SGR Committee and Staff

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE (NCC)

Chair
Dr Philip Webber

Vice Chair
Kate Macintosh MBE Dip Arch

Treasurer
Dr Patrick Nicholson

Secretary
Harry Tsoumpas¹

Committee Members
Alasdair Beal CEng
Prof Roy Butterfield CEng DIC
Dr Alan Cottee²
Hilary Chivall
Dr Tim Foxon
Dr David Hookes
Patricia Hughes
Rachel Marshall³
Martin Quick CEng
Sean Rose³

STAFF

Executive Director
Dr Stuart Parkinson

Principal Researcher
Dr Chris Langley

Office Manager
Kate Maloney

Membership Development Officer
Jane Wilson

¹ Acting Secretary until 25 October 2008, then elected
² Stepped down 25 October 2008
³ Co-opted 17 January 2009

Some of the NCC and staff:
(from left to right) Hilary Chivall, Kate Macintosh, David Hookes, Stuart Parkinson, Alasdair Beal, Tim Foxon, Patrick Nicholson, Roy Butterfield, Philip Webber, Chris Langley.
Chair’s Report

Over the reporting year, SGR has continued to have a high level of activity across our areas of concern. In particular, the launch of our new report on military influence in universities received some very good media coverage. SGR also hit a high note with the award of a new three-year grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust to develop the organisation further. They had clearly been impressed with our achievements over the previous years. However, our finances continued to be tight.

During this period – March 2008 to February 2009 – world affairs underwent some seismic shifts. The global financial crisis, which led to the collapse of numerous institutions including banks, motor companies and household retailers, has brought into sharp relief the huge dangers of under-regulated business. Meanwhile, the election of the first black US President, Barack Obama, with a markedly different agenda to his predecessor, has led to high expectations of positive change in world affairs.

At a national level, the UK Parliament passed the Climate Change and Energy Acts which, for the first time, set legally-binding reduction targets for carbon emissions, while entrenching the government’s pro-nuclear power stance. The Brown Government also created a new Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) to enact some of these changes, and departmental reshuffles continued apace including the appointment of a new Science Minister with an agenda largely unsympathetic to SGR’s concerns. With all the changes, even ministers themselves seemed at times to be unsure who exactly was responsible for what – especially concerning some key climate issues. Indeed, given the government’s current unpopularity, it may not be long before there are even more changes…

Against this rapidly changing background, SGR has done well to continue to make contributions across all our issues of concern. Working in partnerships with others, we have made significant inputs at the policy level on the issues of renewable energy and nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, we have kept up our education work, especially on ethical careers in science, design and technology and climate change. In addition, our new research on the growing military influence within UK universities has once again sparked debate over this important issue.

The very different global backdrop to the previous year is leading to new – and, at times, unexpected – opportunities for our work. The much greater pressure on public finances is combining with the agenda of the Obama presidency to create greater potential for nuclear disarmament. As such, more questions are being asked about the wisdom of Trident replacement than ever before. Meanwhile major investments in the low-carbon economy offer a greener way out of the current economic problems in the run-up to the crucial Copenhagen climate negotiations in December 2009.

SGR has the expertise to make key contributions over the coming months. Based on research carried out over this reporting period, we will be publishing an important new report highlighting the detrimental effects of allowing the business sector to have too much influence over science and technology. Also, our 2009 annual conference will focus on the potential of the low-carbon economy.

Organisationally, we reached some important milestones during the reporting period. We came to the end of our 2005-08 development plan in August 2008. Although we did not reach our ambitious membership targets, we did achieve all the other goals of the plan and sufficiently impressed our funders for them to award us a further three years’ core funding. One membership milestone we did reach was to pass the 1,000-member mark, which is a very positive achievement. However, as the reporting year drew to a close, the recession was beginning to hit our income. It will be particularly important therefore that we do not neglect our fundraising and recruitment activities. We are planning an updated membership leaflet and redesigned website to help us in these efforts. Meanwhile, the support of our existing members will be especially crucial during this period.

Turning to SGR’s National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC), there were several changes during the year. At the 2008 AGM Harry Tsoumpas was elected Secretary and Alan Cottee stepped down from the NCC after many years of service – thank you, Alan, for your long-standing support! In January 2009, Rachel Marshall and Sean Rose were co-opted to the NCC as student representatives.

