

Chair of the Association 2008-2009

Like many who join the ASE, I became a member when training to be a teacher. I have been a typical 'low key' member for the last 30 years. I dipped into the magazines and journals, usually attended the Annual Conference, sometimes ran a workshop or seminar and occasionally went to a few regional events. Not a huge level of active involvement, but manageable while I was a teacher and bringing up a family. I remained an ASE member once I left the classroom, because the ASE represents such a broad range of interests in science education. What other organisation could keep me in touch with the diversity of science education encountered through FE, HE and primary teaching; education research; advisory services; OFSTED inspection; and overseas consultancy? I am passionate about science as a vehicle for developing reasoning and critical thinking and fascinated by its ever-shifting body of knowledge and skills. Now that I spend much of my time writing books and developing CPD courses, I need to stay in touch with teachers, technicians, science advisers and education researchers, to ensure my contributions to science education are relevant and useful. Being an ASE member helps me to do this. I have always been aware and profoundly grateful that there are many active ASE members who get 'stuck in': writing articles, running workshops and CPD courses and organising a whole range of activities at regional and national level.

About four years ago, I found myself thinking it was 'pay back' time when I was asked to be President of the ASE Scotland region and found out at first hand how committed the active members of ASE are. I joined a group that has provided me with camaraderie, stimulation and insights into science education across the United Kingdom. Now I am honoured to be the Chair of the ASE. To quote Graham Kingsley, the

Immediate Past-Chair, '*chairing the ASE is a three-year sentence*', so I have had a year as Chair-elect to get used to its inner workings. Council members voluntarily give time and commitment to attend meetings – always on a Saturday. At both regional and national level, committee members make every effort to ensure that the ASE is active on many science education 'fronts'. Such a complex organisation, serving the needs of its members as well as meeting its charitable status obligations, needs good governance. The elected Council, the Chief Executive and his staff, must act on behalf of the interests of the stakeholders, i.e. the membership, in a spirit of democracy and respect. Look at the contacts page (page 44) to find details of your Council, the 19 regions and the 10 committees, each with a specific sector of science education to steer, which keep the ASE evolving. The membership owe a big thank-you to all the hardworking people who are the lifeblood of the ASE, making this huge organisation live and breathe. So how do I, as Chair, intend to support the governance of the ASE?

I have in mind two big questions I want to explore this year:

- What does it mean to be a membership-led organisation?
- How can the government of such a body become more efficient whilst still retaining and respecting democracy?

I also have two areas of personal interest with which I want to engage. Firstly, supporting members to continue to develop professionally and receive recognition through, for example, Chartered Science Teacher status (www.ase.org.uk/htm/thease/siteguide.php), or for technicians through *techcen* (www.techcen.org.uk/web/). Secondly, re-energising the regions that are less active. All suggestions are welcome.



I also have two suggestions for you, the members who cannot be directly involved in committee activities: recruit one new member this year – a friend, a colleague. Gift them the support of a professional network and see if there is at least one local ASE event that interests you in your region. If there is not, contact the Secretary and explain what would interest you. I will meet many of you at the Annual and regional conferences over the coming year, so please say 'hello', tell me what you think about the ASE and how we can continue to improve the services for members. I chair your Council; make sure you help us to continue to be a vibrant, responsive organisation for promoting excellence in science education.

Wearing other hats... Carolyn is the Director of Cognitive Acceleration Programmes. With Professors Michael Shayer and Philip Adey at King's College London, she developed the Cognitive Acceleration through Science Education programme (CASE).

She lives in Dumfries and Galloway with an ex-racing greyhound called Jimmy and her husband, Ken Gouge, an Arts Education Consultant. She chairs her local creative writing group and has completed her first full-length play: *Choosing A.R.T.* about Artificial Reproductive Technology.

She is looking forward to the arrival of her first grandchild in January.