it was inevitable that they would manifest into dreams and nightmares.

But, the fundamental question remains – what is a learned society, and are they still relevant?

A learned society exists to promote an academic discipline, profession or group of related disciplines. Membership may be open to all, it may require a qualification, or may be an honour conferred by an election. Activities traditionally include: holding conferences for dissemination and discussion of new research; publishing academic journals; and collaboration through networks. Their success can be measured by longevity – the oldest in the UK being the Royal Society, founded in 1660. The Nutrition Society is young by comparison, having formed 81 years ago. But, compared with many small or medium sized businesses established, and later declined, over that 81 year period, it is a model of operational success.

Why am I therefore having nightmares over an existential threat?

There are trends emerging, only small, but they are worthy of our attention now, before they become substantial. Membership levels are declining slowly. Retaining young members has always been an issue once their academic studies are complete, but we are now seeing mid-career members leaving (other learned societies are seeing similar trends). The Society's



conferences have seen no growth in numbers of delegates for many years, despite heavy subsidies from the Society to reduce delegate fees. The Society's journals are faced with competition from new publications, rising costs, and reducing academic budgets to cover the costs of publishing research.

Therefore, perhaps the days of those involved in an academic discipline automatically becoming a member of their respective learned society are over. Is this 350+ year old learned society membership model no longer fit for purpose? Are four day long scientific conferences, held between Monday to Friday, no longer feasible with the many other demands on people's time?

After 350+ years, let us not now 'fall asleep at the wheel' and watch the gradual decline and fall of such a successful model. Learned societies play a key role in developing academic disciplines. They use their funds to invest in travel grants, studentships and bursaries, fund conferences, provide platforms for scientific communications – they support members at all stages of their careers. We need to find innovative ways to remain relevant to today's and future generations. If I emerge from a future nightmare, I hope I will not encounter someone saying “Oh, I remember learned societies, didn't they once organise conferences?” ■

The 2021 Nutrition Society Blaxter Award: reflections of an Animal Scientist

Professor Ilias Kyriazakis, Queens University Belfast



As well as being a great honour and recognition for my work, winning the 2021 Nutrition Society Blaxter Award for my contribution to the field of Whole Body Metabolism and Animal Nutrition also signifies the completion of a cycle in my career. I was awarded by the Society its highest honour bestowed on its younger members, the Silver Medal, in 1995. At that time the Medal was awarded to nutritionist below the age of 35, who had shown promise in their early research career in nutritional sciences. The Blaxter Award, awarded 26 years later, is for the contribution of my whole career to its subject. I hope that The Nutrition Society feels somehow vindicated in recognising my 'potential' a quarter a century ago!

I was the first animal nutritionist to be awarded the Silver Medal and remain the only animal nutritionist to have done so. To me this signifies the development of the Society over the last 30 years or so. When I became a member as a young postgraduate in 1989, it was dominated by scientists with interests in animal nutrition. This dominance has waned over the years and reflects the ascendancy of human nutrition as the dominant field in nutrition research. It is a natural progression, reflecting the

impact of nutrition on human health, and the development of methodologies and techniques to assess this. The recognition of nutritional epidemiology as a powerful tool to understand the impact of nutrition on population health has also contributed towards this. It is not surprising, therefore, that animal nutrition research has increasingly been viewed as mature science, whereas human nutrition has been addressing the big questions.

Although the Society has made several efforts to continue to cater for the interests of animal nutritionists, their membership within the Society has declined over the same period. Many scientists operating in the field have joined other learned societies who appear to cater more for their specialist interests and, in several instances, the number of research animal nutritionists has dwindled. However, more recently there has been an increased interest in the contribution of human diet to climate change, something which is made through the link between the contribution of agriculture, and livestock production in particular, to the greenhouse gas emissions. Livestock emissions, of course, arise mostly from the feed they consume and the

nutrients they excrete. The debate over what sustainable human diets look like, and the contribution of both plant and animal-based foods to human health and sustainability, is therefore an active one. Addressing this issue requires precise measurements of the impact of the production of feed ingredients, how livestock utilise the feed they consume, and the nature of their excretions. The use and consequences of sustainable alternative or novel feed ingredients for livestock have opened new research avenues for animal nutritionists, as well as requiring a closer collaboration between human and animal nutritionists, and with other scientific disciplines.

I view the recent establishment of The Nutrition Society Blaxter Award, of which I am its second recipient, within the context of this debate and the challenges and opportunities it provides. After all, one of the major contributions of Sir Kenneth Blaxter was the prediction of the amount of methane, one of the major greenhouse gases produced by ruminants. His insights in this topic continue to be of relevance today and, for this reason, I feel particularly honoured to have been given an award that bears his name. ■

The Nutrition Society and IFIS launch the Nutritional Science Collection

- Identify relevant, reliable science with ease
- Uncover innovation trends
- Keep up-to-date with latest research developments
- Make your patent research more efficient
- Smoothly access many whole documents if and when you need to



FIND OUT MORE

Nutrition Society members benefit from a 20% discount throughout 2022, and student members can access the collection completely FREE.



OBE appointed to Professor Yaqoob

Congratulations to Professor Parveen Yaqoob, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Joint Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation at the University of Reading, who has been appointed an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.



Dr Alison Tedstone

A career case study of the new
President of the Association for Nutrition



After 20 years in the civil service, and almost 10 as the Chief Nutritionist on Public Health England (PHE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), I aim to continue to support nutritionist professionalism from research to implementation across all areas of practice in my new role as Chair of Association for Nutrition (AfN). Nutrition is an area where opinion can outstrip evidence all too easily. We must guard against this to have long term influence and maintain credibility while acting in the best interests of the public.

Nutrition has been of growing political interest over time. Not only because of the cost of poor diet and obesity to the NHS but also the economic importance of food businesses to the UK. Food journalism is high profile as are some individuals with very particular views. Everyone likes a silver bullet, but in my experience, few live up to expectations.

How did your early career develop?

The Philips Enquiry into BSE led to the separation of scientific advice and delivery. It was at this point that I left the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to join the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to lead the secretariat of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN). The first report produced by SACN was on Salt and Health. This was the scientific basis for the salt reduction programme which combined voluntary structured reformulation with consumer awareness campaigns alongside monitoring. The programme led to large reductions in everyday foods with 11% reduction in population salt intakes. This demonstrated the importance of science in policy making.

What have been some of the challenges and learnings you have faced?

At the FSA, I contributed to the

application of nutrition including the development of front of pack nutrition labelling and the nutrient profile model to define high saturated fat, salt, and sugar products (HFSS) for the first controls on television advertising of less healthy foods in the UK.

These were all seen as innovative by some but interfering and anti-business by others. That narrative led to nutrition being moved into the Department of Health under the coalition government in 2010, when the Public Health Responsibility Deal (PHRD) became the new way of working with business. With a few notable exceptions, the Deal was not the great success seen with the earlier salt campaign. The learning here is the importance of clear targets and robust monitoring.

What opportunities have you been able to take?

In 2012, nutrition was moved to PHE. This coincided with the SACN report on Carbohydrates and Health and the recommendation to halve the dietary reference value for free sugars. To achieve SACN's recommendations, Sugar: Evidence to Action made recommendations on structural interventions going beyond fiscal intervention, further advertising restrictions, promotional controls and structured reformulation.

SACN and PHE's work led to a step change in obesity policy and new legislation – including the soft drinks industry levy (SDIL), a structured and closely monitored reformulation programme and promises of promotional and advertising controls of HFSS.

What impact did COVID-19 have on public health nutrition?

COVID-19 led to wider political recognition that excess weight was causing an immediate threat to the NHS

with the overrepresentation in Intensive Care of people living with obesity, and enabled further policy progress. It also led to PHE's closure and the relocation of the team into the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

The pandemic was associated with large increases in calorie sales, children living with obesity, and food poverty. Our diet continues to fall short of dietary recommendations. Delaying further advertising and promotional restrictions won't help these to be met.

What are your hopes for the future of nutrition science?

More structured and upstream interventions will be needed if the tide is to be turned. There will be challenges as the economic pressures on business grow. This, then, is the challenge for appropriately qualified nutritionists; to protect the public and support health at all stages of the food chain. They will need to influence agriculture, horticulture and population health policy by promotion of evidence-based approaches, and by supporting the public to improve their dietary health. What have been some of your career highlights?

I have been privileged to work with brilliant people in the civil service, academia, charities, professional bodies and in the food industry. I am very proud of my team and SACNs achievements. Good quality work and enabling change is dependent on a willingness to go that extra mile. I have been a member of the Nutrition Society for most of my adult life and helped establish the AfN.

What are your plans as president of the Association for Nutrition (AfN)?

During my tenure as President of the AfN, I hope to work with staff, committee members and volunteers to continue to support professional standards across the nutrition community and to ensure

good governance through oversight and challenge. I also plan to work with Helen Clark, the Chief Executive of AfN, to support the development of staff, and collaboration with The Nutrition Society. I hope that we will have a positive outcome to AfN's application for a Royal Charter which, if successful, would be a great honour for AfN, recognising our expertise in maintaining high standards of education, practice and regulation of nutritionists and, through this, promoting the health of the public. ■



Awards and memberships

- **Honorary Fellow**
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- **Honorary Fellow**
Nutrition Society, member since member since 1984
- **Honorary Fellow**
Royal College Physicians

Looking for Career Support?

The Society's newly published Career Section provides a hub of career-related resources and inspiration accessible to everyone at all career stages.

