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Objects of the Association
The objects of the Association are:
  ▪ to encourage, develop and safeguard the role and title of Ombudsmen in both
    the public and private sectors
  ▪ to define, publish and keep under review criteria for the recognition of
    Ombudsman offices by the Association
  ▪ to accord recognition publicly to those persons or offices who satisfy the
    defined criteria for recognition in:
    ▪ the United Kingdom
    ▪ the Republic of Ireland
    ▪ the Channel Islands
    ▪ the Isle of Man
    ▪ Britain’s Overseas Territories
  ▪ to formulate and promote standards of best practice to be met by
    Ombudsmen in the performance of their duties
  ▪ to hold meetings, conferences and seminars, publish information and engage
    in all such other activities as may improve public awareness of recognised
    Ombudsman schemes and encourage their efficiency and effectiveness
Aften two years as Chair, I am handing over at the Annual Meeting in May 2010 to a new Chair with the satisfaction of knowing that the Association has achieved much during the year. The dominant events of the year (all of which are recorded in greater detail in this Report) are:

- The 8th biennial Conference, held in May 2009 at the University of Warwick
- The commissioning of the wide-ranging review of the Association’s future direction, and the subsequent publication in August of the review’s report
- The publication in October 2009 of the new BIOA ‘Guide to principles of good governance’
- The seminar on ‘accessibility’ held in Dublin in November 2009
- The successful running at Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh of the pilot accredited training courses for case handlers (during October 2009 and February 2010)

In addition, the regular activities of the Association continued to take place during the year, including the biannual Interest Groups meetings (for Communications, HR, legal and First Contact staff of member schemes) and the publication three times a year of ‘The Ombudsman’ newsletter. Notwithstanding the BIOA Secretary’s co-ordination of and involvement in these activities, they could not have taken place without the willing and active participation and involvement of so many staff members of BIOA member schemes.

It was particularly gratifying to see the culmination of the work carried out for quite some time now by both the Accreditation and Governance Working Groups, under the respective leadership of Ros Gardner and Paul Kenny, together with the many individual members of the Groups. Both Working Groups continue. The Governance one to develop further material on the topic for the BIOA website; the Accreditation one to plan the way ahead for accredited training once the full evaluation of the pilot courses has taken place.

The ‘Future Direction’ Review report is available for all members and staff of member schemes to view in the ‘members’ area’ of the BIOA website. The Executive Committee continues to debate its findings and will report fully to the membership in due course with any resulting recommendations it may make. Overall, the report indicates considerable satisfaction with the Association, what it is, and what it is able to achieve with its deliberately modest resources. With subscription rates remaining unchanged for five years, at the very least, BIOA provides a very effective ‘value-for-money’ networking organisation to put Ombudsman schemes and other complaint-handling bodies, both in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland, in regular touch with each other to debate topical issues and exchange best practice. Important in a time when most budgets are under strain!

There are areas where improvements should and can be made, particularly in raising its external profile and communicating better its existence to staff members of member schemes. It is the intention to employ a consultant shortly to advise and assist with external profile-raising, with a view to BIOA being regarded as an authoritative voice on Ombudsman matters in Britain and Ireland by governments, departments and other relevant bodies, so that it is an automatic ‘port of call’ for consultations and other enquiries. It is not the intention to encroach on the existing relationship arrangements of individual member schemes, but rather to provide ‘added value’. In addition, a new Working Group under Peter Tyndall is being established to investigate how BIOA and its activities can be better communicated to staff of member schemes. Many staff are already well aware of BIOA and take regular part in its activities. However, it is known that, with staff turnover, there are also many who remain unaware of it and therefore unable to benefit themselves and their schemes from taking part if they wished to do so.

Jerry White, the Association’s Vice-Chair, left the Executive Committee at the end of September 2009, on stepping down as Local Government Ombudsman for England to take up an academic career and to concentrate more on writing his books. I am grateful for his support during his time on the Committee and wish him well with both ventures. His place as Vice-Chair was taken by Peter Tyndall, who now takes the lead in contact with UK government, departments and agencies.

