

The Wellcome Museum in London gives an excellent informative display of Tropical Pathology.

Power rightly notes that medical research also took place in tropical countries outside the British Empire, but does not mention that from the beginning of the twentieth century medical schools for the special study of tropical diseases were set up in Paris, Bordeaux, Antwerp and Hamburg. She describes the efforts of the United Nations Organisations to promote health and to prevent and treat disease in the tropics. She rightly records the disappointing results of the antimalarial measures, but does not mention the great success of the eradication of smallpox, or, regrettably, the emergence from the tropics of new pathogenic viruses to affect mankind, notably causing AIDS with its social implications.

Frederick J. Wright
75 Barnton Park View, Edinburgh EH4 6EL

MECHANISMS OF ASTHMA

Sir, The review by Holgate (*Proceedings* 1995; 25: 360-79) clearly shows that the lung is a complex immune organ with a remarkable degree of autonomy in the manifestation of immunological reactivity; hence the discrepancy between the behaviour of lungs transplanted from non-asthmatic subjects versus the behaviour of lungs transplanted from mildly asthmatic donors to non-asthmatic recipients, the consequence being amelioration of asthma in the former instance and its persistence and progression in the latter.¹ What is even more remarkable is the immunological autonomy of the airways *vs* the alveoli within the same individual, rendering the co-existence of asthma and fibrosing alveolitis a clinical curiosity reported only once,² even though the immunological repertoire of cytokines, eosinophils, mast cells, and lymphocytes is available throughout all lung tissues.^{3,4} How does this segregation come about, and why does it seldom break down even though the association of fibrosing alveolitis and elevated serum immunoglobulin E is common?⁵

O. M. P. Jolobe
Tameside General Hospital, Ashton-under-Lyme

REFERENCES

- ¹Corris PA, Dark JH. Aetiology of asthma: lessons from lung transplantation. *Lancet* 1993; 341: 1369-71.
- ²Jolobe OMP. Asthma with cryptogenic fibrosing alveolitis could arise from altered immunity (letter). *Care of the Elderly* 1994; 6: 346.
- ³Kay AB. T cells, cytokines and asthma. *J R Coll Physicians Lond* 1994; 28: 325-31.
- ⁴Du Bois RM. Diffuse lung disease: combined clinical and laboratory studies. *J R Coll Physicians Lond* 1994; 28: 338-46.
- ⁵Marsh P, Johnston I, Britton J. Atopy as a risk factor for cryptogenic fibrosing alveolitis. *Resp Med* 1994; 88: 369-71.

College Affairs

Obituary

JAMES WILLIAM HOWIE

James Howie died on 17 March 1995 aged 87. He had been professor of bacteriology at the Glasgow medical school and director of the English Public Health Laboratory Service and had received many honours. He held the fellowships of the Colleges of Physicians of London, Glasgow and Edinburgh and of the College of Pathologists which he served as President in the 1960s. He was President of the British Medical Association in 1969-70 and BMA Gold Medallist in 1984. In 1972-73 he was President of the Association of Clinical Pathologists. He was appointed an Honorary Physician to the Queen and he was knighted for his outstanding services to Medicine in 1969. In the same year his alma mater honoured him with an honorary LL.D. He was notable for his quiet wisdom, his style and his enthusiasm, tempered always with thoughtfulness and caution. He had a flair for words and writing. He was a man of sincerity and integrity, who did an enormous amount in his lifetime for medical microbiology, for pathology in the wider sense and for his Church.



JAMES WILLIAM HOWIE

He was born on 31 December 1907 in Oldmeldrum, Aberdeenshire. His father, an auctioneer at Laurencekirk, was seemingly a hard man. James did not have an indulged childhood but he had the great advantage of an education at Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen, and thereafter at Aberdeen University medical school where he graduated MB ChB in 1930 and MD with honours in 1937. In 1935 he married Winifred Mitchell who held a first-class degree in agriculture. Their homes were always warm and welcoming. He was an earnest golfer and was hugely encouraged when, at the age of 77, he got a hole in one at the 15th at Bruntsfield, Edinburgh, and repeated the feat 3 months later at the same hole. He made one of his sons very anxious by phoning him (to give him the news) 20 minutes before the starting time for the cheap rate. His politics, when they showed, were well right of the fairway. Once, as James came off the tee at Hampstead, Harold Wilson complimented him on his drive and asked how he did it. The answer was, 'By keeping a firm grip on the left, Prime Minister', and James looked round with his inimitable hint of a smile. A man of emphatic likes and dislikes, he loved the music of Beethoven, Bach, Wagner and Schubert.