Finally, I wish to thank our staff, Stuart Parkinson, Kate Maloney, Chris Langley and Jane Wilson, for their hard work. I would also like to thank the NCC and our volunteers (including office volunteers, Barbara Barrett, Brenda Dutton and Rachel Marshall), together with our funders, sponsors, and, of course, members for all their support over the year.

Philip Webber
Executive Director's Report

This past year (March 2008 – February 2009) has again been a very active one – with notable successes in several of our advocacy, research and education activities. This is particularly pleasing given limitations on our resources early in the reporting year. Our hard work was rewarded in the form of a new three-year core grant. However, there were signs at the end of the year that the worsening economic situation will mean that finances continue to be tight.

Education, advocacy and research activities

Military influence on science and technology (see p.4). We published our third report in this area in June 2008, entitled Behind Closed Doors. It highlighted not only the increasing attempts to militarise university research, but also a disturbing lack of openness and accountability within the increasingly commercialised academic environment. Media coverage was very positive with numerous articles in the national, technical and green press. Over 2,300 copies of our three reports in this area were disseminated during the year to policy-makers, academics and campaigners.

Corporate influence on science and technology (see p.4). Work began on a new research/advocacy project this year. The aim is to outline the growing influence of the commercial sector on science and technology, highlight the detrimental effect this is having, and make recommendations for reform in the UK.

Ethical careers in science, design and technology (see p.4). External interest in our work in this area continued to be high. SGR had a presence at 12 careers events across the UK and Ireland during the year. We distributed over 4,200 copies of our ten publications in this area – mainly downloads from our website.

Advocacy and lobbying (see p.5-6). We continued to be active across a wide range of issues, including climate and energy policy, nuclear weapons, science and technology governance, military spending, and emerging technologies. Notably we worked with the Renewable Energy Tariff coalition to obtain a government commitment to bring in new measures to support small-scale renewable energy technologies.

Invited lectures. 16 invited lectures were given by senior SGR staff and members during the year. One lecture was at a side event during the nuclear non-proliferation treaty negotiations. The most popular themes for the lectures were climate change, militarisation of science, nuclear power, and ethical careers.

SGR conference (see p.3). This year’s event was entitled Sustainable buildings and communities: their role in meeting environmental and social goals. The event included two keynote speakers and a poster session. About 70 people attended, and feedback was very positive.

Media (see p.7). SGR achieved an especially high level of media coverage this year due to the launch of our report, Behind Closed Doors (see above). This led to articles in numerous publications, notably The Guardian, Nature and Times Higher Education. Commissioned articles, authored by SGR, also appeared in the technical press.

SGR newsletter (see p.7). This high-quality publication continued to be popular with members, journalists and others. Indeed, the front-page article of the autumn issue was quoted in a speech on nuclear weapons to the United Nations General Assembly. A change in scheduling – due to the high workload elsewhere – meant that only one issue was published during the reporting period.

SGR website (see p.8). The website continued to be a key way of promoting SGR’s concerns to the outside world, in particular being the main platform for the distribution of our publications and other outputs. During the year, the site averaged over 10,000 visits a month.

Organisational development plans

In terms of organisational development, this year has been one of transition. We came to the end of our 2005-08 plan in August and, thanks to a further grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT), began a new three-year development plan in September 2008.

A key part of these development plans has been to expand membership (see Box), both to increase our influence and to provide a higher level of financial security for the organisation. Towards the end of this reporting period (January 2009), we achieved an important milestone – recruiting our 1,000th member! This compares with about 650 in summer 2005. However, as highlighted in previous annual reports, we were not able to achieve the ambitious rates of membership expansion over the 2005-08 plan that we had projected, and so our financial position was not improved to the extent we planned.

Nevertheless, we were able to expand our education, advocacy and research activities considerably over the three-year period (as intended), and this was an important achievement in itself. Furthermore, we have gained valuable experience in recruitment and related activities. Hence, we were able to make a strong case to our funders, JRCT, for a further core-funding grant.

Consequently, in summer 2008, JRCT awarded us a new grant of £45,000 for a new development plan running from September 2008 to August 2011. This includes efforts to increase further the effectiveness of SGR’s activities, and a net annual recruitment target of 85 members per year.
**Membership recruitment**

During the reporting year, we distributed nearly 20,000 membership leaflets. The largest share went out as inserts in magazines, including *Ethical Consumer*, *Small World* and *The Friend*. Other leaflets went out to other contacts, including ex-members, and past purchasers of publications. We also carried out a limited amount of recruitment via electronic means. All this activity led to us gaining 76 new members during the year. We ended the year with a total of 1,005 members, including 150 associate members.