Yet again this year, Ian Pattison undertook his duties as BIOA Secretary with his customary professionalism and commitment. The esteem in which his work is held by the wider BIOA membership was very evident in the feedback comments from the BIOA review and Ian undoubtedly made my job as Chair so much easier through that professionalism and commitment. I owe a great deal of thanks to him.

I would also like to pay tribute to Shirley Browne, Ian Pattison’s partner over several years, who so sadly passed away at the beginning of the year. Shirley was not just a lovely, warm and immensely kind woman, but also a great professional support Continued on page 4
to Ian and to BIOA. We miss her and again express our condolences to Shirley’s and Ian’s respective families. If I may say in Irish, Ar dheis De go raibh a h-anam dilis. May her faithful soul be at God’s side.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who have both assisted with and taken part in all the Association’s activities. That includes, of course, my fellow members of the Executive Committee, the Validation Committee, the Chairs and members of the various Interest Groups and Working Groups, and not least of all Emma Gray (Editor) and the Editorial Board of ‘The Ombudsman’ newsletter which they valiantly produce three times each year. All of these people willingly give their (free) services to the Association in addition to carrying out their normal busy ‘day jobs’. Without that, there would be no BIOA! I am also very grateful to those member schemes which have allowed their premises to be used during the year for BIOA meetings and other events.

I step down, to concentrate on my own ‘day job’, from Chair of the Association in the knowledge that it will remain in safe hands and continue to move forward, especially after taking on board whatever changes or improvements come about as a result of the ‘Future Direction’ Review.

*Emily O’Reilly*
BIOA Chair
*Ombudsman for Ireland*

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**Annual Meeting 2009**

The Association’s 16th Annual Meeting was held on 7 May 2009 at Scarman House Conference Centre, University of Warwick, during the Biennial Conference. Unlike the Annual Meetings held in the intervening years between conferences, this was not a public meeting with guest speakers, but one dealing solely with the business of the Association. Some 46 members (Voting and Associate) and 131 guests (conference delegates) were present at the meeting.

The minutes of the Annual Meeting are available to members and staff of member schemes in the ‘members’ area’ of the BIOA website. Items covered at the meeting were:

- the Association’s finances for 2008/09 and budget for 2009/10
- the appointment of Auditors for 2009/10
- the election of the Chair and Executive Committee, as follows:
  - Emily O’Reilly (Chair)
  - Ros Gardner
  - Christopher Hamer
  - Jane Hingston
  - Suzanne McCarthy
  - Peter Tyndall
  - Jerry White
  - Paul Kenny
- Presentation of the Annual report for 2008/09
- Report on the review of the future direction of the Association (see also page 7)

Copies of the 2008/09 Annual Report are available in printed form from the BIOA Secretary (secretary@bioa.org.uk).
Biennial Conference 2009

The Association’s 8th biennial Conference was held on 7 and 8 May 2009, once again at Scarman House Conference Centre, University of Warwick.

Following the success of the 2007 Conference, when available delegate numbers were increased to 200 (the maximum bedroom capacity of Scarman House), there was once again a very good turnout with over 180 delegates attending the Conference. The net surplus from the Conference was £13,323.

The Conference celebrated 200 years of the institution of the Ombudsman (the first Ombudsman in its present form was introduced by the Swedish Constitution in 1809), examining how and where BIOA and its member schemes fit into that landscape, with the overall theme of much done – still more to do.

As well as an initial plenary session about the future of the Association, followed by the Annual Meeting, over the two days there was a mixture of traditional lectures in the tiered lecture theatre and the more informal smaller, but well-attended, workshops, as follows:

1st session:
Future direction of BIOA
Chair: Emily O’Reilly
(Ombudsman for Ireland, BIOA Chair)
Speakers: Laurence Shurman (former Banking Ombudsman and first BIOA Chairman)
Fiona McLeod (Energy & Water Ombudsman for Victoria, Australia & New Zealand Ombudsman Association Chair)
Walter Merricks (Chief Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman Service)

2nd session:
Annual Meeting
Chair: Emily O’Reilly
(Ombudsman for Ireland, BIOA Chair)
Secretary Ian Pattison (BIOA Secretary)

3rd session:
Report from academics on review of public sector Ombudsmen
Chair: Professor Mary Seneviratne (Director of Research, Nottingham Law School)
Speakers: Dr Richard Kirkham
(Lecturer in Law, University of Sheffield)
Brian Thompson (Senior Lecturer in Law, University of Liverpool)