From Aberdeen he went to Glasgow, where he obtained clinical microbiological experience. He served during World War II with the RAMC in Nigeria and then at the War Office in London. His early experience of the Civil Service in London was to stand him in very good stead in his later career. He

Photograph reproduced from the portrait by Sir William Hutchison with permission of the Royal College of Pathologists.

returned to Aberdeen to a senior post at the Rowett Research Institute and subsequently had twelve of the happiest years of his life as Professor of Bacteriology at Glasgow. There he did important work to correct the deficiencies that had been reported in hospital sterilisers. This supplemented the pioneering work of John Bowie and his team in Edinburgh. James Howie became Convener of an MRC Working Party to put these matters right. At Glasgow, Howie built around him a team of dedicated teachers and clinical bacteriologists who warmed to his example.

He became anxious about the dangers of poor communication between the Scottish medical schools and their associated microbiological laboratories. There was, in his view, a rather haphazard epidemiological intelligence system and, as Scotland lacked (and still lacks) the equivalent of the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) in England, he saw this as a grievous and potentially dangerous deficiency. The development of the Communicable Diseases (Scotland) Unit, known as the CDSU, at Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow, was a great step forward and Howie had a hand in its creation. But Scotland does not yet have a truly integrated microbiology laboratory service.

In 1963, James Howie became director of the PHLS. It is a sad reflection on the values of our time and the strange evaluations of government that the PHLS, despite its world renown, was soon to be fighting for its existence and continued financial support. Paradoxically, the salmonellas, listerias, legionellas, coliform pathogens, campylobacters, staphylococci, streptococci, clostridia and tubercle bacilli and a host of viruses joined forces with the efforts of Sir James and other senior men and women to convince the powers-that-be that a priceless service cannot be costed entirely in marketing or accounting terms. Of the PHLS, Howie wrote 'I pray that no misguided tinkering destroys this beautiful thing through so-called planners . . . not understanding it'.

In the corridors of power, he walked with a calm assurance born of his thoroughness and painstakingly acquired knowledge of protocol and diplomacy. He never lost his sensitivity or his temper, despite the innumerable problems that inevitably confronted him.

When the hazards of work with dangerous organisms became evident in the 1960s and 70s, Howie headed a committee that, in 1978, produced a demanding Code of Practice for the Prevention of Infection in Clinical Laboratories and Post-mortem Rooms. This became known as the Howie Code and it transformed laboratory work in microbiological centres and associated clinical laboratories throughout the United Kingdom and across the world.

He was a splendid teacher and a daunting chairman with an eagle eye and a stern manner for those who merited a rebuke. For those who deserved support, he was warm and encouraging. He had a great sense of humour, a love of good stories and much respect for courtesy, which he practised assiduously. Despite the pressures of his professional commitments, he had a lasting and firm commitment to his faith and Church. In his early retirement, his services as a speaker, chairman, assessor and writer were much sought after. In his series of articles entitled *Portraits from Memory*, published in the British Medical Journal and subsequently produced as a book, Howie shows his skill as a writer, a shrewd observer and a gentle historian. He is survived by his wife Winifred, Lady Howie, and by his daughter and his two sons.

J. G. COLLEE

Deaths of Fellows

LIONEL ADRIAN DAWSON

Dr L. A. Dawson of New South Wales, Australia, died on 20 December 1994. He graduated MB with honours from the University of Sydney in 1945 and took the Membership of this College in 1954. Dr Dawson was a consultant physician to several hospitals in Newcastle, New South Wales until his retirement in 1991. He had a particular interest in neurology and was a member of the Australian Association of Neurologists. He was elected a Fellow in 1973.