Scan to find out more:



Jobs

2013-2021

Chief Nutritionist and Head of Diet, Obesity and Physical Activity Division, Public Health England

2012-2013 and 2021-22

Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)

2006-2010

Head of Nutrition Science Unit Food Standards Agency (FSA)

2010-2012

Department of Health

2001-2006

Principal Nutritionist – FSA

1992-2001

Lecturer in Human Nutrition London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

1992-1996

Freelance lecturer

1988-1991

Postdoctoral Research Fellow (MRC) Metabolic Research Laboratory, Oxford

1983-1984

Research Assistant Clinical Pharmacology, Royal Free Hospital, London

1982-1983

Research Associate George Washington University, Washington D.C., USA.

Qualifications

1988

PhD Physiology St. George's Hospital Medical School, University of London – Doctoral project and thesis: "Factors affecting postprandial thermogenesis or How does a meal stimulate metabolic rate?"

1982

BSc Hons Physiology Queen Elizabeth College (now Kings College), University of London

From Council Member to Trustee

Professor John Brameld, Honorary Science Officer



I am just coming to the end of my first year as Trustee and Honorary Science Officer (HSO) and I have to say that I didn't really appreciate the amount of work the Trustees do "behind the scenes"! As well as attending Council and Trustees meetings (3 each per year), and chairing the various Society committees, the Trustees regularly deal with things via email or have online 'Teams' meetings for quick discussions. All of which is efficiently coordinated and managed by the incredible Society office staff and CEO, Mark Hollingsworth.

For those of you who do not know me, I have been an academic at the University of Nottingham since 2001, which is also when I re-joined the Society. Until recently I was the Society's Council member for Animal Nutrition (2015-2021), during which my aim was to re-establish links with Animal Nutritionists. We achieved that to some extent via holding or sponsoring joint meetings with the British Society for Animal Science (BSAS) and the development of a new Animal Nutrition textbook jointly produced by the Society and BSAS. The latter is well under way, and we are aiming for a first draft later this year, with publication planned for 2023; thereby becoming the 7th textbook in The Nutrition Society Textbook Series. Spiridoula Athanasiadou, Scotland's Rural College, is a co-editor of the textbook and has taken over from me as Council member for Animal Nutrition. I know that she has plans to further enhance links with those working in Animal Nutrition.

My research in Nutritional Biochemistry is often applicable to all mammals and I know historically that developments in animal nutrition can impact on human nutrition and vice versa. Hence, one of the things I would like to do as HSO is to increase the opportunities for interactions at our various meetings and conferences, particularly for Early Career Researchers (PGR students and postdocs). I certainly

benefitted from such interactions as a postdoc in the 1990s. As HSO, I co-chair the Science Committee which manages the development and approval of all conference programmes planned roughly 1-2 years ahead. Hence my aim is likely to take a bit of time but, hopefully, will start to develop symposia and programmes that enable greater interaction across animal and human nutrition disciplines, particularly in relation to cellular and molecular mechanisms and whole-body metabolism, my specific areas of interest.

Before I started, the previous HSO, Frank Thies, along with the Honorary Programmes Officer, Bernard Corfe, had initiated a review of the Society conference programmes, with the initial proposal presented at my first Trustee meeting in Manchester in October 2021. We have since asked Council and Science committee members for feedback and the main outcomes have been a unanimous decision to increase opportunities for early career researchers to present at our meetings, a decision to try out an expanded format for the Summer conference (similar to FENS, but remaining annual) and discussions (still ongoing) around how we might enhance interactions across the student membership. One of the positive outcomes of the recent pandemic has been the various online and hybrid meetings, that allowed greater participation/ attendance by our international members. We aim to continue this whenever possible, but numerous discussions and past experience has led to the realisation that hybrid conferences are very dependent upon the infrastructure of the conference centre. Hence future events and conferences are likely to be a mix of hybrid and in-person only (possibly with recordings) and likely to be a factor in deciding where conferences will be held but will continue to move around the UK and Ireland.

Finally, if anyone is considering getting involved in the Society, my advice would be "go for it"! We regularly have positions available and it is a great way to meet your peers and potential future collaborators. Maybe apply to be on a Committee or to become a Council member, like I did? Email the Society office if you want to know more, or check out the website for committee and Trustee vacancies. All members are welcome to put their names forward.

I thoroughly enjoy the opportunities it has provided to meet and get to know new people and discuss nutritional science in a relaxed, sociable atmosphere! If you see me at a future conference, please come and say hello, but be prepared for the mix of South Yorkshire and Nottingham accents! ■

Conference Overview: Obesity and the brain



Following the restrictions and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Winter Conference 2021 was a welcome opportunity to meet in-person again.

The rising prevalence of obesity is a global public health priority due to associations with reduced life expectancy, lower quality of life, poorer mental and physical health, reduced economic productivity and, more recently, the worse COVID-19 prognosis. Topically titled 'Obesity and the brain', the conference covered the impact of obesity and diet on brain structure and function, and shed light on the current challenges for behaviour change interventions.

Day One

Professor Louise Dye, University of Leeds, opened the conference with

discussion on the relationship between obesity and cognitive function. Given the widely reported increases in stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was timely to explore the potential effects of stress driving fat deposition and weight gain. Professor Dye noted that dietary interventions including polyphenols have shown beneficial effects on cognitive function in middle aged and older adults, and appear to impact on chronic fatigue – a key enduring symptom of COVID-19.

Dr Veronica Witte, Max Planck Institute, followed by highlighting the impact of obesity and diet on brain structure and function. Using neuroimaging data, including the LIFE-Adult study, Dr Witte showed how overweight and obesity are intertwined with markers of brain health in the general population. Higher BMI



Congratulations to the student competition winners for the best oral and poster presentations.

- **Curie Kim, King's College London, The impact of intermittent energy restriction and mastication on hippocampal cognitive ageing and neural stem cell fate: the change study – chewing, adult neurogenesis and energy restriction**
- **Aisling Daly, Technological University Dublin, Motivations for food choices in Irish teens from the National Teens' Food Survey II.**

and visceral fat accumulation correlate with worse cognitive performance, possibly as a result of systemic low-grade inflammation. Subsequently, diet may help to promote brain plasticity, affect brain function and structure.

Although mid-life obesity is associated with alterations in brain structure and decreased cognitive function, the underlying mechanisms remain largely unknown. Professor Amanda Kiliaan, Radboud University, looked at the effect of white adipose tissue as a proposed mechanism. Using preliminary results from the BARICO study, she highlighted how dysregulation of white adipose tissue appears to increase the number and size of adipocytes and inflammation of the tissue, and negatively impact vascular and brain health.

The first plenary lecture delivered by Professor Dana Small, Yale University, looked at nutrient sensing and predictive neural coding. The metabolic signals generated during glucose metabolism were found to regulate central circuits involved in reinforcement, so that nutritional properties of food can be learned.



Dr Wendy Hall, Theme Lead for Nutrition and Optimum Life course



Over 165 delegates attended at the Royal Society in London, with a further 171 joining virtually from across 17 countries



Professor Rachel Batterham, University College London

Symposium two began with an insightful talk from *Dr Helen Croker*, World Cancer Research Fund International, looking at the current challenges around behaviour change interventions targeting children. *Dr Croker* highlighted that the home environment is more likely to influence behaviour than the school environment, with positive parent feeding practices being key to success.

Professor Falko Sniehotta, University of Twente, followed by discussing the behavioural perspective of maintaining weight loss. Whilst there are many interventions that successfully lead to short term weight loss, sustained success requires change to the obesogenic environment.

The final session of Day One saw the awarding of the Cuthbertson Medal 2021 to *Dr Nerys Astbury*, University of Oxford. The medal lecture entitled: 'Low-energy total diet replacement weight loss programmes – from bench to bedside', explored *Dr Astbury's* work on the origins of low-energy total diet replacements for weight loss programmes. Results showed that a commercial total diet replacement programme is a feasible, acceptable

and clinically cost-effective treatment for obesity in routine primary care.

Day Two

A breakfast symposium hosted by Noom Inc. looked at the way attitudes and beliefs of obese individuals relate to future preventive behaviours for on COVID-19. *Professor Andrew Steptoe*, University College London (UCL) highlighted that awareness of obesity being a risk factor



for COVID-19 outcomes marginally predicted faster vaccination uptake, and greater engagement with a weight loss programme.

Professor Nicholas Dale, University of Warwick, opened symposium Three by discussing how tanycytes have emerged as a locus for change in the expression of genes that play a role

Alison Gallagher @amgallagher_UU · Dec 8, 2021
 What a fantastic couple of days attending the @NutritionSoc #NSWinter21 - congratulations to student OC winners @curiekphd and @AislingDaly and hats off and thanks to @NutritionSoc and especially to @hall_wendy for delivering such a great conference 🙌👏

'Fantastic conference! Thank you very much for all your thoughtful, current, helpful and efficient organisation. I am always impressed with the commitment and efficiency of those who plan and conduct this conference. Truly the contributions at the forefront in such a transcendental issue for our field seeing Obesity and Brain in a global way have a lot of application in our daily activities. Now it's time to break down each evidence of the impact on cognition and take it to the field in my daily Practice in the Private Clinical Consultation and Teaching. I look forward to next year's conference and being able to attend in person.'