Workshops:
- Stakeholder consultations: a lever for change
- Information security: pitfalls and good practice
- Freedom of Information

4th session:
Consumer redress
Chair: Elizabeth France (Chief Ombudsman, tOSL – Telecommunications, Energy and Surveyors Ombudsman schemes)
Speakers: Steve Brooker (Head of Fair Markets, Consumer Focus)
Ann Fitzgerald (Chief Executive, National Consumer Agency, Ireland)

Workshops:
- New media and the Ombudsman
- Equality and diversity
- Governance

5th session:
Public redress
Chair: Jerry White (Local Government Ombudsman for England, BIOA Vice-Chair)
Speakers: Kenneth Parker QC
(Law Commission, England & Wales)
Marian Shanley
(Law Reform Commission, Ireland)

Workshops:
- Managing customer expectations
- Accreditation
- Training for bodies under jurisdiction

6th session:
Institution of the Ombudsman
Chair: Ann Abraham (UK Parliamentary Ombudsman and Health Service Ombudsman for England)
Speakers: Albert Johnson (Head of Division, Parliamentary Ombudsman, Sweden)
Arne Fliflet (Norwegian Parliamentary Ombudsman)
P Nikiforos Diamandouros (European Ombudsman)

Workshops:
- Equality of access and the investigation of discrimination complaints
- Unacceptable behaviour
- Knowledge Management

Reports of the workshops are available on the BIOA website. Copies of the many of the presentations given at the 2009 Conference are in the ‘members’ area’ of the website. Access details are provided to staff members of member schemes on request to the Secretary (secretary@bioa.org.uk).
Dublin Seminar 2009

On 17 November, another of the seminars run by the Operational Management Seminars group was held, this time in Dublin at the offices of the Ombudsman. The topic was ‘Accessibility’ and included issues of access to Ombudsmen and complaint-handling services by all parts of the community, as well as wider public awareness. The seminar was well attended by over 70 delegates from 36 different organisations, mostly member schemes. Speakers at the seminar were:

- Fergus Finlay – Chief Executive, Barnardos, Ireland
- Tony McQuinn – Chief Executive, Citizen Information Board, Republic of Ireland
- Pat Whelan – Director General, Office of the Ombudsman for Ireland
- Brian Symington – Director, RNID Northern Ireland
- David Millington – Ombudsman, UK Financial Ombudsman Service
- Marie Anderson – Deputy Northern Ireland Ombudsman

Copies of the presentations given at the seminar are in the ‘members’ area’ of the website. Access details are provided to staff members of member schemes on request to the Secretary (secretary@bioa.org.uk)

Annual Meeting 2010

The 2010 Annual Meeting takes place in Cardiff on Thursday, 14 May at the National Museum of Wales. On the previous evening (13 May) there will be an Association Dinner held also at the Museum, following a ‘fringe’ event for staff of member schemes at The Parc Hotel, Cardiff, organised by the office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The programme of events is as follows:

Thursday, 13 May 2010
‘Fringe’ event held at The Parc Hotel
(organised by the office of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales)

Workshop 1: Administrative Law Reform – an opportunity to discuss the Law Commission’s view of the next steps in reforming the administrative justice system, particularly as it effects Ombudsmen.

Workshop 2: Managing Expectations – discussion of the different approaches taken to first contact and managing complainants’ expectations.

Workshop 3: Redress – consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the range of approaches taken to providing redress.

Association Dinner in the Grand Hall, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Friday, 14 May 2010
Annual Meeting in the Reardon Smith Theatre, National Museum of Wales, Cardiff

Annual Meeting – chaired by Emily O’Reilly (Ombudsman for Ireland and BIOA Chair)

Opening address – Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas (Presiding Officer, National Assembly for Wales)

Peter Griffiths (Chief Executive, Principality Building Society)
Dame Gillian Morgan (Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Assembly Government)
Jorrit de Jong (Kafka Brigade, Netherlands and Harvard University, USA)

Biennial Conference and Annual Meeting 2011

The 9th Biennial Conference of the Association will be held on 12/13 May 2011 at Burleigh Court, part of the Imago conference facilities owned and operated by Loughborough University. The Annual Meeting of the Association will take place during the Conference, on 12 May 2011.