Income from other trusts has continued to be a key source of funds. During the reporting period, we submitted ten applications, of which six were successful. We also received three grants that had been awarded at the end of the previous reporting year. In addition to the grant from the JRCT, the other grants were from: Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation for the corporate influence project; Network for Social Change, Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust, Martin Ryle Trust, Garden Court Chambers and the INES Special Projects Fund for the military influence project; and Martin Ryle Trust and 1970 Trust for core costs. Total grant income during the reporting year was over £47,000. Further details are given in the Treasurer’s report (see p.8).

However, despite these successes, SGR finances remained tight during the year. The cut in the paid hours of the core staff, which was introduced in December 2007 as a cost-saving measure, continued throughout the first half of the reporting period. In September 2008, following the receipt of the JRCT grant, paid hours were increased. However, as we approached year end it became clear that the economic downturn was starting to affect some sources of income. Hence, it is already clear that over the coming year we will once again need to make some cutbacks, while trying to boost our income from charitable trusts.

**Thanks**

I would very much like to thank the staff – Office Manager, Kate Maloney; Principal Researcher, Chris Langley; and Membership Development Officer, Jane Wilson – for all their commitment and hard work. I would also like to thank the Chair, Philip Webber, for his unwavering support, and also the rest of the National Co-ordinating Committee and the numerous volunteers who have given me a lot of help and support over the year. I would also like to thank all the trusts who have generously made grants during the year. Finally, a big thank you to all SGR members – we would not be here without you!

*Stuart Parkinson*

**Conference**

**SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS AND COMMUNITIES: THEIR ROLE IN MEETING ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL GOALS**

*SGR Conference and Annual General Meeting*


Over 70 delegates attended this stimulating event. There were two main speakers – Kate Macintosh and Sandy Halliday – and a poster session. SGR’s AGM took place at the end of the day.

Kate Macintosh, Vice Chair of SGR and a former partner in Finch Macintosh Architects, spoke on ‘Social Housing: From Paternalism to Co-operatives’. Kate traced developments in social housing in the UK from the 1920s to the present. She described a number of examples of influential and ground-breaking projects, including some she had been involved in herself. She also discussed some of the ill-advised policy decisions that have led to the erosion of social housing in recent years.

Sandy Halliday, Principal of Gaia Research, Edinburgh, spoke about ‘Making Sustainable Building and Places’. She began her presentation by outlining the history of the concept of sustainable development, and the key implications for the building and housing sector. She particularly argued for the importance of good design, high standards of energy efficiency and the use of high quality eco-friendly materials. She concluded by describing a number of projects, including some from her own professional practice, that exemplified these ideas.

In contrast to previous SGR conferences, this year’s event featured a poster session. Ten posters were displayed by both SGR members and non-members. Thanks go to those presenting posters: Salvador Acha; Rich Blundell; Ian Greenwood; Wiebina and Aart Heesterman; Gavin Killip; Alice Moncaster; Sue Pollard; Hywel Roberts; James Scott; and Michael Weller. Feedback on the poster session was very positive. Selected posters were reproduced in SGR Newsletter 37 (see p.7).

The day concluded with SGR’s AGM. The Executive Director and Treasurer gave reports on the activities of the previous year, summarising the annual report and outlining some activities since. The new National Co-ordinating Committee (NCC) was elected. Alan Cottee, who stepped down from the NCC this year, was thanked for his past work and also for organising this year’s poster exhibition. A constitutional amendment to allow organisations to affiliate to SGR was accepted. The event concluded with a wider discussion of SGR’s activities.
Projects

MILITARY INFLUENCE ON SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

This year was marked by the launch of our third report on the issue of military influence on science and technology – Behind Closed Doors – which focused on the role of the university sector. In addition to widespread media coverage of the report, we continued to raise our concerns about this issue through invited lectures, written articles and distribution of copies of our other reports. Work in this area continued to be led by Chris Langley.