Yvonne Rodriguez, Clinical Dietician and Nutritionist



Professor Julie Lovegrove, President of the Society

in the control of feeding and energy balance. *Professor Rachel Batterham*, UCL, followed by discussing the role of the gut in regulating food intake and energy balance; highlighting how bariatric surgery can positively alter the gut hormone profile to reduce hunger and preference for sweet and high fat foods. New data show how drugs, such as semaglutide, offer promise as a gut hormone-based pharmacotherapy. *Professor Susan Ozanne*, University of Cambridge, concluded the symposium by examining how the nutritional environment to which a developing foetus is exposed impacts long-term cardio-metabolic health. Using diet induced obese mouse models, *Professor*

Ozanne explored how impaired glucose tolerance during pregnancy leads to reduced insulin resistance, cardiac dysfunction, hypertension and fatty liver, even when the offspring is born lean. This is a growing concern

since 1 in 7 births are now affected by gestational diabetes.

Symposium four looked at personalised approaches for tackling obesity, with advances in cost and time efficiency of genome sequencing fuelling interest for precision nutrition. Using data from the Food4me intervention, *Dr Carlos Celis-Morales*, University of Glasgow, concluded that more controlled and comparative studies with cost-benefit analysis for improving behaviour and health are needed. *Associate Professor Henrik Munch Roager*, University of Copenhagen, followed with an interesting talk on how microbiota enterotypes impact the amount of energy extracted from food, and their important role in predicting weight loss from high fibre diets.

Professor Janet Treasure, King's College London, delivered a fascinating plenary lecture to close the conference, looking at the new approaches being used to treat eating disorders. Whilst historic methods of cognitive psychotherapy have delivered low recovery rates, newer approaches using virtual reality, brain training and stimulation have shown significant improvements in eating disorder recovery rates.

Papers from the speakers will be available in *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* over the coming months, as well as all original communications presented at the meeting. ■

Yvanna Todorova @YvannaTodorova · Dec 7, 2021
 Excited to be attending my first in-person conference! The morning session has been inspiring and thought provoking. Thank you @NutritionSoc for organising such a great event #NSWinter21

Yvonne Rodriguez BSc, MSc @yvonnerodriguz · Dec 8, 2021
 Thank you @NutritionSoc for these two fantastic days full of the latest research findings from neuroscientists and clinicians showing evidence within the topic "Obesity and the brain" #NSWinter21 Hope to be in person next Event!



Hybrid Panel Discussion

Membership Matters

Professor Eileen Gibney, Honorary Membership Officer

The last couple of years have been challenging for all. The pandemic, political changes and uncertainty, have made us all consider our priorities personally, professionally and financially. As the Society's Honorary Membership Officer, I recognise the importance of meeting the needs of members more than ever, ensuring we provide support and benefits to our members throughout their careers in the field of nutritional science.

Over the past year the Membership Committee has had a reshuffle. We have welcomed new faces and said goodbye to several previous members. Firstly I would like to thank Dr Dean Sewell (former chair); Dr Colette Shortt (Industry Representative); Kiu Sum (Student Representative); Dr Anna Gryka-Macphail (Policy Representative) and Dr Spiridoula Athanasiadou (Animal Nutrition Representative) for all their work over the last few years. The Committee now comprises representatives from membership and various sectors of nutritional science. You can view all Committee members via the Society's website and chat to them about membership of the Society via Member-Connect or at an in-person conference.

This Committee is working on supporting member-focused activities within the Society. Current work includes plotting the membership journey to illustrate what benefits are useful at the various stages of your career – from student to full member and beyond. The Society is working on an exciting new project to involve members and their opinions in various initiatives and projects within the Society – so watch this space, we will be calling for input from you as a member! We are also looking at ways to enhance tools for University Ambassadors to support student members in engaging with the Society. So lots going on, and it is all for your benefit!

As your needs and interaction with the Society change as your career does, the Society has different membership categories – from student and early career to retired member the Society has lots to offer. Over the course of time the Committee will develop

resources that allow you to maximise the benefits of membership, as your career progresses. Specific benefits for each member type have been outlined in the new membership pages on our website: <https://www.nutritionociety.org/membership>. Make sure to visit and check if you have made use of all the benefits available to you.

In addition to knowing your membership benefits, we feel it is important to create a sense of belonging and community within the Society. We see many colleagues and friends at the society meetings but we also offer our Member-Connect platform to enable communication in between events. This is an engagement platform exclusively for members to be able to discuss hot topics, form new contacts and collaborations, and access offers and news, not always available on our website. It is straightforward and easy to use (trust me... if I can use it so can you!), and you are free to get involved in as much, or as little, as you wish. If you haven't already had a look please do join and build your network, dip into the conversations and see what it's all about! We have also created some instructions to add Member-Connect to your device to allow you quick access; they can be located here: <https://www.nutritionociety.org/member-connect>.

As Summer is nearing, I am delighted to be once again attending the Society's events in person. I look forward to listening to some inspiring scientific talks to continue my own professional development, and very much look forward to meeting fellow members. Please introduce yourself and talk to me about any ideas, questions or thoughts on membership, or any of the other Society activities when you see me. ■

If you have any issues, questions, or feedback, please contact the Membership Team via membership@nutritionociety.org



EARLY CAREER OPPORTUNITY – STAMP YOUR CV WITH THE NSTA

One of the Society's four priorities in the current Strategic Plan is to support the careers and interests of the membership. The objective? To engage members at all career stages, particularly early careers, and to enhance the professional skills of those members working to contribute to the nutritional science discipline. The Nutrition Society Training Academy (NSTA) is committed to playing its part in delivering activities to support the Society's objectives. The NSTA Committee feels that it is best positioned to support early career Professionals (ECP) in their development by launching a programme to elevate ECP research, providing the opportunity to host webinars

and workshops for the NSTA. After all, the NSTA looks to disseminate the latest in cutting edge research, which we all know ECPs are at the heart of delivering.

Are you an ECP?

We know that presenting opportunities have been scarce over the past 24 months, so we encourage ECP members, whether you work in academia, industry or the public sector, to take up this opportunity with the NSTA. Use the platform to disseminate your research globally, whilst building confidence and polishing up on presenting skills before presenting on the larger stages at in-person

conferences. So, if you are within 10 years of graduating, have exciting research to share, and are looking to add Nutrition Society activity to a CV, then apply today.

Further details and the application form can be found here: www.nutritionociety.org/host-webinar or contact training@nutritionociety.org to discuss applying further.



Penny Hunking, Honorary Training Academy Officer

Celebrating the 80th anniversary of The Nutrition Society – a personal reflection

Dr Margaret Ashwell OBE

One day, my great-grandchildren might ask me what I did in the terrible COVID-19 pandemic in the early 2020s. "I turned myself from a sort of nutrition scientist into a sort of nutrition historian", I shall say.

I spent quite a bit of 2020 planning the blue plaque for Elsie Widdowson which was successfully unveiled in June 2021⁽¹⁾.

Then at the start of the January 2021 lockdown, I started a new historical project. My inspiration for this project came from spotting a book from 1991⁽²⁾ on my bookshelves whilst lying on my Pilates mat on the floor of my office. An update would make a good project for The Nutrition Society's 80th anniversary, I thought. Mark Hollingsworth (CEO) and Professor Julie Lovegrove (President), agreed. I'm grateful to them, and also to Cassandra Ellis, the Society's Science Director, who has helped me with this project.

I had played a very small role in the previous volume. In 1987, June Schulkes, who ran the Society almost single handedly from 1967 to 1994, alerted me to some cassette tape recordings made by the Society's archivist, Dr Molly Copping. Reading the preface to the previous volume, I have now realised that these early tapes were made at the request of Dr WJ Darby from Vanderbilt University in USA. I mentioned their existence to Elsie Widdowson, and she asked for further transcripts to complete her 'little book', as she called it. My part was to get the early tapes transcribed and the originals are now safely in the Nutrition Society archives.

I was fascinated by all of these early tapes. One was the joint interview with Robert McCance and Elsie Widdowson made in 1970 by Molly. That tape played a very important part in my life. It was one of the reasons that I decided to ask the famous pair if I could write a book about them⁽³⁾ and I've never regretted that decision.

Now back to my most recent historical volume⁽⁴⁾. I contacted all the people who had been Nutrition Society Presidents since 1991, together with all those who had been awarded Honorary Fellowships in that time. All eleven Presidents agreed to contribute and ten of the Fellows too. I asked them to tell me about their careers in nutrition, with special reference to the role that the Society has played. My immense gratitude goes to all of them.

On reading and editing these contributions, I was staggered by all the amazing achievements they recount. Just one word of caution. Don't read these and think they must have had a charmed existence. I bet every one of them could have also told you about things that went wrong for them. I certainly



Dr Margaret Ashwell (right) with two past Presidents of The Nutrition Society (Dr Ann Prentice and Professor Catherine Geissler) and the current President, Professor Julie Lovegrove at the unveiling of Elsie's Blue Plaque. All three contributed their Stories in the 2021 book.

could have done. My favourite quotation is from the Lebanese writer, Kahlil Gibran: "Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding". Everyone goes through experiences that are very painful at the time. But once you get over them, you realise just how much you have learned from them. About others. About yourself.

The other thing that has struck me on reading these recollections is the many mentions of the wonderful social events that have always accompanied the Society meetings. Why do I sound surprised? They have been amazing and I'm so lucky to have participated in many of them. We have had a strange couple of years since the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and all our conferences had to be virtual. However, the Society now hosts some hybrid events which will not only help to boost inclusivity for those not able to get to the venue, but will also bring back these social interactions for those who want or need them. If you have the opportunity to attend a Society meeting in person, do so!

