

# SOCIETY UPDATE



The BLS is delighted to announce the appointment of David Combie as its Communications Officer with effect from 1 March, 2008. David has had many years of experience working at senior level in both the public and private sectors. Information about his background and role can be found on the BLS website ([www.thebbs.com](http://www.thebbs.com)), and in the BLS Newsletter. He is developing a new strategic approach to all aspects of communication, targeting internal and external stakeholders to provide a framework for promoting all strands of treatment and patient support. BLS is proactively facing the challenges of promoting effective treatment and will continue to provide a clear, objective and focused voice for practitioners and all those concerned with patients' needs. The major forthcoming event for everyone's diary is the BLS Annual Conference on 5th to 7th October. The venue this year will be Belfast — flights cost less than a medium distance rail journey and the hospitality in Northern Ireland is second to none. We are already drawing up the agenda for a really stimulating and interactive three days. See you there.



The Lymphoedema Association of Australia (LAA) was founded by John and Judy Casley-Smith in 1982 to encourage research into lymphoedema and to spread information among doctors, therapists and patients. Its website contains an excellent summary of information about lymphoedema, its causes and treatment, including views on bandaging and garments, as well as essential reference material. The website has been progressively updated in 2007 and contains useful suggestions to patients about the range of treatment and management options. It is strongly recommended that patients discuss these with their doctor prior to undertaking any of them. In the first quarter of 2008 the site will feature a new section on recent research into lymphoedema, its symptoms and treatments, which is being conducted at Flinders University and Medical Centre. It will, however, continue to provide information which has an international perspective to it. Throughout 2008, the site will contain a progressive release of details relating to the 22nd International Congress of Lymphology which will be held in Australia in Sydney. The LAA website can be accessed at: [www.lymphoedema.org.au](http://www.lymphoedema.org.au). Preliminary details of the 22nd International Society of Lymphology (ISL) congress can be got from the site or from: [www.lymphology2009.com](http://www.lymphology2009.com).



The Swedish Society of Lymphology (Svensk Förening för Lymfologi) celebrated its 11th anniversary in 2007. It was founded with the intention of supporting research, education and development in the area of the diagnosis and treatment of lymphoedema. Its members include physicians working within the fields of lymphology: breast surgery, plastic surgery, rehabilitation and radiology, as well as physiotherapists, nurses and occupational therapists trained in the treatment of lymphoedema. The society has a yearly meeting, often featuring international lecturers. It supports evidence-based surgical as well as conservative treatment of lymphoedema. Some of the board members have also played an active role in preparing the National Best Practice Document for Lymphoedema Treatment, aimed at ensuring that treatment of it is basically the same in different parts of Sweden. For more information go online to: [www.lymfologi.nu](http://www.lymfologi.nu).



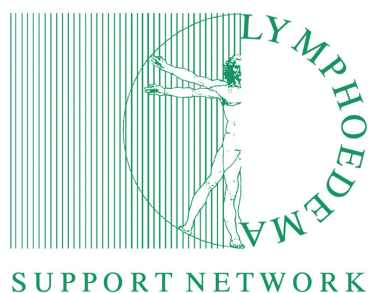
The Leg Club Forum's annual conference and charity gala dinner were held last September. Among our eminent presenters we were delighted to have Rebecca Billingham, Lymphoedema Nurse Specialist who spoke about the management of chronic oedema and lymphoedema. Rebecca stressed the importance of correct diagnosis and described pathways for care delivery, citing her local Leg Club as an excellent example. Attendee feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the workshops and speakers received excellent evaluations. Plans are already in motion for our 2008 conference, in educational partnership with the Wound Care Society (WCS). Over the years, Leg Clubs have been able to identify people living with chronic lower limb oedema and to refer or treat appropriately. Stemmer signs are incorporated into the Leg Club assessment documentation to assist diagnosis. During the conference, Edward Rusling (Business Director, Wounds UK) formally launched the Leg Club Foundation book, *Leg Ulcers and Problems of the Lower Limb: An holistic approach*. As a charity we were privileged to have our eminent patrons and authors (from the UK, Spain and Australia) dedicate their time and expertise to this project. This text will help healthcare professionals in their day-to-day work with patients suffering from leg ulcers and problems of the lower limb.