Based on more than a year’s research using Freedom of Information requests, interviews, and questionnaires, Behind Closed Doors was launched in June 2008. The report – authored by Chris, with Stuart Parkinson and Philip Webber – highlighted not only the increasing attempts to militarise university research, but also a disturbing lack of openness within the increasingly commercialised academic environment. The report attracted a great deal of media coverage, with articles in The Guardian, Nature, Times Higher Education, and numerous other technical and green media outlets, as well as local newspapers. (A more detailed list is given on p.7). About 1,000 copies of the report were distributed during the year – nearly 800 downloaded from the SGR website.

Two presentations were given on the militarisation of science during the year: Stuart spoke at a side event at negotiations on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty in Geneva. Chris gave a seminar at the Praxis Centre at Leeds Metropolitan University. Chris also assisted former MSP Tommy Sheridan with his Masters’ thesis on military involvement at Scottish universities. The publication of the thesis was covered by Scotland’s Sunday Herald.

In May 2008, Chris wrote a comment article for a leading technical magazine, Engineering and Technology. Articles by Stuart appeared in two issues of the INES Newsletter, one a special issue published at the European Social Forum in Sweden. Chris was also extensively quoted in an article on the Nature website, concerning the opening of a new (civilian) research laboratory at Imperial College London funded by the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Other media coverage is listed on p.7.

With the news that BAE Systems had been recruited as lead sponsor of the national ‘Big Bang’ science fair, SGR joined up with Campaign Against Arms Trade to issue a press release condemning the high-profile involvement of Britain’s biggest arms company with science education.

SGR’s other publications exposing the militarisation of science and technology continue to be in strong demand. About 1,300 copies were distributed during the year. Finally, we are very grateful for the grants received to carry out this work – see p.9 for a list of funders.

ETHICAL CAREERS IN SCIENCE, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

SGR has continued to promote ethical careers at a range of events through the year, while our publications remain in great demand. The project activities were co-ordinated by Stuart Parkinson and Kate Maloney.

During the reporting year, SGR had a presence at 12 careers events across the UK and Ireland – equalling the highest number in a single year. These included careers fairs at the universities of Birmingham, Cambridge, Cardiff, Leeds, Limerick, Loughborough, Manchester, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, and York. Stuart Parkinson gave a talk on ethical careers at Nottingham University, while Chris Langley took part in a panel discussion at University College London.

In October 2008, David Webb gave a presentation on SGR’s project work on ethical careers and military influence on science and technology (see left) to a conference at Hamburg University on teaching ethics to science students. In February, Stuart was interviewed for an article in the new edition of The Ethical Careers Guide.

Over the course of the year, more than 4,200 copies of our ten ethical careers publications were disseminated, 90% of which were downloaded from our website. Since 2001, a total of 25,000 copies of our ethical careers publications have been distributed. The project has been so successful that paper copies of our first five publications are now out of stock, so we will shortly be seeking funds for updated reprints.

Finally, many thanks to all the volunteers who helped run SGR stalls at careers fairs this year: Barbara Barrett, Hilary Browne, Alan Cottee, Aart Heesterman, Wiebina Heesterman, Richard Jennings, Ed King, Kate Macintosh, Rachel Marshall, Kerry McKenzie, Martin Quick, Max Wallis, David Webb and Tony White.

CORPORATE INFLUENCE ON SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

Following the award of a grant from the Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation, SGR began a new research/advocacy project in May 2008. The aim is to outline the growing influence of the commercial sector on science and technology, highlight the detrimental effect this is having, and make recommendations for reform in the UK. Chris Langley is the lead researcher for the project.

As the research developed during the year, it was decided to focus on five sectors as case studies: pharmaceuticals; biotechnology; tobacco; oil and gas; and military/defence. The project is revealing much information that will cause concern – including evidence of conflicts of interest, bias in research agendas, and systemic campaigns of ‘scientific misinformation’. Particularly disturbing is the way in which similar problems are found across several sectors. An in-depth report is planned for publication in 2009.
Issues

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

As public interest in climate change and energy issues remained high during the year, SGR continued to be very active in these areas. Our work focused on three main areas: education work on the threat of climate change; support for efforts to expand renewable energy and improve energy efficiency; and the highlighting of problems related to nuclear power. Work in these areas was led by Stuart Parkinson and Martin Quick.