Elsie ended her preface by hoping that these stories and recollections would inspire present members and others who had been concerned with the history of nutrition over the past 50 years. We now have a Society which has celebrated its 80th Anniversary. Let's hope that these stories can inspire even more people, and that the idea of recording the Presidents' stories continues when The Nutrition Society is celebrating its 100th anniversary. ■

1. Ashwell M (2021) Guest blog – Elsie Widdowson and her blue plaque. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/news/2021/guest-blog-elsie-widdowson-and-her-blue-plaque/>

2. Widdowson E (1991) *The Nutrition Society 1941-1991 Presidents and Honorary Members: Their Stories and Recollections*. CAB International.

3. Ashwell M (editor) (1993) *McCance and Widdowson – A Scientific Partnership of 60 Years*. London: British Nutrition Foundation.

4. Ashwell M (editor) (2021) *Celebrating 80 years. Presidents and Honorary Fellows 1991-2021: Their Stories and Recollections*. London: The Nutrition Society.

Professor Susan Jebb

Chair of the Food Standards Agency (FSA)



Tell us about your career path from dietitian to Chair of FSA?

After my degree in nutrition science and professional training in dietetics, I went to Cambridge University to do a PhD. At the time it felt a natural extension of my degree rather than a decision to pursue a career in research, but I stayed there for 25 years, progressing from PhD student to Programme Leader with the Medical Research Council's nutrition units. My research shifted from studying energy metabolism in both over- and under-nutrition, onto appetite control and behavioural science. In 2013, I moved to the University of Oxford where I co-lead the Health Behaviours team in the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences. I have two main research interests: first in how we can support and enable people to consume a healthier diet, primarily focused on food purchasing behaviours delivered at individuals and population-level, and second, testing interventions for the treatment of obesity in routine care settings.

Increasingly my research has become more applied with a focus on using science to shape policy and practice – whether in the food industry, the NHS or government. I've sought out opportunities to be a member or Chair of various committees which have given me great insights into the evidence that is needed to make a difference. I was delighted to be offered the position as Chair of the Food Standards Agency last summer. It is a tremendous privilege to lead an organisation which is doing so much to protect public health and uphold the high food standards we enjoy in the UK. It's certainly not something I'd have predicted when I left university.

What skills do you bring to your current role from your previous career as a leading academic?

The credibility of the FSA is grounded in its use of science and evidence to make decisions that matter to public health. My scientific training has taught me to read

and assimilate lots of material, think hard and ask searching questions and I try to use these skills to add value. As an academic, I've tried to present evidence to policymakers in a way that supports their decision-making, and that 'honest-broker' role is not so very different as Chair of the FSA.

Obviously, having experience of chairing committees, working with policymakers and engaging with diverse stakeholders are all really important to enabling a high performing FSA Board. As Chair of the Board, it's important to be able to think strategically and look ahead, which is something we do all the time in research when you are trying to develop and test new ideas and build a team. You also need to be resilient, and years of failed grant applications have certainly taught me that!

The challenges as Chair of the FSA are different from those in leading a research team, but in both cases I think you need a strong sense of purpose, a vision for how things can be better and the drive and commitment to get things done.

What changes would you like to see in the British food landscape?

We are at an extraordinary moment for UK food policy. Our exit from the EU, the COVID-19 pandemic and now the war in Ukraine is reshaping global food systems and public attitudes to food. These challenging times also present a real opportunity to reshape food systems.

I was a member of the advisory group for the National Food Strategy, the independent review by Henry Dimbleby, which provided a powerful analysis of the challenges we face and a suite of recommendations. As Chair of the FSA, I am now talking with others in government about the changes that are needed. There has been longstanding agreement of the importance of food safety – indeed it speaks to the origins of the FSA. I think

that now there is also a shared vision for a food system that provides healthier and more sustainable food, delivered equitably too. The challenge is not so much the 'what', but 'how' we can achieve this.

What role will nutrition science play in the work of FSA?

It's the FSA's job to represent consumer interests in relation to food in government and our research shows that more than half of those surveyed were concerned about the healthiness of their personal diet. We will use our science and evidence on consumer behaviour to support the development of policies that make it easier for people to meet nutritional recommendations. And we want to ensure that nutritional information is communicated to consumers in a way that is accurate, clear and makes it easy for people to make healthier choices.

There are also some areas where FSA has specific duties which involve nutrition science. For example, following EU exit we run the authorisation process for new food and animal feed products. Alongside looking at whether these foods are safe, we want to know what impact they are likely to have on what we eat. For example, in considering meat or dairy substitutes or alternative proteins which may have environmental benefits, we also need to be mindful of how they might be consumed and what impact they may have on nutritional intake.

How will FSA work with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to encourage more people to adopt healthier diets?

In England, policy responsibility for nutrition rests with DHSC, but we also work closely with the Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Assembly who have their own strategies for diet and health. Our aim is to use our evidence and consumer insights to help achieve policy goals. For example, in Northern Ireland, we are already a key partner in the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework which sets out a vision to guide long term decision making about

food. In Wales, we are offering support to the Welsh government as they develop their Community Food Strategy, to encourage the supply of locally sourced food. In England, we are working with the Department for Education and DHSC to look at how we can assure the nutritional standards for food served in school, which I hope might evolve into wider assurance schemes to safeguard standards in other public food systems.

One new area we are developing with DHSC, Defra, and the devolved countries, is the idea for a Food Data Transparency Partnership. This has the potential to provide a granular reporting mechanism on progress towards nutritional targets. In time, I hope it may also provide insights into new interventions to change the supply chain and consumer behaviour towards healthier diets.

What would you like to achieve by the end of your first term of office?

My first year is nearing its end and I'm pleased to say we've made good progress. Most notably we have released a new strategy for the FSA for the next 5 years. This is a roadmap recommitting the FSA to its core mission – Food You Can Trust – and sets out how we will work to deliver on three key objectives: food is safe; food is what it says it is; and an explicit new objective – to play our part in transforming the food system to ensure food is healthier and more sustainable. It's a step change in what we do, expanding our area of interest beyond food safety. In doing so, we've opened the door to new conversations across government. I'm keen for FSA to be the 'glue' that helps achieve better join-up on food policy across departments and across the UK. We are starting to see joint projects emerging where we can use the skills and expertise in the FSA to support other parts of government in delivering on their responsibilities in relation to food. I hope our new strategy will also extend our links with academia and I'd urge members of the Nutrition Society to sign-up for the FSA Chair and Chief Executive Regular blog update by scanning the QR code below:



Coming this summer, just ahead of my first-year anniversary, will be our first annual report on food standards,

jointly with Food Standards Scotland (FSS), to give a 'One UK' perspective. This will be the first of a regular and comprehensive assessment of the state of the nation's plate and I hope a useful baseline from which we can monitor standards going forward. This is FSA stepping up its responsibility as a 'watchdog' in the food system, providing objective and transparent analysis of food standards. This feels especially important at this time of uncertainty in the food system, with the change in our relationship with the EU, our major trading partner, and development of new trade deals.

What are the barriers to people achieving safer, healthier diets and how can the FSA help to tackle these?

Everyone wants safe food, yet there are still an estimated 2.4 million cases of food-borne disease every year in the UK and sadly, around 160 deaths. Some of that is contamination in the food supply, but some is also about poor hygiene practices in the home. When it comes to healthy food, most people have a good idea what a healthy diet entails and aspire to achieve it, but they struggle to enact their good intentions in a world where energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods are relatively cheap, convenient, accessible and heavily marketed. And most people want to eat food that has been produced with the least harm to the environment, but it's almost impossible to know the environmental impact of individual foods or to be confident when making comparisons between products.

Overlaid across each of these issues is the pressing question of food affordability and the growing prevalence of household food insecurity across the UK. Worries about the cost of food can lead to people

taking more risks with the food they eat, such as buying food close to its use-by date, or not chilling or cooking food adequately. And cost pressures make it harder for people to prioritise healthier or more sustainable food choices.

There is more that FSA can do in all these areas in each of our five core roles: as evidence generator, policy-maker, regulator, watchdog and convenor and at our public Board meetings people can follow what we are doing and ask questions. The challenge for the FSA Board is to balance our ambition to make a difference with the resources we have available.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I feel incredibly fortunate to have two jobs I love, at the University of Oxford and the FSA. It does often feel like two full-time jobs, but there is certainly never a dull moment!

Despite a career in food, as Chair of FSA I have learnt so much about parts of the food system I've had little engagement with previously. No day is the same, from meetings with Ministers, the food industry or consumer groups, to visits around the country, including an abattoir to see the work of our vets and meat hygiene inspectors, a port to discuss import controls, a laboratory doing food sampling, new product development kitchens and community food redistribution schemes. I get to see and hear the most interesting parts of other people's jobs. I also really enjoy telling people about the work the FSA does to deliver on our mission of 'Food You Can Trust' and I'm so proud to lead an organisation full of people who really care about what they do. There is little about it that I don't enjoy. ■



No Publication Fees

Publish in GUT MICROBIOME

All Article Processing Charges (APCs) have been waived until October 2022



Ms Heather Kelman

New Chair of Food Standards Scotland (FSS)

Tell us about your career path from dietitian to Chair of FSS?

I graduated as a Dietitian from Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology in 1981 and started my first dietetic post in Nottingham in January 1982, returning to the North of Scotland in 1983. I held various hospital dietetic posts before being given the opportunity to form a new dietetic department providing a population based service in Aberdeenshire. In addition to treating diet related disease, I had the opportunity to place an emphasis on promoting positive nutritional health which led to a career long interest in health promotion, prevention of disease, rehabilitation and supported self-care.