The 31st Annual Congress of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Lymphologie (DGL) (German Society of Lymphology) was held in Marburg, 20–22nd September, 2007. The first day was devoted to practice and featured workshops and training courses. The themes included: manual lymphatic drainage (MLD); scar treatment in dermatological cosmetics; combined decongestive therapy (CDT); lymph taping; and neck dissection. The second day dealt with basic research and perspectives for lymphological patients. A number of oral presentations were given on MR lymphography, sono-micromorphology and lymphoscintigraphy, sentinel-lymph-node biopsy and breast cancer. Lectures dealing with the health systems in Europe regarding lymphological disease, obesity, lipoedema and other topics concluded the second day of the congress. The third day covered aspects of the genesis and transport of lymph and physical therapy of oedema, including: basic research on the lymphatic system; MLD and CDT; patient compliance; different aspects on diseases of the lymphatics; guidelines for lymphological therapy; and problems related to prescribing and reimbursement. The next DGL congress, in co-operation with the 'Gesellschaft für manuelle Lymphdrainage nach DrVodder', will be held in Dresden, 2–4th October, 2008. The President is Professor Uwe Wollina (e-mail: Wollina-Uw@khdf.de). For further information contact: Office of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Lymphologie (DGL), Lindenstr 8, D-79877, Friedenweiler. Tel: (+) 49 (0)7651/971611; e-mail: post@dglymph.de; or go online to: [www.dglymph.de](http://www.dglymph.de).



The National Lymphedema Network (NLN) is an internationally recognised non-profit organisation founded in 1988 to provide education and guidance to lymphoedema patients, healthcare professionals and the general public by disseminating information on the prevention and management of primary and secondary lymphoedema. The NLN supports research into the causes and possible alternative treatments for this often incapacitating, long-neglected condition. It provides: a toll-free recorded information line: 1-800-541-3259; referrals to lymphoedema treatment centres, healthcare professionals, training programmes, and support groups; a quarterly newsletter (*LymphLink*); an extensive computer database with patient medical data; and a biennial international conference for healthcare professionals. The next conference is scheduled for 27–31 August, 2008 in San Diego, CA. The primary goal of the conference is to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and to share the breakthroughs and innovations in the field of lymphology. The conference is an opportunity for new practitioners and investigators to exchange treatment principles and philosophies with established experts to further the field's pioneering status as the discipline continues to press forward. For more information, go online to: [www.lymphnet.org](http://www.lymphnet.org) or email: [nlm@lymphnet.org](mailto:nlm@lymphnet.org).



The Lymphoedema Support Network (LSN) takes the lead role in educating and supporting patients with this condition. The charity is the largest information resource for lymphoedema in the UK, with two self-help videos/DVDs and an extensive range of fact sheets that are widely distributed to patients, hospitals and lymphoedema clinics throughout the country. The LSN has recently been shortlisted from 241 organisations to the final 20 to receive a GlaxoSmithKline Impact Award. The awards recognise and reward small to medium sized charities that are doing excellent work to improve people's health. They are organised and managed in partnership with the King's Fund, a leading independent health charity working to improve health and social care. The LSN promotes better awareness of lymphoedema as a major health condition to health authorities, healthcare professionals and politicians, and actively campaigns for improved national standards of care. For more information visit: [www.lymphoedema.org/lm](http://www.lymphoedema.org/lm).



MLD<sup>UK</sup> was formed in 1995 and has recently received charitable status. Its principal aims are to educate healthcare professionals and the general public about manual lymphatic drainage (MLD), to maintain a register of practitioners and to set standards for the practice of MLD in the UK. From the start, MLD<sup>UK</sup> has worked with the British Lymphology Society (BLS) to further the acceptance of MLD as part of complex decongestive therapy in the UK. The Lymphoedema Support Network (LSN) also recommends the MLD<sup>UK</sup>'s register of MLD practitioners. MLD<sup>UK</sup> accepts membership applications from therapists trained through Casley-Smith, Földi, Leduc and Vodder schools of MLD. These schools have strict training schedules for their teachers to ensure good theoretical and practical knowledge. These practitioners have also worked towards the acceptance of MLD by the medical profession in their respective countries. MLD<sup>UK</sup> publishes a list of courses available in the UK. It also sends an up-to-date register of practitioners on request. The association has a designated helpline for members of the public and its members. The MLD<sup>UK</sup> Annual Conference will be held in Warwick on 17th May, 2008. For details please contact: MLD<sup>UK</sup>, PO Box 14491, Glenrothes, Fife KY6 3YE; telephone: 0844 800 1988, or go online to: [www.mlduk.org.uk](http://www.mlduk.org.uk).



The Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA) is the peak national lymphology body, which strives to improve the management of those with, and at risk of developing lymphoedema. The Association endeavours to enhance communication between healthcare professionals, educators, relevant authorities and Government in regard to oedema and lymphoedema. It advocates for equitable access to lymphoedema treatment in Australia and New Zealand. Members of the ALA will soon converge on Fremantle in Western Australia for the biennial ALA Conference 'Exercise Your Mind, Stretch Your Boundaries' (27–29 March, 2008). The ALA will welcome Associate Professor Dr Katie Schmitz as the keynote speaker; also other international colleagues offering the opportunity for all participants to share new research and treatment in the management of lymphoedema. A culmination of two years work by the ALA Education & Training Guidelines Subcommittee will also be presented. This is an outstanding achievement and will cover details regarding the 'Graduate Certificate in Lymphoedema Management' and the National Lymphoedema Practitioner Register (NLPR). Detailed information is available on the ALA website: [www.lymphology.asn.au](http://www.lymphology.asn.au).



The Dutch Lymphedema Network (NLNet) provides a unique forum in the Netherlands for both patients and healthcare professionals involved in lymphoedema and lipoedema. It started in 2000 and offers information and contact details for therapists, regional support groups, as well as a discussion forum. In 2006, NLNet was joined by other leading organisations in the Netherlands involved in lymphology. It facilitates discussion and the exchange of ideas on the internet, enhances public awareness, stimulates multidisciplinary healthcare cooperation and encourages an interest among professional stakeholders. To achieve these goals, there is a HON ([www.hon.ch](http://www.hon.ch)) certified internet website, a journal (*Lymfologica*), regional patient support groups and an annual congress. Membership costs 20 euros per annum, which entitles you to full access to the internet platform and other offers from NLNet. NLNet carry out the national and international guidelines on lymphoedema and are actively cooperating in the development of an European Lymphedema Network ([www.european-lymphologic-network.de](http://www.european-lymphologic-network.de)) and links to other international organisations. For further information please visit: [www.lymfoedeem.nl](http://www.lymfoedeem.nl).



The International Society of Lymphology (ISL) was founded in Zurich, July, 1966. It is now in its 42nd year of existence with members from 44 nations. The society promotes activities which: advance and disseminate knowledge in the field of lymphology and allied topics; stimulate and strengthen experimental and clinical investigation; establish relations between basic researchers and clinicians working in the field of lymphology; and further personal contacts and exchange of ideas among lymphologists. Of significant importance are details of the International Consensus Document for Diagnosis and Treatment ([www.u.arizona.edu/~witte/ISL.htm](http://www.u.arizona.edu/~witte/ISL.htm)). Details of the next ISL congress in Sydney, can be found at: [www.lymphology2009.com](http://www.lymphology2009.com).



On 6 September, 2007 the Israel Lymphedema Association (ILA) held its third annual conference at the Hebrew University Campus in Rehovot. The one-day conference included speakers and a panel discussion with representatives from Israel's health funds about the rights of lymphoedema patients in accordance with health fund policies and Israel's National Health Insurance Law. As a result of the panel discussion, the ILA is continuing to meet with health fund representatives to ensure that lymphoedema patients receive all the rights to which they are entitled, including lymphoedema treatments, bandages, pressure garments and supplementary materials. The conference also included workshops, a personal story, exhibits by leading Israeli suppliers of new and innovative lymphoedema-related materials. At the conference, ILA volunteers distributed reusable 'hot pink' plastic bracelets to be worn by lymphoedema patients on visits to hospitals, laboratories and clinics, warning medical personnel that 'It is prohibited to prick, inject, measure blood pressure or take blood, from this arm'. As a result of the interest shown in these bracelets, ILA volunteers also distributed bracelets at several meetings of the Israel Cancer Association.