



Life Membership Awarded to Professor Pete Cole (September 2024)

So, when I was asked to read out Pete's citation for the Lifetime Member Award I was honoured. But then, when I thought for a moment, the nerves kicked in; how could I do Pete justice? Pete Cole, the radiation protection legend with a wicked sense of humour. It's like being best man to Peter Kay, anyway, here goes....

Before we present this Lifetime Member Award I want tell you a little bit about Pete. There is so much that can be said and perhaps in equal amounts so much which cannot!!

Pete began his illustrious academic career studying Physics at the University of Manchester where he earned a first class degree. He went on to study for a PhD also in Manchester being awarded this in 1990. In his time at Manchester he skilfully avoided contact with D:Ream's Brian Cox!

In 1991, he left his beloved home in North-West England for a brief soirée down south to complete a post-doc at the University of Oxford in the Biochemistry Department under Sir George Radda. Here he worked on

- Developing triple quantum filtration for multi-nuclear MRI
- Building a Golay gradient set to change a vertical bore MR Spectroscopy machine into an MRI scanner.

I'm sure Pete will be happy to explain all about this to anybody who is interested!

Pete moved back up to Liverpool in 1992 to work for IRS and this is where his radiation protection career began in earnest. Pete jumped back into academia in 2000 at the University of Liverpool and this is where he has worked since – for almost a quarter of a century, with nearly 24 of these as RPA! The University recognised his significant contribution in 2009 awarding him a Professor of Physical Science.

Most people would be entirely satisfied with a similar career at this point but not Pete. With a real enthusiasm and drive to make a difference in the world of radiation protection Pete became an active member of SRP and AURPO, eventually becoming President of both organisations – the only person to have ever done this!!

Over the years Pete has had roles in SRP's Events Committee, Non-Ionising Committee and Strategic Planning Committee. He was a founder member and Chair of SRP's Outreach Committee and participated in many outreach activities for school-age students.

He was also a member of SRP's RWA Working Group and Chaired the Professional Accreditation Working Group which eventually led to the formation of The Radiation Protection Council. He was active in developing the SRP Mentoring Scheme to support early career members.

Pete also established the UK Young Professionals Award for RP, recognising the need for us all to bring in and support a new generation of individuals in this field. I recollect Pete wanting to call this the "Rising Member Award" but this breached SRP's strict double entendre rules! To further support new talent he was the UK judge on the IRPA Young Scientist and Professional Award for three IRPA Congresses.

Pete then moved into his writing phase. Recognising his inability to write Alan Titchmarsh like semi-erotic fiction Pete bowed to his real talent and co-authored the critically acclaimed textbook "An Introduction to Radiation Protection" with Alan Martin, Sam Harbison and Karen Beach. A must for all RP professionals young and old.

He also co-authored IRPA's "Practical Guidance for Engagement with the Public on Radiation and Risk" (2020).

Research-wise, Pete has added to his day job by publishing many papers on science and RP.

Pete joined AURPO in 2000 and, like myself, his first conference was at Bangor University. Since then, he has been ever-present at our annual event, both hosting and presenting.

Pete became President of AURPO from 2018 to 2023 and managed the Association through the Covid years maintaining interest to members through webinars and a highly successful virtual conference.

Continuing to support new blood in this field he established awards at AURPO to support newer members with attendance at the AURPO Strathclyde Course and AURPO Annual Conferences and he tutored on AURPO/Strathclyde Course for many years.

Clearly, Pete is a people person, a talker and a listener, but we also all know Pete for his sense of fun and his sometimes very risqué sense of humour.

Rude jokes and good old belly laughs are never far away from Pete. There are lots of stories surrounding conferences where Pete has been at the centre of these or the target! Like the meeting in Cardiff where Pete was being introduced to the audience as 'Head of Public Engagement' emblazoned in large font on the screen behind him. Unfortunately, Christine Edwards accidentally (or deliberately) left the "L" out of Public!!! Most of us would have been mortified, not Pete, laughing it off and proud of this unexpected badge of honour – "if the glove fits"!!

Then we get to 2006. The Annual Conference was held in Greenwich. This was the one conference I missed because my son was starting school and how glad I was that I did miss this one. Following one of the evening's events Pete decided to streak, butt naked across one of the beautifully manicured lawns. Unfortunately, some of those present here this evening did witness this and have flash backs to Pete's pasty bum disappearing off into the gloom! He swears it was a tanned bum!!

There has been blowup lobster gate, Simon Willis's and Mike Sobanski's fart gate and uncontrollable giggles at the conference dinners on what usually gets dubbed the "naughty table". But one thing I'm certain of is that Pete has made AURPO a better, more enjoyable and successful organisation over the last 23 years he has been part of it and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for this.

I'd like to finish off on a personal level. Not only is Pete a colleague of mine, and has been for more than 20 years, I'm also extremely proud to be able to call him a friend – and I know many of you here feel the same.

Pete epitomises all that makes AURPO a great organisation. He is always willing to help, to give up his time and to share his experiences, both good and bad - all for the betterment of RP within the education sector. This is why I am immensely proud to have been asked to present this Lifetime Membership Award to Pete Cole, an award that he thoroughly deserves.

Please can I ask you to put your hands together and show your appreciation for Pete.

Chris Murdock



The award of Life Membership was presented to Prof Pete Cole at the AURPO Annual Dinner on 4 September 2024 at Keele Hall. Pictured L to R: Julie Turner (President), Pete Cole, Chris Murdock.