This in turn led to a change of career and after studying part time to gain an MBA, I was appointed to the post of Business and Service Development Manager for the NHS. In addition to producing the annual plan, I led several service redesigns where I worked with clinicians across the service to consider the whole patient pathway and improve the focus on prevention and rehabilitation, aiming to ensure disease prevention, retention of independence and recovery of wellbeing were given equal priority to the delivery of effective and timely treatment. This brought me closer to primary care services, and ultimately to my application to become a general manager in community and primary care services which I did for 20 years before requesting early retirement from the NHS. My first day of retirement was also my first day as a shadow Board Member for Food Standards Scotland and I was delighted to be given the opportunity to be part of the development of this new public body with such a positive role in protecting health by ensuring food was safe, complied with legal standards and contributed to nutritional wellbeing. After seven years as a Board Member I was honoured to be appointed as Chair and feel privileged to be leading the Board through the significant challenges ahead.

What changes would you like to see in the Scottish food landscape?

The very recent past has highlighted the susceptibility of our food chain to world events. The COVID-19 pandemic, EU exit, climate change and most recently the invasion of Ukraine highlighted the

vulnerabilities inherent within a global food chain. These recent experiences can create a real understanding and a desire for change. In turn, I hope all stakeholders involved in the growth, harvesting, production, manufacture and retail of food, will join food scientists, researchers, policy advisers and policy makers to drive a period of change which more closely aligns the food available for consumers to the dietary guidance for better nutritional health.

Farming and fishing played a major role in the culture and economy in the Scotland of my childhood. The population was closely connected to food and most families would 'cook from scratch' on a daily basis. Food not prepared or cooked in the home was a rare thing. Our eating habits have changed so much since then. There is a far greater emphasis on ready to eat, pre-prepared, highly processed food, often eaten 'on-the-go' or as snacks throughout the day, which has resulted in a rapid expansion in the consumption of a high fat, high sugar, high salt, low fibre diet. While not wanting to turn the clock back, I do feel we have lost something.

For the future I would like to see Scotland's people reconnect with food in a mindful way and for it to be easier to choose to buy and eat nutritious food that will help us remain physically and mentally well. New technology, the application of science and a changing climate should enable us to change the quantity and range of foods produced locally that aligns to our nutritional guidelines. The publication in 2009 of Recipe for Success, Scotland's first National Food and Drink Policy, led to many improvements in Scotland's food and drink sector, but diet related poor health and concerns for food security remained significant. In 2014 the updated national food and drink policy "Becoming a Good Food Nation" was published aiming to build on the earlier policy and ensure Scottish food suppliers offered food that was fresh, healthy and environmentally sound. The vision described in Chapter 7 of the policy describes the changes I would like to see in our food landscape and I hope the forthcoming Good Food Nation Bill will mark the start of a clear journey in that direction.



What role will nutrition science play in the work of FSS?

FSS was established in 2015 to protect the health and wellbeing of consumers. We have a unique role in government, working independently of Ministers and industry, to provide advice which is impartial, and based on robust science and data. Our mission "To be Scotland's leading authority on food safety, standards and healthy eating; using data and evidence to provide assurance and advice that inspires consumer confidence and improves public health" ensures that nutritional science is core to the work we do.

The Nutrition team at FSS is committed to continuing to gather data on food purchasing and food intake which provides data and information used by many nutritional scientists and policy advisers. The inclusion of Intake 24 in the Scottish Health Survey should improve the accuracy of population level detailed dietary data.

In addition to our routine data gathering and reporting, FSS has identified funding for research and is in the process of developing our research plan to underpin the delivery of our strategy "Healthy, Safe, Sustainable: Driving Scotland's Food Future". This plan will be available later this year and outlines how working in partnership to generate evidence and data is essential to meet our aims. This will include additional work in the field of diet and health, foodborne illness, identifying risks to the food chain and understanding attitudes and behaviours of consumers. In partnership with FSA, FSS is now jointly responsible for the risk analysis associated with the authorisation of new food or animal feed products. The introduction of new foods, will be accompanied by nutritional or health claims. FSS will need the data and evidence to test these claims and ensure all labelling complies with legislation.

It can be seen that the need for nutritional science permeates almost every aspect of

the work of FSS and we aim to build our relationships with the academic institutes and individuals that work within our field of interest.

What will be your priorities over your first term of office?

As I sit here I have only been in post for seven weeks, and my initial priority was to meet the huge number of partners and stakeholders that are essential to FSS fulfilling our purpose and also to fully understand how FSS delivers its statutory functions and objectives. In addition, I had an immediate priority to commence the recruitment process for four new Board Members to replace myself and the three very experienced and highly valued Board Members completing their second term of office at the end of March 2023. It is so important that I find equally enthusiastic, well informed and committed people to join the Board. If any readers think this could be them, you can register your interest by scanning the QR code below:



Looking beyond these immediate actions, my priorities for my first term of office are very clearly to focus on delivering our aims as outlined in the FSS Strategy for 2021-2026. This has to be balanced against the ever increasing volume of work arising from the UK exit from the European Union which has the potential to divert us from our ambitions for the future.

How do you plan to work with the academic community in Scotland? I met with Professor Julie Fitzpatrick, Chief Scientific Adviser for Scotland shortly after my appointment and we have discussed how we can support collaboration between scientists in Scotland and I look forward to working with her over the years to come.

I also have ambitions to visit many of the food related institutes or academic bodies in Scotland along with Professor David Gally, FSS's Chief Scientific Advisor, to learn more about the work being undertaken within the academic community and to explore opportunities for collaboration and joint working. In addition, I will be attending the Royal Environmental Health Institute of

Scotland's Annual Forum this year to talk about the FSS Strategy.

Later this year the FSS Research Plan shall be presented to and discussed at our Board. The publication and communication of this plan shall hopefully foster opportunities for further dialogue between FSS and the academic community in Scotland.

The food landscape is very complex with many players – how will FSS cut through this to make a difference?

Yes, there are many players in the food landscape many of which are not located within Scotland. Clarity of the role and responsibilities of each contributor is essential for effective communication which is, in turn, essential to making a difference. Our highly skilled communications team will assist FSS to have effective and honest conversations with the appropriate stakeholders at key times. Seeking to identify shared aims and objectives with our partners and stakeholders will be an essential step towards effective change.

The challenges facing the food landscape in Scotland are universally shared. The need to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of the food industry, rising costs, supply chain difficulties and the requirement to minimise health harms from food are shared by us all. FSS shall take the opportunity for open and honest dialogue with all players to ensure the food landscape of the future is one that we can be proud of, and that meets the nutritional requirements of this, and future, generations.

The Scottish diet seems to have made little progress over the past 20 years. What could we do differently in future?

I view this as a challenge across the entire food chain from farm or sea to fork, each sector has a need to consider what they can do to improve health of the population and the planet.

The food environment in Scotland must change. It is easy to blame individual choice. But, it is not exactly free choice. Consumer choice is heavily influenced by marketing expertise. The Five P's – product, pricing, promotion, placement and people are all highly influential in our everyday eating choices. While respecting the need for the food industry and retail businesses to make profit, it should be possible to balance this with a corporate social responsibility to reduce

harm. Product reformulation, or a new focus on healthier products will contribute significantly to improving the Scottish Diet. It is essential to reduce the consumption of discretionary high fat, high sugar, high salt, low fibre foods in Scotland.

I would also like to see organisations/businesses or individuals responsible for the production of meals for others to give careful consideration to the menus, choices and quality of the food they offer. MenuCal is a free on-line tool that will calculate calories in the food they serve. Simple changes in recipes or portion size, with an increase in vegetable portions make a big difference to a person's diet, especially as so many calories are now consumed outwith our homes.

For individuals I would like to simplify the dietary advice available. We do not have to move to the perfect food intake overnight. Keep a note of what you eat over a day or week and find 5 things you would like to change and concentrate on achieving those. The difficulty about giving dietary advice is that the best change to make is individual to each person. Advising someone not to eat a particular product will only work if that forms a regular part of their food intake. If I was allowed to choose for everyone I would ensure that we all increase our vegetable, fruit and fibre intake.

What does a typical day in your role look like?

I am semi-retired and don't think I have such a thing as a typical day. But normally I will start by opening my emails and checking to see if there is anything urgent requiring my attention, I then move to check the calendar for the day and the forthcoming couple of weeks and my task list and from all of this form a to do list for the day. Next is to review the media coverage for the day and consider if there is anything there of concern.

The wonderful thing about this role is that no two days are alike, and that I am learning so much every day. The to-do list may include meetings with politicians, government officials, partner agencies such as Public Health Scotland and FSA or stakeholders from across the food sector – retail, manufacture, regulation, science, and the third sector are just some examples. Alternatively, there may be papers to clear, or correspondence to reply to. I may meet with members of the FSS team to discuss a particular issue, or to plan an event, and of course a day may be completely dedicated to an FSS Board meeting. ■

Importance of Nutrition in Japan and the World

Professor Hisanori Kato, The University of Tokyo, Japan and Professor Kiyotaka Nakagawa, Tohoku University, Japan

Importance of Nutrition in Japan and the World

In recent years, countries worldwide have seen a growing interest in the relationship between nutrition and health. Known for its incredible life expectancy, Japan has long been a role model for its progressive approach to nutritional science, including its practical application and education. Nonetheless, there are many issues that Japan must face due to its status as an advanced nation with an ageing population. These include the provision of nutritious meals for senior citizens, the increase in lifestyle-related diseases, the challenges in ensuring the appropriate use of functional foods and supplements, undernutrition, overnutrition, unhealthy dietary habits of the younger population, excessive emphasis on body weight among young women, and low birth-weight infants. From this perspective, society expects us to address and solve these problems through the advancement of nutritional science (Fig.1).

Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science (JSNFS) and International Activities

This year marks the 75th year since the founding of the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science (JSNFS) in 1947 by experts to address the nutritional deficiencies in Japan at that time. As the 14th subcommittee of the Japanese Association of Medical Sciences, JSNFS has contributed to the progress in



Fig. 1 Prime Minister Kishida delivering an opening speech at the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 2021
(Photo: Cabinet Public Affairs Office)

nutrition and food science research while maintaining a close relationship with the medical field. Today, with changes in the social environment, our research targets have been diversified and deepened to include overnutrition, lifestyle-related diseases, and an ageing society. We believe that the academic progress in these fields will make a significant contribution to the health and well-being of people around the world. Because of this, our Society has long placed a high value on international activities, many of which have been performed in cooperation with international bodies representing related fields, including the International Union of Nutritional Science (IUNS), the International Union of Food and Technologies (IUoST), and the Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS).

22nd IUNS-ICN

The International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) is held by IUNS every four years, making it the world's longest-running international congress in the field of nutritional science. 47 years have passed since the last ICN was held in Japan (10th ICN), and following the appointment of Japan as the host for the 22nd IUNS-ICN for fall 2021 (subsequently postponed to winter 2022), our Society, together with the Japanese Society of Nutrition and Dietetics, formed the 22nd International Congress of Nutrition Organising Committee in 2016 to prepare for the upcoming congress. The organising committee has selected as its main theme "The Power of Nutrition: For the Smiles of 10 Billion People."

The event will include presentations and discussions of significant research findings in the field of nutritional science, with topics covering:

- the advances in nutrition research
- nutrients and nutritional assessment
- nutrition through life course
- nutrition and management of diseases

Find out more about the Japan Society of Nutrition and Food Science



- food culture practices and nutrition education
- public health nutrition and environment
- functional foods and bioactive compounds
- agriculture, food science, and safety.

In addition, we invited the recipients of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine to deliver the keynote address. Hosting the 22nd IUNS-ICN in Japan provides an opportunity to bring together leading researchers from around the world to facilitate the discussion and presentation of the latest research findings related to the importance of nutritional science and contribute to the development and application of nutritional science. We look forward to welcoming you at the 22nd IUNS-ICN in Tokyo from 6-11 December 2022. ■



The 22nd International Congress of Nutrition (ICN) will be held in Tokyo, Japan, on 6-11 December 2022

Student Section Update

Kiu Sum, Student Section Chair



I cannot believe we are now coming to the end of another academic year. Since the last Gazette, my highlight has been meeting many students in December 2021 at the Winter Conference; the Society's first face to face conference since the pandemic. It was great to have the opportunity to connect with student members. I want to now take this opportunity to reflect and share the highs and lows the past year and what you can look forward to as a student member of the Society.

International Engagement

As a Student Section, one of our goals is to improve our engagement with our international student members. I have been very fortunate to be working with Christina Choo, our International Student Representative (who is also a final year nutrition student from King's College London). Together, we are creating a strategic plan to develop activities that cater for the needs of international students. Keep your eyes peeled as we should be able to share more about this in the coming months!

If you have any ideas on how best to engage with our international student members, please do let us know via email: studentsection@nutritionssociety.org

Career Support

Having a clear idea of our career path after graduating is difficult and often leaves us with more confusion than before. As Nutrition Society members, we are very fortunate to have the support from the NSTA to help us explore the many career paths and ascertain the

skills, knowledge and experience needed to be competent nutritional professionals. This year, the Student Section continued to provide members with the opportunity to hear from nutritionists across various different professions through regular career events including Nutrition Futures. The Society now has a dedicated careers area on the website where members can access past career session recordings and get inspired to pursue a nutrition related career through the new 'Day in the life of...' case studies.

Access the Career Section here:



Nutrition Futures

Looking ahead, the Student Section is busy planning its annual Nutrition Futures. Hosted by Coventry University, the event will take place on 6-7 September 2022 and promises an array of opportunities for all students, graduates and prospective nutrition students to engage in the diverse and interactive activities across the many topics within nutrition.

Attendees will have the opportunity to:

- present their research through our oral communication sessions
- develop skills in public speaking and publication through workshops
- hear from leading experts across a range of disciplines
- learn how to create a job seeking strategy through our careers panel
- build new connections and through networking opportunities.

This is such an exciting meeting for all students, whether in the UK or overseas, and we look forward to meeting you at Coventry in September.

Join the Student Section

Despite the 'highs' of these past few months, the academic year is now coming to an end, so we will have to say goodbye to Section members who are graduating and moving on to the next exciting chapter of their nutrition careers.

That means we have some vacancies for student members to fill. If you are interested in joining the Student Section, please could you contact myself, Kiu Sum at studentsection@nutritionssociety.org

We are also looking for students to become University Ambassadors for their university. If any student members would like to learn more about the Ambassador programme, please visit the website or contact us directly at studentsection@nutritionssociety.org. We would be very happy to hear any feedback or ideas. ■

The Nutrition Society Themes

The Nutrition Society Themes exist to promote and support the advancement of nutritional science.

Acknowledging that nutrition scientists will often undertake work within and across multiple disciplines, the four Themes of *Nutrition and optimum life course*, *Food systems*, *Nutrition in the treatment, management and prevention of disease* and *Novel nutrition research methodologies*

and technologies cut across all research themes.

To champion these networks and ensure effective representation across the disciplines, the new structure encourages interdisciplinary working of researchers across scales from molecular to public health, policy, and nutrition research methodologies.

Members can express their 'Theme'

of interest when they join the Society or are able to update this in their members' area. Each Theme is led by a Theme Lead, who represents the interests of, and liaises with Society members through their Member-Connect Forum.

Hear from your current Theme Lead about the recent developments in their field and the plans they have for their theme:

Nutrition in the Treatment, Management and Prevention of Disease

Dr Oonagh Markey, Loughborough University

It is with great pleasure that I take on the role as the Society's Theme Lead for Nutrition in the Treatment, Management and Prevention of Disease. I would like to thank my predecessor, Professor Ailsa Welch, for all her hard work and dedication to this role, and the Public Health Nutrition Theme which she formerly led, over the past 11 years. I am looking forward to serving in this role and supporting the shaping of this Theme with you all over the coming years.

I am delighted to see that our Theme now represents 1,269 members from across the globe and various career stages. In this role, I will have opportunities to facilitate conferences and 'hot topics'/Special Interest Groups (SIGs) related to our Theme, you can find out more about the current SIGs overleaf. Members aligned to this Theme are encouraged to reach out if they would like to propose a SIG that considers foods and nutrients as risk factors for diseases, nutritional strategies for prevention, or nutrition in the management and treatment of clinical conditions. To ensure that we are meeting the needs of the next generation of nutritionists, I would also invite members in the early stages of their career to share any thoughts on how they might like to contribute to the Theme or feel more supported in their career development.

Evidence synthesis to inform the process of updating international guiding principles on feeding of infants and young children

The World Health Organization (WHO) guiding principles for feeding infants and young children (IYC) have traditionally focused on indicators for prevention of undernutrition. However, global consumption of unhealthy foods, including sugar-sweetened beverages has increased substantially among paediatric populations. Furthermore, suboptimal diet during early life can track into adulthood, alongside overweight/obesity and other risk factors for cardiometabolic disease. In recognition of this, it is now recommended that indicators of unhealthy food and beverage consumption are included in IYC feeding practice assessment.

The WHO, as part of the process of updating the guiding principles on feeding of IYC, commissioned a series of systematic reviews to synthesize and assess the available evidence for priority questions. At Loughborough University, we undertook the systematic review on the impact of unhealthy food and beverage consumption during childhood on pre-specified outcomes including, overweight/obesity, cardiometabolic disease risk biomarkers and oral health/dental caries.



We recently published review findings related to risk of overweight/obesity in *Advances in Nutrition*. Of 26,542 identified citations, 60 studies (59 observational) were included. We found that consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and unhealthy foods in childhood may increase BMI, percentage body fat, or odds of overweight/obesity in later life, whereas consumption of artificially sweetened beverages and 100% fruit juice has less demonstrable effects on these outcomes, although greater certainty of evidence is needed. Our review highlights the need for more high-quality studies that purposefully assess the effects of unhealthy food and beverage consumption during childhood on risk of overweight/obesity. Data from low-income countries are also warranted.

So back to our Theme. I am always happy to hear from you if you would like to propose a SIG or share ideas on how to shape of our Theme. Please contact me via the Member-Connect platform: <https://www.nutrition society.org/member-connect> or the membership team ■

Novel nutrition research methodologies and technologies

Dr Ruan Elliot, University of Surrey

Having swapped from leading the Cellular and Molecular Nutrition Theme, under the Society's previous Theme structure, to now lead the Novel Nutrition Research Methodologies and Technologies Theme, I can immediately see how the new Theme engages a wider selection of the Society. More than more than 850 members have indicated this Theme aligns with their interests. Moreover, the selection of abstracts submitted to this Theme for the Society's 2022 Summer Conference emphasises the variety of novel techniques already being employed by members. These include innovative technologies using the *internet of things* and *web-based apps* to analyse eating patterns and food intake, the use of big data from commercial food manufacturers to refine food composition databases to better define nutrient intakes, and N=1 study designs making use of wearable technologies for data collection.