During the year, Stuart Parkinson gave seven lectures on different aspects of the climate problem. He spoke at four public meetings across northern England on climate change and ‘reducing your carbon footprint’. Most notable was an event organised by the University of the Third Age, which was attended by over 180 people. Stuart also gave a lecture on climate change and biodiversity to students at Trinity College Dublin. To minimise greenhouse gas emissions, the lecture was given via a video link. He also spoke about the links between climate change and conflict at a London event (see p.6), and summarised some of the latest scientific findings on climate change at the national ‘Climate Forum’ in London. Some of these lectures led to media coverage – see p.7.

SGR also worked with a range of organisations in lobbying for a greater expansion of renewable energy and energy efficiency. SGR submitted responses – co-ordinated by Martin Quick – both to the government’s consultation on renewable energy and a House of Lords inquiry into the issue. We then joined the Renewable Energy Tariff coalition in lobbying for new financial support mechanisms to be introduced as part of the government’s Energy Bill, which was making its way through parliament. After some last-ditch negotiations, the coalition was successful in getting a government commitment to introduce these tariffs over the coming months. This should make a major difference to the expansion of small-scale renewable energy, which has been neglected up until now. The issues of energy efficiency and renewable energy in the housing sector were, of course, key themes at SGR’s annual conference this year (see p.6). SGR also joined the Existing Homes Alliance to lobby for greater support for energy efficiency improvements in the housing sector (see p.6).

SGR also continued to highlight the shortcomings of nuclear power. Keith Barnham gave two lectures in the autumn on this topic – one at a London event organised by the Royal Society of Arts, and the other a well attended public meeting in Oxfordshire. The ‘Nuclear Dilemma’ exhibition, for which SGR provided material, continued its tour, opening in Guernica, Spain between September 2008 and January 2009.

Finally, five articles on climate and energy issues appeared in the autumn issue of the SGR Newsletter (see p.7). Meanwhile, SGR committee members had several letters published in the press during the course of the year on these issues (see p.7).

WHO CONTROLS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY?

The issue of who controls science and technology is a critical one for SGR. The main activities in this field during the reporting year were our two research/advocacy projects examining military and corporate influence – more information is given on p.4. Here we summarise other activities related to science and technology policy. Stuart Parkinson led work in this area.

In October 2008, SGR made a submission to the government consultation on its science and society programme. In it, we argued that the government does not give enough attention to dialogue concerning the pros and cons of science and technology, and allows powerful vested interests to have undue influence.

Stuart was commissioned to write an article on engineering and social responsibility for a new book to be published in 2009 by UNESCO, entitled Engineering: Issues and Challenges for Development. He was also asked to input into deliberations on the new Science and Regulatory Agency set up as part of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Stuart took part in a seminar organised by the British Pugwash Group on social responsibility in science.

In December, Chris Langley was interviewed about the misuse of science for a programme on Teachers TV and Why Science? website. Chris also took part in seminar organised by Demos on the public funding of science.

POPULATION, CONSUMPTION AND VALUES

The Population, Consumption and Values (PCV) group reached a milestone this year, with the publication of its 100th monthly email newsletter. Co-ordinator Alan Cottey has been editing this newsletter for over eight years, gathering together interesting news items on the thorny environmental and social issues related to the growing global population and growing consumption levels.

In January, Alan decided to stand down from this post. Unfortunately, a new co-ordinator was not found, so the National Co-ordinating Committee took the decision that the group would be wound up. However, the Committee also decided to investigate other avenues for possible future work on these important and often neglected issues.
SECURITY AND DISARMAMENT

In addition to our project challenging military influence on science and technology (see p.4) – which was our main organisational activity on this issue – SGR contributed to the debates on nuclear weapons, military spending, and the link between security issues and environmental issues. Our work in this area was led by Philip Webber and Stuart Parkinson.

In the run-up to the May 2008 negotiations on the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, SGR signed a joint letter – organised by Nuclear Flashpoints – calling for the de-alerting of all nuclear weapons. At the negotiations themselves in Geneva, Stuart Parkinson spoke at a side event about military involvement in science – highlighting the particular role played by the UK’s Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE). The issue of high-alert nuclear weapons was also the focus of the lead article in SGR’s autumn newsletter, which has since been widely distributed at several UN conferences (see p.7). SGR also signed up to an appeal to the incoming US president to lead global efforts towards a nuclear weapons-free world. As we have seen in the months since President Obama came to power, this agenda is now being seriously pursued.