Opened only two years ago, Burleigh Court offers excellent conference facilities including 225 high-quality (4 star) en suite bedrooms, a 240 capacity Convention Room and leisure club and spa complex. Loughborough is in an excellent central location, and well served by flights from Dublin and Edinburgh to Nottingham East Midlands Airport, by a good train service from London and by road via the M1.

Those wishing to view the facilities should visit www.welcometoimago.com for a ‘virtual tour’.

External relations

Liaison meetings with government
The Association continues to have dialogue with the UK Government about Ombudsman issues, and periodic meetings continue to be held with representatives of the Cabinet Office.

Discussions have continued to be primarily about revised Cabinet Office guidance to departments about Ombudsman matters, as well as about raising the profile of BIOA within departments and with Ministers and MPs. At these meetings, BIOA was represented by the Vice Chair and the Secretary.

The Cabinet Office revised guidance is about to be issued and is very much welcomed, as it requires departments to consult with the Cabinet Office when considering new redress schemes, and encourages them to seek guidance from BIOA. It also discourages the incorrect and inappropriate use of the name ‘Ombudsman’. The guidance can be viewed on the Association’s website under ‘other info’.

Responding to consultations
During the year, the Association has formally responded to the following issues, consultation papers and reports:

- EC consultation on harmonising consumer complaints classification and reporting
- Consumer Focus Scotland and the report of the Administrative Justice Steering Group: Administrative Justice in Scotland – The way Forward
- BIS consultation on taking forward the establishment of a body to monitor and enforce compliance with the groceries supply chain code of practice

Where appropriate in responding to issues and consultations, the Association continues to campaign to encourage government bodies setting up, or approving,
new schemes which meet the BIOA criteria for Voting membership to be called Ombudsman schemes, rather than other names such as Commission. Conversely, it also continues to campaign for the protection of the word ‘Ombudsman’ to avoid ‘the risk of damaging the credibility of the Ombudsman ‘brand’.

The Association is particularly concerned with the present government’s plan (and also a commitment by the Conservative Party should it form the next Government) to establish a grocery supply-chain arbitration scheme, being branded as the “Supermarket Ombudsman” by both the Competition Commission, the Department for Business Innovation & Skills and in the Press. BIOA is continuing to press for a different and more appropriate name to be used, including in its response to the consultation above.

Working with the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council
The Association has a long history of consultation and co-operation with the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council (AJTC), and its predecessor body, the Council on Tribunals (CoT). With the appointment in 2009 of Richard Thomas as its new Chairman, it is anticipated that this association will continue fruitfully.

Current Work Programme

Governance
The ‘Governance’ Working Group, with Paul Kenny (Pensions Ombudsman for Ireland) as Chair, continued its work with the following Terms of Reference:

To identify those general principles of governance relevant to Ombudsman and complaint-handling schemes which allow those schemes to function appropriately, including:

- drawing up a statement of those principles which underpin the BIOA core criteria of independence, fairness, effectiveness and accountability, while recognising the diversity of schemes and the need for flexibility
- publishing a high-level statement of those principles which can be used as a guiding principle by existing schemes, by those seeking to set up new Ombudsman and complaint-handling schemes and also by other interested parties such as consumer organisations and the recipients of schemes’ services
- publishing elsewhere (possibly on the BIOA website) details and examples to illustrate those high-level principles

The resulting BIOA ‘Guide to principles of good governance’ was published in October 2009, and can be viewed or downloaded from the BIOA website (under ‘BIOA publications’). Printed copies are available free from the Secretary (secretary@bia.org.uk).

The Working Group is continuing to develop additional material on the BIOA website. Members of the Working Group are:

- Mike Biles: Housing Ombudsman
- Christopher Hamer: The Property Ombudsman
- Paul Kenny (Chair): Pensions Ombudsman for Ireland
- Mick King: Deputy Local Government Ombudsman for England
- Ian Pattison (Secretary): BIOA Secretary
- Mike Reddy: Independent Consultant

Bill Richardson: Deputy Chief Executive, UK Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

Pat Whelan: Director General, Ombudsman for Ireland

Professional development
The ‘Accreditation’ Working Group, set up by the BIOA Executive Committee during 2007, continued to meet during this year, with Ros Gardner as Chair. Working with Nick O’Brien, the consultant appointed to progress this project, the Working Group has made good progress in developing training for case handlers of BIOA member schemes.