The opportunities to apply new techniques to advance nutrition research, however, seem almost endless. For example, the UK Government recently completed a consultation on vitamin D, specifically

seeking expert views on how to improve the vitamin D status of the population. This is undoubtedly a significant challenge as mean dietary vitamin D intakes for most children (older than 1.5 years) and adults in the UK are well below the current reference nutrient intake (typical dietary intakes are in the range of 2-3µg/day, compared with the RNI of 10µg/day). In the light of this, the recently published work from Professor Cathie Martin's group at the John Innes Centre, which demonstrates that gene editing can be used in tomatoes to achieve substantial accumulation of vitamin D3, is particularly interesting (Li et al. *Nature Plants* (2022) <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41477-022-01154-6>). Their analysis suggested that a single ripe gene-edited medium sized tomato could contain up to 2µg of vitamin D3 where a normal tomato would contain none or virtually none. They suggest the content of their gene-edited tomatoes might be further enhanced by exposure to UVB light, for example, during sun drying and that other fruits and vegetables may be amenable to vitamin D enrichment via the same gene editing strategy. This represents a potential new route to achieve adequate vitamin D intakes

without the need for supplementation or food fortification. However, it remains to be seen whether the regulators and the general public will accept gene edited foods when genetically modified foods remain essentially rejected by both.

Other equally intriguing research suggests that the nutrient composition of foods, while highly variable, follows very specific mathematical rules determined by the inherent biological properties of the underlying metabolic networks (Menichetti and Barabasi *Nature Foods* (2022) 3, 375-382). As such, the authors of this work suggest the mathematical rules they uncovered could be used to define normal variability in nutrient content for a particular food type and also to impute data missing from food composition databases.

With such a diverse range of new and emerging technologies available, the opportunity for you to set up SIGs to help develop and realise the true potential of this field, seems ideal and I encourage you to consider applying to set up SIGs for the approaches you want to champion. ■



Food Systems

Dr Christian Reynolds, City University, London

It is time of rapid change and large challenges for food systems. The continuing cost of living crisis, the war in Ukraine (resulting in grain and fertiliser supply chain disruptions), and the return to new normal post Brexit and COVID-19 have all shocked the food system. As nutritionists and food system operatives we are working at mitigating the fallout of these events. However, these events are just the tip of the iceberg, many possible structural food system transformations are now about to begin.

In 2020 the National Food Strategy to tackle obesity and create healthy food systems was published, and on 13 June 2022 the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) published a response to the first independent review of the UK's food system in 75 years. Many had hoped that this white paper would be bold in vision and provide far sighted support for the food system reform necessary to achieve the UK's current net zero and nature positive commitments, tackle obesity and reduce inequalities. However, the white



Continued over

Continued

paper lacked detail on 7 of the 14 recommendations including no new targets, standards, and education policies. Indeed, there appears to be limited food systems thinking in the solutions offered by the white paper.

The Scottish Government's Good Food Nation (Scotland) Bill is responding to these tensions at the devolved level. It presents a vision that by 2025 Scotland will be "a Good Food Nation, where people from every walk of life take pride and pleasure in, and benefit from, the food they produce, buy, cook, serve, and eat each day." Though not perfect, it has many advancements that will help the Scottish food system and supports the nutrition of individual citizens. This Bill was passed on 16 June, with the next step being the establishment of a Food Commission to make recommendations and provide advice to government.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is another organisation that has recently made changes to their scope, and these change I believe will be transformational to the wider UK food system. The FSA Strategy 2022–2027 has just been published and outlines the FSA's vision for a food system, including the statements: "food is safe", "Food is what it says it is", and "Food is healthier and more sustainable". This new expanded focus on sustainable food is a very exciting food systems step for the FSA, and will be vital to support other government departments such as DEFRA.

Finally, the UKRI Transforming UK Food Systems Strategic Priorities Fund programme has announced additional funding of £14 million to 11 new research projects focused across the UK food system. I hope some of The Nutrition Society members reading this were among the recipients of this funding. ■

Nutrition and Optimum Life Course

Dr Wendy Hall, King's College London



One of the specialty interest areas that falls within the Nutrition and Optimum Life Course theme is workplace health. This is currently a highly dynamic topic as many workplaces are adapting to new ways of hybrid working. The recent shift in working patterns affects mainly office-based jobs whereas other workers continue to experience persistent challenges in following a healthy diet in their workplaces, for example, workers who may be required to work shifts and those in frontline public services. Identifying the specific barriers to following a healthy diet is essential to improving health and weight management in these employees. The British Dietetic Association (BDA) Work Ready programme White Paper "Supporting healthier working lives through dietitian-led wellness initiatives" (1) estimates that working adults consume approximately 60% of total daily food intake in their workplace. Key findings of the report included that diet and obesity are important factors in productivity loss at work and larger organisations that instigate health promotion interventions are likely to find that the costs are offset by the productivity gains (BDA, 2017). There is scope to address specific needs in different types of workplaces to tailor diet and lifestyle interventions for different groups. For example, men are less likely than women to participate in lifestyle

interventions, and therefore workplace wellness programmes in male-dominated workplaces could be a particularly effective way to improve male health outcomes.

The Workplace Diet and Health Special Interest Group was launched in February this year and held a kick off meeting on 19th April 2022. The meeting was attended by diverse range of members (10 in total) attending from academia, industry, and nutrition and dietetics practice. The reasons why members wanted to join the Workplace Diet and Health SIG were identified during the meeting, including: keeping up to date with the evidence; raising the profile of workplace nutrition and health; networking; and knowledge transfer. SIG activities were planned for the next 12 months, including a roundtable meeting to be held before the end of the year to determine research priorities around workplace diet and health. Longer term goals over the next couple of years include a member-led scoping review which would have the potential to feed into a White Paper, and a half-day symposium. Find out more about the WDH SIG overleaf, or if you would like to join, please go to <https://www.nutritionandsociety.org/workplace-diet-and-health>. ■

Reference:
British Dietetic Association. BDA Work Ready Programme [Internet]. 2017. Available from: <https://www.bda.uk.com/uploads/assets/42d65148-95ab-4eaa-be5c1e89707c53c6/Work-Ready-White-Paper.pdf>

New Special Interest Groups (SIGs) launched:

In addition to the two established SIGs overleaf, the Society is delighted to announce that two new SIGs have been launched in June 2022:

- 1) Diet and Health of Ethnic Minority Groups
- 2) Global School Health and Nutrition

Scan to find out more:



Special Interest Groups (SIGs) Update

Professor Bernard Corfe, Honorary Programme Officer



In the Winter 2021 Gazette, the Society announced the launch of its Special Interest Groups (SIGs). This innovation adds to the ways in which members can engage with the Society through a range of ground-up, member-led activities.

The Society sought to make the process of proposing a SIG reasonably 'light touch' to allow the proposers considerable flexibility in the scope, outputs, and delivery that their SIG may aim for.

Each SIG is associated with one of the Society's Scientific Themes and is supported by both the Theme Leader (who will report on its progress to the Science Committee) and Nutrition Society staff (who will provide the infrastructure to deliver and communicate, principally via Member-Connect).

Since launching this initiative, I am delighted that we can report the launch of two SIGs, and we are having supportive discussions with colleagues on the development of 2-3 further groups; evidencing the enthusiasm of our membership for this type of smaller, focussed activity within the wider umbrella of The Nutrition Society's portfolio.

We have invited two chairs to describe their SIGs and their experience of setting up a SIG.

Workplace Diet and Health

Chair: Dr. Rachel Gibson (Registered Dietitian – British Dietetic Association), King's College London

Area of Interest: Occupational impact of diet and cardiometabolic health (focus on shift work) and Dietary assessment in different occupational groups.



'Since starting research in workplace diet and health I became aware of some challenges to developing research in this area. Firstly, there are many great researchers and stakeholders sharing an interest in this area and secondly, nutrition and diet in the workplace is an emerging area and key organisation within nutrition and dietetics (British Dietetic Association, Association for Nutrition and British Nutrition Foundation) are actively involved in workplace diet and health. However, there was no central hub or conference themes in the UK to support collaboration and to bring interested stakeholders and researchers together.

When I heard about the SIG initiative – I immediately jumped at the chance to apply with the aim of setting up a network of researchers and stakeholders. I had discussions with the Theme Lead Dr Wendy Hall – about how the SIG aligned to Nutrition and Optimum Life Course, I also reached out to contacts at the BDA and BNF as well as researchers working in the area to help develop the groups remit. The application process was straightforward, and interest in membership has received a positive response.'



School Food Systems

Chair: Dr Suzanne Spence

University Research Fellow, Newcastle University

Area of Interest: School-based policy and interventions to improve children & young people's diets, inequalities, evaluation

'The school food system provides opportunities to improve children's dietary behaviours. However, modifying the school food system is complex, with challenges at macro- (policy, procurement), meso (cultural norms) and micro-levels (food/drink choices). Furthermore, complexities exist in evaluation methods and identifying evidenced-based solutions. Our proposed School Food Systems SIG aims to further develop a network of stakeholders (academic and non-academic) engaged in school food developed from a MRC UKPRP funded network (Generating Excellent Nutrition in UK Schools (GENIUS)) to share expertise, discuss challenges, and develop the evidence-base of potential opportunities to improve the school food system.

Developing the SIG was straightforward. The process required submission of a short application form for review. The potential benefits of a SIG to engage Society members and wider stakeholders (i.e., third sector organisations, practice, and policy partners) in this topic area is exciting and we look forward to the development of the SIG over the next few years.