In September 2008, Philip Webber provided information to Channel 4 News related to a story on flooding at the AWE the previous summer – the details of which had only just come to light. In January 2009, Kate Macintosh put together an objection on behalf of SGR to a planning application for further building work at AWE.

SGR has also continued to highlight the weapons proliferation concerns related to new nuclear power. Keith Barnham raised these concerns in two talks during the year (see p.5) and this was also a theme in the Nuclear Dilemma exhibition which SGR contributed to (see p.5).

SGR has also continued to support several campaigning coalitions working on various aspects of the nuclear weapons issue, including a new international campaign to establish a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Some SGR members, including Kate and Duncan Macintosh, took part in the large CND protest at the AWE at Easter 2008.

In November 2008, the International Peace Bureau launched a ‘Global call for action on military and social spending’, urging governments to reduce their reliance on the use of military force and divert the finance to social and environmental areas. This is a message that SGR has long argued so we did not hesitate in signing up. We have also been in discussions with other peace organisations about promoting this agenda more within the UK.

We have also continued to highlight the links between security issues and environmental problems. In November, Stuart Parkinson gave a presentation on climate change and military conflict at the AGM of Movement for Abolition of War in London. Martin Quick also took part in a roundtable discussion on this issue with other peace organisations.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SGR’s main activity concerning the built environment over the course of the year was our annual conference on Sustainable buildings and communities (see p.3). One of the main speakers at the conference was Kate Macintosh, who leads our work across this area.

Kate also undertook a number of other related activities during the course of the year. In June 2008, she attended the launch of the Existing Homes Alliance (EHA) in London. The EHA was formed to lobby the government to take much stronger action to improve the quality of the UK’s current housing stock, helping to tackle such diverse problems as fuel poverty and climate change. SGR has since affiliated to the EHA.

In January 2009, Kate put together an SGR objection to a planning application by the Atomic Weapons Establishment for further development of its buildings. Kate also provided information to the Independent on Sunday about the government’s proposals on eco-towns.

SGR’s work in this area is complemented by that in other areas, especially energy (see p.5).

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

With emerging technologies such as genetically modified (GM) crops and synthetic biology causing continued concern, SGR carried out a number of activities in this area, led by Eva Novotny and Chris Langley.

In March 2008, SGR objected to a proposed field trial of a new GM potato on the grounds that transgenic contamination of other crops could occur. In April 2008, Eva took part in a workshop in London organised by the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes. She pressed the Committee over the close links between the biotechnology industry and many academic researchers, and the apparent unwillingness of policy-makers to give due weight to evidence from more independent researchers. Eva also wrote a number of letters during the year to policy-makers and the press, including the Secretary of State at DEFRA and The Guardian.

Chris took part in several activities related to synthetic biology. In May 2008, he gave a talk on the issue at the Dana Centre in London, pointing out some of the risks and uncertainties of the technology. He also took part in the ‘Synbiosafe’ online conference on the issue, making a number of inputs to the discussion, and also a London workshop organised by the Royal Academy of Engineering.
Communications

MEDIA

SGR received some very good media coverage during the period, March 2008 to February 2009. Media activities were co-ordinated by Stuart Parkinson and Jane Wilson.

The activity that attracted the greatest media attention was the launch of our report, Behind Closed Doors: Military influence, commercial pressures and the compromised university, in June 2008 (see p.4). The report launch was covered by articles in The Guardian, Nature, Times Higher Education, Al Jazeera’s website, Science and Public Affairs, Green World, People and Planet news, The Friend, Research Fortnight, local newspapers and a range of other, smaller media outlets. The articles in Science and Public Affairs and Research Fortnight were specially commissioned and authored by Chris Langley.

Other media coverage of our project on the military influence on science and technology included three other SGR-authored articles – one in leading technical magazine, Engineering and Technology (circulation of 150,000), and two in the INES Newsletter (the newsletter of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility). We were also quoted on this issue in articles in the New Statesman, Defence Management, Sunday Herald, Peace Matters, and the ‘Network London’ pages on the Nature website.

Some media interest came from TV and radio broadcasters. Philip Webber supplied information to Channel 4 News related to a story on flooding at the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Stuart Parkinson was interviewed for a programme on Climate Radio, a web-based radio station. Chris Langley was interviewed about the misuse of science for Teachers TV and the Why Science? website.