Several suppliers who had expressed an interest in providing appropriate training were approached, and Queen Margaret University (QMU) in Edinburgh was selected to run the initial pilot courses. These courses were developed by QMU in conjunction with the Working Group and it was decided to divide the content, derived primarily from competencies previously agreed, into an ‘Award’ course and a ‘Certificate’ course. These pilot courses ran very successfully in Edinburgh during October 2009 and February 2010 respectively.

The Working Group members during the year have included:

- Kerryn Ashton: Senior HR Advisor, Local Government Ombudsman
- Ros Gardner (Chair): Independent Complaints Reviewer for the Criminal Records Bureau
- Lorna Hearson: Head of Learning and Development, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman
- Liam Kelly: Head of Personnle and Finance, Ombudsman for Ireland
- Maureen Kelly: Head of Personnle, Local Government Ombudsman
- Niki Maclean: Head of Services, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
- Fiona McCarney: Training Officer, Ombudsman for Ireland
- Suzanne McCarthy: Immigration Services Commissioner
- Mike McMahon: Training Manager, Financial Ombudsman Service
- David Moorehead: HR Manager, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Nick O’Brien: Consultant
- Ian Pattison (Secretary): Secretary, British and Irish Ombudsman Association
- Susanna Reece: Deputy Adjudicator, Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
- Jon Ward: Director of People and Organisational Development, Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman

Future direction of the Association
In October 2008, the Executive Committee decided to review the role and activities of the Association and to consider what its future direction should be. A similar review was carried out six years ago, the result of which was that...
the Association should continue more or less as it was then.

It was also agreed that this review should, in due course, include a review of the Association’s rules and criteria for membership, a process originally started by the Validation Committee at the request of the Executive Committee.

After an invitation to tender to consultants and an open competition, Carolyn Hirst (with Professor Janette Webb) was appointed to carry out the review. It was completed in August 2009, and the full report can be viewed by members and staff of member schemes in the ‘members’ area’ of the BIOA website.

The review report identified some priority action points (in the view of members and other respondents), summarised in the report as:
- Decide what BIOA wants to be and who it is for
- Decide what to do about the Membership Criteria
- Improve the workings of BIOA itself
- Review Activities and Services to Members
- Do more to raise the profile of BIOA, Ombudsmen and Members
- Clarify who and what BIOA represents

The Executive Committee has considered the report in detail and decided initially to concentrate on the following areas, some of which will continue as ongoing ‘work in progress’ to be taken forward by the new Committee for 2010/11, together probably with other areas of the report’s findings:
- Membership categories
- PR and profile raising
- Validation, and Criteria for membership
- Funding, staffing and sources of income
- Membership communication
- Review of objectives
- Future composition of the Executive Committee
- Change of name for BIOA

**Membership categories**

It was decided not to recommend a change in membership categories, retaining one category (currently ‘Voting member’) for those schemes which meet the Association’s Criteria in full, and another category (currently ‘Associate member’) for other complaint-handling schemes. A minor change in name is, however, being recommended, to ‘Member’ and ‘Associate Member’ respectively. Voting rights will remain only for ‘Members’.

**PR and profile raising**

It has been agreed that professional assistance will be sought to raise the Association’s external profile with the media, governments and other relevant parties. The objective is for BIOA automatically to be considered a point of contact for consultation responses and other information and advice relating generally to Ombudsman issues.

**Validation, and Criteria for membership**

The Validation Committee has been asked to continue its review of Criteria and Rules, postponed pending the Review report, to include recommendations for criteria for ‘Associate’ membership.

**Funding, staffing and sources of income**

It was agreed that no additional significant staffing or funding changes for the Association were required presently, but that the situation would be kept under review.

**Review of objectives**

Minor changes to the Association’s objectives are being recommended in order to distinguish better between the Association’s promotion and support roles.