If you are interested in any aspect of school food, have ideas for activities, or want to share expertise and get involved in the SIG, please contact membership@nutritionandsociety.org to join. SIG members can connect and interact via the Society's platform Member-Connect. Or, perhaps you have a specialised topic to engage Society members and wider stakeholders to share expertise with, developing a SIG poses an ideal opportunity to do so.'

Workplace Diet and Health

14 Members registered

School Food Systems

9 Members registered

Update from the Irish Section

Dr Anne Nugent, Secretary



Since the last edition of the Gazette, the Irish Section has been delighted to return to two 'in person' meetings. In February 2022, the 31st Annual Irish Section Postgraduate Meeting was hosted by Ulster University, with 86 delegates attending. Oral presentations were delivered by 39 postgraduate students. The standard of presentations was

excellent and it was a pleasure to see so many questions for the speakers from fellow students. A further highlight of the meeting was the excellent presentations from eight guest speakers who provided insight to the opportunities after PhD life and a range of career and professional advice to those present.

With the removal of all COVID-19 related restrictions, it is anticipated to grow the number of Nutrition Society undergraduate events aimed at increasing awareness of the benefits of becoming a Society member. Many thanks to those who have hosted such events during the academic year 2021/22. Members are also encouraged to engage with Nutrition Society ambassadors within their own university who can provide guidance and advice on all Society activities.

A full list of Ambassadors can be found by scanning this code:



The Irish Section Conference took place in June at University College Cork. Dr. Alice Lucey and team did a great job in putting together a very exciting programme. I was delighted to attend and hear so many global experts discussing how we can learn from past perspectives of the impact of nutrition science to human health to channel future directions. My thanks to all the organisers and local helpers for organising such a successful event.

Finally, we held our Annual Section Meeting during the Irish Section Conference on 16 June. Thank you for the members who attended and to those who participated in the voting for new student representative and ordinary member roles. I would like to sincerely thank Lauren Devine for all of her work as student representative of the Irish Section Committee. She has been a pleasure to work with and I appreciated the great enthusiasm she brought to the role. The Irish Section look forward to welcoming a new student and ordinary member to the committee this Summer. ■

Update from the Scottish Section

Dr Alexandra Mavroei, Secretary



The 2022 Spring Conference took place as a hybrid event on 4 -5 April 2022 at the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE). Over 100 delegates (in person and online) came together to discuss the topic – '**Nutrition, immune function and infectious disease**'. The program was very well received by the audience and the AGM took place on last day of the conference.

As of Spring 2022, the Committee membership has been renewed with **newly elected members**: Professor Alexandra Johnstone, University of Aberdeen, Dr Suzanne Zaremba, University of Dundee, Daniel Crabtree, University of the Highlands and Islands; **re-elected members**: Dr Alexandra Mavroei, University of Strathclyde, Mr James Dick, University of Stirling, Dr Janet Kyle, University of Aberdeen; **co-opted members**: Dr James Dorling, University of Glasgow, Dr Nidia Rodriguez-Sanchez, University of Stirling. Our student members, Ms Catriona Thomson, University of Glasgow, and Mr Matevz Arcon, University of Aberdeen, continue with their Committee membership for another year. We said goodbye to three longstanding members (Dr Stuart Gray, University of Glasgow, Dr Jo Cecil, University of St Andrews and Dr Derek Ball, University of Aberdeen) who have finished their terms and are stepping down, we are ever so grateful for their invaluable contributions to this committee over the years. Dr Alexandra Mavroei is now the Secretary of the Committee.

In parallel with all members of the Society, the Scottish Section has been challenged by the continued effects of the pandemic. In 2022, we primarily met online with the AGM taking place as a hybrid meeting in April 2022. As restrictions have eased, we plan to resume in person events from Autumn 2022. The Committee is now busy planning the 2023 meeting, to be held at Glasgow on 28-29 March 2024, on the theme of **Diet and Health Inequalities**. Our student members have submitted a bid for Nutrition Futures 2023, and the Science Committee has now approved the theme for the 2024 Scottish Section Conference which will be on the topic of chrono-nutrition and hosted by Professor Alexandra Johnstone. ■

As always, we are actively looking to engage with our membership and hope to increase our Society Ambassadors in Scottish universities; if you would like to become a Nutrition Society ambassador please take a look at the Ambassador Pack by scanning this QR code:



A day in the life of a Post-doctoral Researcher

Dr Alice Creedon, Post-doctoral Research Associate, King's College London



Having worked on human clinical trials for the past seven years, I can honestly say no two days are the same. Coping with various states of restrictions during a global pandemic for the past two years has made that statement even truer!

In March 2020, a day in the life of a researcher working on clinical trials looked much the same as a day in the life of anyone else; stuck at home, looking after plants and making banana bread. The onset of the pandemic coincided with the beginning of the analysis phase from the clinical trial I had run during my PhD, investigating the impact of almonds on the gut microbiota and gut health. I was lucky enough to have completed recruitment the previous August, but had many samples to analyse and this was put on hold. When restrictions began to ease in the Summer of 2020, I was eager to get back into the lab. However returning to the lab during this stage of the pandemic had many challenges. The college advised only to return to the building if entirely necessary and, for me, this couldn't be truer as the clock was ticking on my funding. The once busy and lively department was now deserted. Some days I felt like I was the only person there. I was being trained remotely on equipment I was only slightly familiar with, often via FaceTime on my phone while poking at buttons on a piece of equipment and praying I would eventually hit the right one! It was a massive challenge, but supervisors

and colleagues at King's were always willing to help from afar. Following the writing up phase that took me through the winter 2021 lockdowns, I completed my doctoral studies in Summer 2021.

Shortly after this, I was lucky enough to begin working on another clinical trial in the Nutrition Department at King's, this time investigating the impact of commercially relevant fats on post-prandial lipaemia and other cardiometabolic outcomes. Working on this study was a whole new experience. While running the previous study, participant visits typically lasted 1-2 hours, during which time we collected samples, anthropometric measurements and asked participants to complete questionnaires. My new role involved running post-prandial study visits – often 12 hour days during which participants arrived in the morning and were provided with meals containing specific fats. We then collected blood from them, via a cannula, at specific time points over a 9 hour period. Initially, I found this new type of study day exhausting but quickly got used to it and thoroughly enjoyed the interaction with participants throughout the day. As they were required to remain in the unit for the entire duration of the study day, it was often easier to get to know them and explain our research to them in more detail, which is a part of my job that I love.

Running this type of trial in Summer of 2021 while the pandemic was still lurking in the background had new challenges.

Participants often had to cancel visits due to contracting COVID-19, so we had to become very flexible with our own time and organisation skills. Maintaining participant and staff safety was at the forefront. Recruitment was difficult, as the public seemed more wary of travelling to additional locations that weren't essential. However, when we did manage to recruit a participant, they were often delighted to take part once they arrived, having been locked down at home for so long.

Since beginning a new role within the department in January 2022, a day in my life has changed once again. I am now in the late stages of organising an exciting new trial, investigating the impact of diet on immune health. My days are typically desk-based, focusing on protocol design, applying for ethical approval, designing study documents, updating collaborators and ordering supplies and consumables for the start of the study in September – when a day in my life will change once again! Although most restrictions have now eased, the memories of the pandemic remain and so, in a new challenge, I have been tasked with putting into place a contingency plan for how we might continue the study should another lockdown occur. Options include home blood and stool collections and methods of running the study without face-to-face interaction. While we all hope this will not happen, the extra level of preparation is perhaps part of our "new normal" in the running of clinical trials. ■



Events calendar

Winter Conference 2022: Architecture of food: processing, structure and health

The classical reductionist approach to nutrition research of focusing on individual food components has provided immense insight into nutrient requirements and the potential health-promoting bioactivities of non-nutrient components of food. This type of information is routinely mapped to food composition databases to assess the nutritional adequacy of diets. However, such approaches do not necessarily capture the vital contribution of food structure on human health. There is, for example, great concern around potential adverse health effects of ultra-processed foods but not all food processing is automatically bad for health as some may enhance the bioavailability of key food components.

With changing patterns of food consumption to achieve environmental sustainability and a constant flow of new food

products on the market, the need to better understand the role of food structure and processing on human health has perhaps never been greater. The Nutrition Society's Winter Conference will consider current understanding and knowledge gaps around the role of whole foods and food processing on health, focusing on primary prevention and management of chronic diseases as well as implications for food-based dietary guidelines. ■

Further details will be available on the conference section of the website. Registration and abstract submission will open shortly.

Conferences

Nutrition Futures 2022

A diverse and interactive experience for all nutrition science students, graduates and prospective students.

6-7 September 2022

22nd IUNS-ICN 2022

The Power of Nutrition: for the smiles of 10 billion people
Tokyo, Japan

6-11 December 2022

Winter Conference 22/23

Food architecture and health
The Royal Society, London

24-25 January 2023

Nutrition Society Training Academy (NSTA)

Continue your professional development around your busy schedule: Pre-recorded versions of recent NSTA webinars are available to listen to at a variety of different times on the website.

www.nutritionssociety.org/training-academy

Further details including registration fees and abstract deadlines can be found by scanning the code.



CPD endorsement by the Association for Nutrition has been applied for, for ALL Nutrition Society Events.

75TH ANNIVERSARY

BJN

BRITISH JOURNAL
OF NUTRITION

Scan to view a short presentation on the history of the *British Journal of Nutrition*



EXPLORE THE ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-nutrition/bjn-75th-anniversary-collection