During the year, SGR was asked to contribute to three books, all due to be published later in 2009 (after the end of the reporting period). The books are Engineering: Issues and Challenges for Development (published by UNESCO), The Ethical Careers Guide (3rd edition), and Power in the Academy.

One SGR lecture – by Stuart Parkinson on climate change – received particularly good media coverage during the year. A summary was given in Sources, the magazine of the University of the Third Age, which has a circulation of about 140,000. The lecture was also well covered in the local press.

Apart from the usual press releases announcing our annual conference and new publications (Behind Closed Doors and SGR Newsletter), we also issued a joint press release with Campaign Against Arms Trade. This heavily criticised the choice of BAE Systems as a lead sponsor of the national ‘Big Bang’ science fair.

SGR spokespeople responded to a number of other enquiries from the national media during the year, on issues ranging from laboratory biosecurity to eco-towns. Unfortunately, we were not always quoted.

Senior SGR members also had a number of letters published in the press. Letters by David Hookes, Kate Macintosh, Eva Novotny and Martin Quick appeared in The Guardian. Meanwhile Martin also had a letter published in Professional Engineering on renewable energy.

Finally, our thanks go to Alison Whyte who assisted with media work for the launch of Behind Closed Doors.

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter continues to be the main forum for discussion of the issues of concern to SGR, with copies also being requested by policy-makers, journalists and campaigners. During the period March 2008 to February 2009, we published only one issue (no. 36). This was due to heavy commitments in other areas of work, leading to the planned second issue of the year appearing just after the end of the reporting period. The editorial team for issue 36 was Stuart Parkinson, Kate Maloney, and Jane Wilson.

This issue included feature articles on high-alert nuclear weapons, military influence on universities, the shortcomings of the UK’s climate strategy, a new global nuclear disarmament campaign, controversial plans to set up a new defence training academy, nuclear waste management, reducing carbon emissions in the housing sector, and two articles on expanding renewable energy in the UK.

Since the publication of this issue in Autumn 2008, there has been particular interest in the article on high-alert nuclear weapons, written by Steven Starr. It has been circulated at several high-level policy events including the UN Conference on Disarmament. The Chilean Ambassador to the UN even quoted it in a speech to the General Assembly!

Thanks to all those who contributed feature articles, book reviews and event reviews. In addition to SGR staff, these included Dave Andrews, Richard Jennings, Kate Macintosh, Peter Nicholls, Martin Quick, Steven Starr, Stuart Tannock, Rachel Western, and Alison Whyte.

Back issues of the newsletter can be downloaded from http://www.sgr.org.uk/newsletter.html.
WEBSITE

There was an important change this year. Patricia Hughes – who had been web manager since 2002 – stepped down at the end of the reporting period (February 2009). We are very grateful to her for all the hard work she has put in over this period. Wiebina Heesterman took over the maintenance of the website.

New material – including the report Behind Closed Doors (see p.4), articles, presentations etc – continued to be added to the website during the year. While there were no major changes, discussions did begin on a possible redesign/rebuild – especially to take advantage of more recent developments in web software. This will be pursued further during the coming year.

The web statistics showed an 18% fall in visits compared with the previous year – to an average of 10,100 per month. However, other statistics indicated that each visitor to our site was viewing more pages and documents. This indicates that, while there has been a drop in casual visitors, those that do visit are downloading more material. Our intention is that, as part of the web redesign, we will consider ways to raise the profile of the website.

As a reminder, on the SGR website, you can find:

- pdf files of all our printed publications (e.g. reports, briefings and back issues of the SGR newsletter);
- SGR responses to government (and other) consultations;
- notes and slides from our lectures and presentations;
- announcements of forthcoming events that involve SGR staff and volunteers; and
- our press releases and other articles.

If you have any suggestions for copy or ideas about how the site could be improved, or if you notice any errors, please let us know at <webmanager@sgr.org.uk>.

EMAIL-LISTS

SGR maintains two email-lists – ‘SGRforum’ for members and ‘SGRupdate’ for non-members. Updates from the SGR office – announcements of forthcoming events and publications, press releases etc – are sent to both lists, while SGRforum allows members also to communicate directly with each other and pass on interesting material. At the end of reporting year, the number of people on SGRforum had grown to over 150 while over 850 were on SGRupdate.

