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The British Institute of Radiology

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The British Institute of Radiology (BIR) is unique in the UK as a multidisciplinary radiological organisation, which welcomes all radiological professionals into its membership, and all professionals in other disciplines who employ radiation in diagnosis or treatment. Equal medical and non-medical representation is maintained on its Council. Multidisciplinary collaboration and networking is fostered through its scientific committees and scientific meetings, the majority of which are held in the BIR's lecture theatre. The BIR works towards a world in which the potential of imaging science and radiation technology against disease is fully realised.

Mission

The BIR is an independent forum, which aims to bring together all the professions in radiology and allied medical and scientific disciplines to share knowledge and educate the public, improving the prevention and detection of disease and the management and treatment of patients.

Values

- BIR believes in the value of multidisciplinary collaboration to combat disease.
- BIR believes that every effort should be made to optimise the use of radiation in healthcare, and in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- BIR believes that research and education are vitally important.
- BIR considers all its members to be equal regardless of profession or grade.

History

The BIR is the oldest radiological society in the world. The origins of the BIR can be traced back to a first meeting held on 2 April 1897 to form 'The X-ray Society', renamed 'The Röntgen Society' soon after. The formal Grand Inaugural Meeting was held at St Martin's Town Hall in London in November that same year and was less than two years after Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen had discovered the X-rays. Whilst the main impetus for the new society was from doctors, it is remarkable that the first President was the well-known physicist Silvanus P Thompson. The tradition of alternating scientific and medical Presidents goes right back to the beginning of the society. The medical society 'The British Association for the Advancement of Radiology and Physiotherapy' (BARP) was formed in 1917, becoming the British Institute of Radiology in 1924.

In 1927 the British Institute of Radiology and the Röntgen Society amalgamated to become 'The British Institute of Radiology incorporated with the Röntgen Society', a truly multidisciplinary society. In 1958 Her Majesty the Queen granted a Royal Charter of Incorporation to the BIR, whose Objects include:

- To promote and encourage the study and practice of the art and science of radiology, radiobiology and the medical applications of nuclear science in all their aspects and the study of kindred sciences.
- To maintain and extend to the public advantage the usefulness of the work of the radiologist, radiobiologist, physicist, radiographer, and X-ray engineer in the field of medicine and in the expanding field of the industrial application of radioactive substances.
- To disseminate knowledge concerning all aspects of the science of radiology, radiobiology and the medical applications of nuclear science.
- To accept subscriptions and gifts of all kinds, whether absolute or conditional, and to undertake and administer trusts for purposes falling within the objects of the Institute.

The BIR became a registered charity in 1963. Its activities are shaped by its Charter and Byelaws.

Activities

The BIR is governed by its Council, which meets three times annually, and Officers, which meet six times annually. The scientific business of the Institute is transacted through its journal, the British Journal of Radiology, its scientific meetings and its scientific committees: Clinical Imaging; Nuclear Medicine; Health Informatics; Oncology; IHE; Radiation and Cancer Biology; Industry; Radiation Physics and Dosimetry; Magnetic Resonance; Radiation Protection; Molecular Imaging.

The BIR owns and participates in the UKRC and UKRO Congresses in partnership with the RCR, COR and IPEM.

The BIR is based at 36 Portland Place, London W1, a grade II* listed building which houses a 75-seat lecture theatre and other meeting rooms and a major collection of radiological journals, books and archives plus administrative offices for its 21 staff (including in-house publishing and event management personnel).

The BIR also has four Branches – North of England, South West, Welsh, and Wessex – which organise meetings and other activities in the regions. Currently, there are over 1400 individual members and over 30 Company Subscribers. The BIR also provides professional services for a number of other organisations.

BIR and Decision Makers in Industry

Given the ability of companies to get involved with the BIR through our Company Subscriber scheme, to serve on and influence our Committees, and to shape the direction of the BIR, our appeal for those in industry should be obvious. However, the BIR also takes the lead in establishing standards for the healthcare industry - the IHE (Integrating the Healthcare Enterprise) initiative took shape as a BIR committee, which seeks to ensure the interoperability of processes, standards, and technologies.

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