**Future composition of the Executive Committee**

Recommendations are to be made for the future composition of the Executive Committee to better reflect the Association’s current membership.

**Change of name for BIOA**

Discussions about possibly recommending a change of name of the Association are on-going, both to assist with the raising of its external profile and to gain better acceptance in all areas of its membership coverage (eg in the Republic of Ireland and in the devolved administrations of the UK).

**Membership**

Membership of the Association at 31 March 2010, compared with a year ago, is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Now</th>
<th>A year ago</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting membership</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Associate membership</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Associate membership</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New members**

The Association was pleased to welcome the following new member schemes during the year:

**Voting member**
- Complaints Commissioner for the Cayman Islands – Nicola Williams

**Corporate Associate members**
- Complaints Commissioner for the British Virgin Islands – Elton Georges
- Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland – John McNeill

**Executive Committee**

The role of the Executive Committee is to manage the Association on behalf of members. The membership of the Committee during 2009/10 was:

Emily O’Reilly (Chair) Ombudsman for Ireland
Ros Gardner Independent Complaints Mediator for the Criminal Records Bureau (until November 2009)
Christopher Hamer The Property Ombudsman
Jane Hingston Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman Service
Paul Kenny Pensions Ombudsman for Ireland
Suzanne McCarthy Immigration Services Commissioner
Peter Tyndall Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
Jerry White Local Government Ombudsman for England
Ian Pattison (Secretary) BIOA Secretary

Jerry White was elected Vice Chair of the Association under Rule 71e until his resignation from the Executive Committee in September 2009, and then Peter Tyndall was elected Vice Chair for the remainder of the year.
The Executive Committee met five times during the year on:
- 16 April 2009
- 17 July 2009
- 25 September 2009
- 3 December 2009
- 11 February 2010

**Validation Committee**
The role of the Validation Committee is to advise the Executive Committee on whether applications for voting membership should be approved. The Validation Committee’s membership during 2009/10 has been:
- Emily O’Reilly (Chair) Ombudsman for Ireland
- Ann Abraham UK Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman for England
- Gordon Adams Former BIOA Secretary
- Mary Seneviratne Associate Dean – Academic Legal Studies, Nottingham Law School
- Helena Wiesner Consumer Consultant
- Ian Pattison (Secretary) Secretary, British and Irish Ombudsman Association

There was only one new application for Voting membership this year. The Validation Committee has also been asked by the Executive Committee to continue with its review of Criteria and rules, temporarily put ‘on hold’ during the wider ‘Future Direction’ Review. The Association is most grateful to the members of the Validation Committee for making themselves available as required.

**The Ombudsman newsletter**
The **Ombudsman** newsletter is produced three times a year under the supervision of an editorial board and has a circulation of around 1,500 copies. Each issue contains news items, case studies, profiles of office holders and member schemes, and a number of feature articles. During the year there have been articles on the following topics:
- ‘Making a difference’: Professor Alice Brown reflecting on her time as Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
- A series of three articles on plain writing the correct use of English by Martin Cutts, Research Director of the Plain Language Commission
- 200 years of the institution of the Ombudsman: a history of the Swedish Ombudsman
- Working together can make a difference: about the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDRI)
- ‘First Contact’ at the Local Government Ombudsman
- Reviews of the BIOA biennial Conference in May 2009
- The Ombudsman Enterprise and Administrative Justice: an academic viewpoint
- The role of the Public Defender in Georgia
- ‘Ombudsman’ – a confusing concept?
- Health complaints in Scotland
- Real lives: a review of the ‘six lives’ joint report by PHSO and LGO
- Forty years of Administrative Justice in Northern Ireland
- Reflections of leaving office by Jerry White, Local Government Ombudsman

‘Selective to be effective’: Richard Thomas reflecting on his time as Information Commissioner and his new role as Chairman of the AJTC
- Researching the impact of Ombudsmen on bodies under jurisdiction
- Reflections on leaving office by Walter Merricks, Chief Ombudsman of the Financial Ombudsman Service
- Data publication by the Financial Ombudsman Service
- Managing high volumes of casework
- A study programme for overseas Ombudsman
- Reflections of an Ombudsman’s caseworker after 25 years service