Any SGR member can join SGRforum. There is on average about one message a day. The list is managed by Kate Maloney and instructions on joining can be found at http://www.sgr.org.uk/SGRForum.html

Treasurer’s Report

The reporting year from 1 March 2008 to 28 February 2009 saw SGR’s finances continuing to remain tight. A reduction in paid staff time throughout the first half of the year helped us deal with shortfalls in projected income outstanding from the previous financial period. With the boost of a new three-year core funding grant in summer 2008 (with the first instalment paid in July), together with new project grants and a continued growth in membership income, paid time was increased in the following September. However, it was clear by the end of the reporting period that the knock-on effects of the global financial crisis were starting to affect our income and further cuts would be likely for the coming period.

Income

Total income was £71,774, representing an increase of 7% compared to the previous year, and the breakdown is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Income 2007-08 and 2008-09

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (£)</th>
<th>2007-8</th>
<th>2008-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership Subscriptions</td>
<td>17,420</td>
<td>20,171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Appeal</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>34,994</td>
<td>47,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>1,055</td>
<td>2,802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Fees</td>
<td>1,232</td>
<td>1,068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales of Publications</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66,989</td>
<td>71,774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. SGR income 2008-09 (in percentages)

Income from subscriptions was up by 16% compared to the previous year reflecting the continuation of the growth in membership due largely to our recruitment and marketing activities.

Unfortunately, there was no appeal income for this financial period. An appeal was sent out in January but the income from it did not begin to reach the SGR account until after the year end. We are planning the next appeal for earlier in the upcoming financial year to improve cash flow.
Other donations totalled £2,802 and included a legacy of £2,000 from a former member.

Income from grants totalled just over £47,000 – up 35% on the previous year. Funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) comprised £5,000 covering the last six months of the 2005-08 development plan (up to August 2008) and £10,208 for the first six months of the current plan. Grants from the Martin Ryle Trust (£6,000) and 1970 Trust (£2,000) were also received for the current development plan. For the military influence project, grants were received from the Network for Social Change (£4,823), Andrew Wainwright Reform Trust (£4,600), Martin Ryle Trust (£3,100), Garden Court Chambers (£500), and INES Special Projects Fund (£498), all towards the publication of Behind Closed Doors and/or the dissemination and advocacy phase of the project. The corporate influence project received £10,000 from the Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation and a further £500 as an anonymous donation from a member.

Income from fees for the annual conference was down slightly from the preceding year, but this was because admission fees were lower rather than because lower numbers attended.

Income from sales of publications was up slightly, but continues to be a very modest proportion of our income. However, it should be noted that the majority of our publications are being either downloaded from the website or distributed free at careers fairs.

**Expenditure**

Total expenditure was up 3% compared to the previous year. Table 2 and Figure 2 set out the breakdown of expenditure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Expenditure 2007-08 and 2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure (£)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core wages &amp; NI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Core Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Careers Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Influence Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Influence Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Core wages and national insurance covered the salaries of the Executive Director, the Office Manager, and the Membership Development Officer. Due to cuts in paid staff hours - brought in December 2007 and continued during the first six months of this financial period - these costs were lower overall than the previous year.

The rent figure represents the rental costs of our Folkestone office. Other core costs cover a wide range of items, including stationery, phone and internet charges, equipment, postage, expenses of the National Co-ordinating Committee etc.

The recruitment costs covered printing of the membership leaflet, inserts in external publications, and mailings to lapsed members and past purchasers of publications.

The newsletter costs covered typesetting, printing and mailing of the single issue produced this year (No. 36), together with part of the costs of issues 35 and 37, which appeared just before and just after the current reporting period.

The annual conference costs include publicity, catering and logistics for the event, plus some outstanding costs from the previous year.

Expenditure also included the costs of the three current SGR projects. Spending on the ethical careers project was small, and mainly covered the travel costs of SGR stall-holders. The military influence project costs included publication and dissemination of the report Behind Closed Doors, and the project worker’s fees and expenses. The figure for the corporate influence project mainly covers staff time for the research phase.

**Balance sheet**

Table 3 shows the balance sheet for the year. Expenditure exceeded income by £1,523 over the year, leaving a balance of £579 at the year end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3. Balance Sheet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance on 01.03.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance on 28.02.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Patrick Nicholson