THEODORE DOUGLAS GRANT

Dr T. D. Grant died on 31 March 1995 aged 65. He graduated MB ChB from Glasgow University in 1952. After service in the RAMC and taking the Membership of this College in 1958 he specialised in geriatric medicine at the Ayrshire Central Hospital in Irvine where he developed the geriatric service in Ayrshire. He became a Fellow in 1971.

ANEURIN HUGHES

Dr A. Hughes died on 17 March 1995 aged 78. After qualifying in London in 1939, he saw active service with the RAMC rising to the rank of Major. He took the Membership of this College in 1947 and spent some years working in Scotland before returning to his native Wales in 1952 as a consultant physician in Newport, Monmouthshire. He became a Fellow in 1954.

LASZLO GEORGE LAJTHA

Dr L. G. Lajtha died on 14 March 1995. He was born on 25 May 1920. After graduating in medicine at the University of Budapest he became assistant professor of physiology there. He came to the UK in 1946 as a British Council scholar at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford. He was head of the radiobiology laboratory at the Churchill Hospital from 1951 to 1962 and then became director of the Paterson Laboratory at Christie Hospital in Manchester and in 1970 professor of experimental oncology at Manchester University. He was elected to the Fellowship in 1980.

DONALD IAN MCCALLUM

Dr D. I. McCallum died on 26 March 1995. Born on 9 March 1915 he graduated MB from the University of Edinburgh in 1938. Throughout World War II he served in the RAMC gaining the MC. On return to Edinburgh he specialised in dermatology and became a Member of this College in 1948. He was then appointed a consultant dermatologist in Nottingham and Newark hospitals. He was elected to the Fellowship in 1962.

ALISTAIR DUNCAN MCINNES

Dr A. D. McInnes died on 29 January 1995. He was born on 1 September 1924 and graduated MB ChB with commendation from St Andrews University in 1949. He took the Membership of this College in 1952. He did research on lung function studies with a Fulbright Travel Scholarship from 1959 to 1960. In 1964 he became a consultant physician and cardiologist at the general hospital in Jersey where he set up a diabetic clinic and coronary care unit. He became a Fellow here in 1971.

DAVID RANDOLPH MAITLAND

Dr D. R. Maitland died on 3 April 1995 aged 93. After qualifying MB ChB from the University of Edinburgh in 1927 he became a general practitioner in Fife. He took the Membership of this College in 1930. He served with HM Hospital Ships from 1939 until 1942 and then at RN Hospital, Haslar with the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant Commander. He was a consultant radiologist at East and West Fife Hospital until his retirement in 1967. He was elected a Fellow in 1945.

JOHN BEBBINGTON TUCKER

Dr J. B. Tucker died on 26 March 1995. He was born on 29 August 1923 and graduated MB from the University of London in 1953. He was a house physician and registrar in Edinburgh for some years and became a Member here in 1955. He returned to London as registrar at St Thomas's for 2 years before joining a group practice in Guernsey in 1959. He maintained an interest in therapeutics and was on the Committee on the Safety of Medicines. He was elected a Fellow in 1982.

LUIS ADRIAN VASSALLO

Dr L. A. Vassallo died on 28 June 1994. He was born in Malta on 29 July 1933 and graduated BSc, BPharm, MD from the Royal University of Malta in 1957. He became a Member of this College in 1963. He was a physician at St Luke's Hospital, Malta from 1974 until 1976 and head of the department of community medicine at the university from 1976 until 1977. Then he left Malta because of controversial legislation and was appointed physician at the King Fahd Armed Forces Hospital in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. He was elected to the Fellowship in 1970.

College Notices

THE NEW LIBRARIAN



Iain Milne, educated at George Watson's College, joined the library of the College as junior assistant in 1974 and in the twenty-one years since has advanced through senior assistant and deputy librarian to his present appointment as Librarian. From 1986-93 he was also the Systems Manager of the College and since 1993, Computer Consultant. He has specialised in information science and graduated as a Master of Librarianship (M.Lib) at the University College of Wales. Presently he is concentrating on completing the establishment of a modern information system to meet the needs of Fellows and other users of the Library and to open up the historic collection for maximum availability.