**The membership of the Editorial Board during the year has comprised:**
- Emma Gray (Editor) Communications and Outreach Manager, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
- Andrew Bradley Communications Manager, Ombudsman Services
- Jo Fainlight Interim Communications Manager, Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman
- Jackie Feeney Head of Communications, Local Government Ombudsman
- Alison Hoyland Consumer and Parliamentary Liaison, Financial Ombudsman Service
- Caroline Mitchell Ombudsman, Financial Ombudsman Service
- Nick O’Brien Legal Policy Consultant
- Marie O’Brien Investigator, Information Commissioner’s Office, Ireland
- Ian Pattison Secretary, British and Irish Ombudsman Association
- Rafael Runco Deputy Housing Ombudsman

Back copies of *The Ombudsman* are available to view at or download from the Association’s website (www.bioa.org.uk) or in printed form from the Secretary. Anybody who is interested in being added to the mailing list to receive a free personal printed copy of the newsletter should contact the Secretary.

**The BIOA website**
The ‘members’ area’ contains the notes of the various BIOA Interest and Working groups, in addition to other items of interest to BIOA members and staff of member schemes, as well as dates of forthcoming BIOA events and activities. Also available in this area are presentations given at Conferences and Seminars. Access details for this area can be obtained from the BIOA Secretary (secretary@bioa.org.uk). In the near future, it is expected to add details of BIOA responses to consultations and requests for evidence.

Member schemes can, and are encouraged to, put job vacancy advertisements free of charge on the BIOA website. These can include advertisements for Council/Board members (where applicable), the office holder and staff members. Some schemes make great use of this facility, whilst others do not. For further information, contact the BIOA Secretary.
Finances

Finances 2008/09
The income for last year, including the surplus from the Autumn Seminar of €2,583 (£2,686), was £98,641 (£102,587). Expenditure was £109,108 (£113,472), giving a total deficit for the year of £10,467 (£10,886), thereby decreasing the Association’s reserves to £105,917 (£110,154).
(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2009 of 1.04 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

Finances 2009/10
The income for this year, including the surplus from the 2009 Conference of €13,323 (£14,933), was £104,278 (£113,472). Expenditure was £110,076 (£123,374), giving a total deficit for the year of £5,798 (£12,372), thereby decreasing the Association’s reserves to £100,119 (£102,587).
(Note: figures shown in Euros are calculated at the exchange rate on 31 March 2010 of 1.1208 Euros to the Pound Sterling.)

Special Interest Groups

The Association has four Interest Groups which meet usually twice a year, and also a group which organises periodic seminars, including the biennial autumn seminar (formerly the Operational Management Interest Group). These Interest Groups facilitate communication between schemes and enable staff to share ideas and issues of concern, and disseminate good practice. Meetings are held at the offices of member schemes, and the Association is very grateful for those facilities being made readily available.

Those interested in joining any of the Interest Groups should contact either the respective Chairs (see below) or the BIOA Secretary (secretary@bioa.org.uk).

Operational Management Seminars Group
A steering group, chaired by Nigel Karney, the Secretary of the Commission for Local Administration in England (Local Government Ombudsman), runs periodic seminars for staff of member schemes on a variety of topics of interest to Ombudsmen and staff of member schemes.

As the Group ran a Workshop (on ‘information security: pitfalls and good practice’) at the Conference in May 2009, there was only one seminar during the year, on 17 November in Dublin at the offices of the Ombudsman for Ireland (see report on page 6).

Legal Interest Group
The Legal Interest Group brings together legal advisers and those with interests in legal matters within member schemes, including some of the Ombudsmen themselves. It is chaired by Anne Whitehorn, Legal Advisor to the Local Government Ombudsman. Two meetings of the Group were held this year, on 19 March 2009 at the offices in London (Docklands) of the Financial Ombudsman Service, and on 29 October 2009 at the offices in Liverpool of the Criminal Records Bureau.

The Group also run a Workshop on ‘equality of access and the investigation of discrimination complaints’ at the 2009 BIOA Conference in May.

