The Congress is a major occasion during the year when cardiologists and scientists can come together to exchange ideas and new information. There is, however, much more to a Congress. The Board is increasingly aware that the occasion of the Congress is used by many groups to bring together persons with particular interests. For example, the Steering Committees or Investigator Committees of clinical trials often take the opportunity to meet during or after the Congress. Those planning applications to grant-giving bodies may also meet face to face rather than always communicating on the telephone or by fax or e-mail. In addition the Congress is an occasion when senior members of the Society, officers of National Societies and chairmen and nucleus of Working Groups can meet. These activities are to be encouraged. The only concern is that the meetings should not take place during the hours of the Congress because then those involved may not be able to participate in the sessions.

The Board has been aware over the last 2 years of the increasing need to bring together the representatives of National Societies and Working Groups. During the previous year, two meetings were arranged in the European Heart House, one for National Societies and one for the Working Groups. These are likely to become regular events. The Working Groups met in the European Heart House on 1 December 1995 and the Presidents of the National Societies will get together on 9 February 1996.

During the Congress a meeting of the Presidents of the National Societies and chairmen of the Working Groups took place. The issues discussed were the organizational structure of the Society, possible changes to article 19 of the statutes, the role of the Nominating Committee, the selection of nucleus members of Working Groups, the role of Working Groups and National Societies in the organization of the Annual Congress and guidelines on education and training. The members of Working Groups met during the Congress and Chairmen of the Working Groups also had a meeting together. During the open forum of the Society on Tuesday at midday (22 August 1995), proposals to amend articles 6 and 10 were discussed. The financial structure and budget proposals were put to the Society. The editor of the Cardiovascular Research spoke about the future of this new journal now belonging to the Society.
in England. Cardiologists associate Birmingham with William Withering and his description in 1785 of the use of digitalis to treat heart failure. Please remember that the final date for submitting abstracts is 14 February 1996. Abstracts should be sent to ECOR at the European Heart House. If you wish to obtain abstract forms contact ECOR. The address is given on p. ii of the Society Notices at the back of this issue.

PHILIP A. POOLE-WILSON

President of the ESC