

**Minutes of the BEST XXXVIII meeting
New Orleans, USA
23 October 2009
New Orleans Marriott at the Convention Center**

Williamson welcomed members and guests to New Orleans. Apologies were received from a number of Scientific and Manufacturing members. Williamson expressed the profound thanks of the Executive Committee and Membership to Gill Cook and Eileen Selogie for terrific organisation of the meeting and to the Manufacturing members who have remained loyal to BEST despite difficult economic times. She outlined changes to the membership. Gavin Murphy has joined Clinical Studies as a new Associate Scientific Member. There are some changes in personnel among Manufacturing members and excitingly we have a new Blood Service member, the Australian Red Cross Blood Service represented by Dr Erica Wood. There continued to be vacancies in Cellular Therapies.

Williamson was delighted to announce that Nancy Heddle had been awarded the Woman of the Year prize which is a combined Award by ISBT, AABB and BBTS. Nancy had been presented with her Award at the BBTS meeting in Manchester, UK which a number of BEST members had attended. The Membership gave Nancy a well deserved round of applause.

The Financial Report is on the website. Williamson reported that due to some resignations of Manufacturing members income is continuing to drop and it may be necessary to reduce the Honoraria next year depending on the economic situation. The Executive will discuss some options and report back.

Election of the next Chair: Sunny Dzik had chaired a Nominating Committee to receive nominations for the next Chair of BEST who will take over at BEST XL in October 2010. He was delighted to announce that there were two candidates for this post – Nancy Heddle and Larry Dumont. A third interested candidate, Ziggy Szczepiorkowski had recently withdrawn due to his appointment to the AABB Board. Sunny explained that he would invite both candidates to post a personal statement on the BEST website and that there would then be an election using Survey Monkey. People eligible to vote are all Scientific members (but not Associate Scientific members nor Honorary members) and one person from each Manufacturing and Blood Service member. A simple majority vote would decide the next Chair of BEST. This election will take place electronically a few weeks after this BEST meeting.

BEST Puzzler: John Hess presented a marvellous BEST Puzzler focussed on the history of public health in New Orleans. There were a number of correct answers but the prize was eventually awarded to Dr Victor Macdonald.

Williamson then introduced the Scott Murphy Memorial Lecture which was given jointly by Erin Meyer and Meghan Delaney. Both are Transfusion Medicine Clinical Fellows who had been involved as Junior Faculty in the BEST project to improve the reporting of platelet clinical trials. They delivered a very high quality lecture between them showing what an excellent it is to involve Junior Faculty in BEST projects.

Williamson reminded the members that three new studies had been approved after BEST XXXVI. An updated list of studies will be posted on the website.

Team leaders then summarised the discussions at their team meetings and ideas for future studies were reviewed. The BEST Executive Committee will finalise these at its next teleconference and allocate numbers to studies which are definitely going to progress.

Williamson reported back from the Manufacturers' brunch held that morning. It had been agreed that it was now an appropriate time to refresh and revisit the mission and values of BEST and set out clear aims for the next phase. The strategic aims could then translate into specific studies which could now include some operational activities such as automation and optimising the supply chain for red cells and platelets. It was also agreed that:

1. It would be useful to have a sounding board on the website where early ideas could be discussed and refined before adoption.
2. We should ask our regulator Honorary members if there are specific areas they would like BEST to investigate.
3. BEST should produce an annual summary of activity which Manufacturing members could use to report back.

Future meetings:

BEST XXXIX : Lisbon : 26-27 March 2010

The European Blood Alliance, which is an organisation of voluntary Blood Services in Europe, will be meeting in the same hotel in Lisbon with a half day overlap with the BEST meeting. It was agreed that Williamson would explore with the Executive of the EBA whether a joint lunch of the two Executives would be of value. It was agreed that there were options to be discussed including EBA becoming a Corporate member of BEST or individual Blood Services in Europe becoming members in their own right.

BEST XL : Baltimore : 6-7 October 2010

There was discussion regarding BEST XL in Baltimore prior to AABB In October 2010. Options were discussed as to how to make this a special meeting. After the meeting it was confirmed that Dana Devine has managed to secure BEST a slot in the main AABB meeting for a symposium. A sub group of the BEST Executive will put together a draft programme. It was also agreed that it would be appropriate to have a history of BEST, perhaps reviewed at the BEST dinner. Nancy Heddle also undertook to revive the BEST Band.

Williamson wished all members safe journeys home and concluded another very successful BEST meeting.