Communications Interest Group
The Communications Interest Group brings together communications professionals and those with an interest in PR/Communications matters in member schemes. It is chaired by Sue Fox, Communications and External Relations Director at the Information Commissioner’s Office. The Group met twice during the year, on 11 March 2009 at the offices in Bridgend of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and on 8 October 2009 in London (Docklands) at the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The Group also run a Workshop on ‘new media and the Ombudsman’ at the 2009 BIOA Conference in May.

HR Interest Group
The HR Interest Group brings together HR professionals and those with an interest in personnel, training and development in member schemes. It is chaired by Peter Stansfield, HR Director at the Financial Ombudsman Service. The Group met twice during the year, on 10 March 2009 at the offices in Bridgend of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, and on 7 October 2009 in London (Docklands) at the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The Group also run a Workshop on ‘stakeholder consultations – a level for change?’ at the 2009 BIOA Conference in May.

First Contact Interest Group
The First Contact Interest Group brings together those concerned with, and with an interest in, ‘gateway’ services within member schemes, and dealing with complaints and enquiries when they are first received. It is chaired by Carol Neill, Outreach Team Leader with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The Group met twice during the year, on 3 June 2009 at the offices in Liverpool of the Independent Case Examiner for DWP, and on 13 November 1998 at the offices in London of the Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman.

The Group also run a Workshop on ‘managing customer expectations’ at the 2009 BIOA Conference in May.
Members of the Association at 31 March 2010

**Voting (full) member schemes**
- Bermuda Ombudsman
- Complaints Commissioner for the Cayman Islands
- Energy Ombudsman
- Financial Ombudsman Service, UK
- Financial Services Ombudsman Bureau, Ireland
- Financial Services Ombudsman, Isle of Man
- Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
- Gibraltar Public Services Ombudsman
- Housing Ombudsman Service
- Independent Police Complaints Commission
- Legal Services Ombudsman, England and Wales
- Local Government Ombudsmen, England
- Northern Ireland Ombudsman
- Ombudsman and Information Commissioner for Ireland
- Ombudsman for the Defence Forces, Ireland
- Otelo (Telecommunications Ombudsman)
- Parliamentary & Health Service Ombudsman
- Pensions Ombudsman
- Pensions Ombudsman of Ireland
- Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Property Ombudsman
- Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
- Removals Industry Ombudsman
- Scottish Public Services Ombudsman
- Surveyors Ombudsman Service
- The Equality Tribunal, Ireland
- Waterways Ombudsman

**Associate member schemes**

**Consumer and Professional Organisations**
- Beachcroft LLP, Solicitors
- Citizens Advice
  (National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux)
- Consumer Focus Scotland

**Complaint-Handling Bodies**
- Adjudicator, Revenue and Customs, Valuation Office Agency,
  Public Guardianship Office, and the Insolvency Service
- Advertising Standards Authority
- An Coimisinéir Teanga (Irish Language Commissioner)
- Barristers Professional Conduct Tribunal, Ireland
- Commissioner for Public Appointments
- Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland
- Complaints Commissioner to the Bar Standards Board
- Complaints Commissioner for the British Virgin Islands
- Criminal Records Bureau (Independent Complaints Monitor)
- Furniture Ombudsman
- Greffier of the States of Jersey
- IDRS Limited
- Immigration Services Commissioner
- Independent Case Examiner for DWP
- Independent Complaints Reviewer, Audit Commission,
  HM Land Registry, Land Registers NI, National Archives,
  Charity Commission, Housing Corporation and Youth
  Justice Agency
- Independent Review Service for the Social Fund
- Information Commissioner
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
- Judicial Appointments & Conduct Ombudsman
- Law Society of Ireland
- Law Society of Scotland
- Lay Observer for Northern Ireland
- Legal Complaints Service
  (Law Society of England and Wales)
- Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
- Northern Ireland Judicial Appointments Ombudsman
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education
- Older People’s Commissioner for Wales
- Ombudsman for Children, Ireland
- Police Complaints Commissioner for Scotland
- Press Ombudsman, Ireland
- Prisoner Ombudsman for Northern Ireland
- Prisons and Probation Ombudsman for England and Wales
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Scottish Information Commissioner
- Scottish Legal Complaints Commission
- Scottish Parliamentary Standards Commissioner
- Service Complaints Commissioner for the Armed Forces
- Standards Board for England
- The Dispute Service Limited