

5 The 1980s: People, Events and Meetings

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INTRODUCTION

This is an informed but informal account of the Society in the 1980s. It is based largely upon my own recollections assisted by annotations, made at the time, in my copies of the abstract books of the Society's Scientific Meetings. The Minutes of the Committee and Business Meetings of that period were also trawled. The current General Secretary, Peter Hall, also perused those Minutes and added some additional perspectives.

The 1980s in The Pathological Society, as well as in other areas of society, were a period of extraordinary change. Looking back at this period, and in particular through the window of the Society records, the Minutes of Committee meetings and the record of work presented to Society meetings in the abstract books (all of which can be found in the Back Record of the *Journal of Pathology* available to all members online), it is quite extraordinary how much has indeed changed! Typical meetings in the 1970s and early 1980s attracted no more than 50–100 abstracts and not many more attendees. Indeed the first meeting with 150 abstracts was January 1981. Accurate numbers of attendees are hard to define because no registration was required, simply the signing of an attendance book. In the Minutes of the Society Committee a note is sometimes to be found of how many signed this but it is stated that the information is very inaccurate. At the Dundee meeting of July 1981 it is remarked that about 120 attended but that 'this was perhaps an underestimate'. The growth in the meetings during the 1980s is evidenced by the dramatic increase in the number of proffered abstracts (see Fig. 9.1 In Chapter 9).

As well as the increase in number of abstracts, the content of the abstracts changed and showed the impact of technology. Indeed, one might consider the growth in the meetings of the 1980s as the direct result of technology. Consider the topics covered in the Symposia: The cell surface and uses of animal models to study microbial pathogenicity (Oxford, January 1980); Ultrastructural aspects of diagnostic pathology (Manchester, July 1980); Cytofluorimetry (Dundee, July 1981); The Monoclonal Revolution (Cambridge, January 1982); Stereology and pathology (Sheffield, July 1982); Computers in pathology (Birmingham, 1983); Immunocytochemical innovations (Royal Postgraduate Medical School, January 1984); Chromosomes and cancer (Leeds, July 1984); Immunocytochemistry in diagnostic pathology and implications of molecular biology for pathology (Northwick Park, January 1985); Growth control and neoplasia (Cardiff, July 1985); Objective methods in pathology (Barts, January 1988). In addition, keynote and named lectures were dominated by technological advances, including the 11th Oakley lecture on 'Diagnostic immunocytochemistry: achievements and challenges' (Kevin Gatter, UCH/Middlesex, January 1989) and the Lucio Luzatto Lecture on 'Gene rearrangements in human pathology' (The London, January 1986). So much of the structured part of Society meetings in the 1980s related to technological advances.

This emphasis on methodologies and in particular antibody-based methods took the presentations of The Pathological Society meetings away from the traditional arena of experimental pathology into a more observational (dare one say 'translational') form of work – lectins, antibodies, flow cytometers and the applications of such technologies to clinical as well as experimental settings. The effect of technology was evident throughout this decade, often in odd ways. At the Committee Meeting of January 1980 held at Merton College, Oxford, a discussion is recorded about the problems of getting notices of the meetings to Members in the 'Dominions'. The cost of airmail delivery to all such members was considered prohibitive. It was decided to send a set of Notices to one such Member in Australia or in another Dominion who might then be able to distribute it to colleagues elsewhere! Forgetting the politically incorrect choice of term Dominion, the approach seems fanciful today only a quarter of a century later.

On the other hand, looking back it is clear that some things have not changed. The issue of Society membership was a matter of concern in the 1980s. In 1984 Membership fell below 1600 (to 1589 in fact). At the 1984 Annual Business Meeting held in Leeds (the current General Secretary's first attendance at a Society meeting by the way) it is recorded that the General Secretary said that 'heads of departments were asked to attempt to recruit new members from their junior staff'. Also at the winter meeting of 1981 held at the Middlesex Hospital there was a debate Chaired by P.G. Isaacson of the Teaching Group Meeting entitled 'Poor recruitment in pathology is due to poor teaching at the undergraduate level'. J.R. Anderson and C.S. Foster spoke for this motion and J.R. Tighe and J. Swanson-Beck spoke against. Given the changes in the undergraduate curriculum in more recent years, one wonders what those speakers would now think! Similarly the issue of recruitment into pathology was then, as now, an issue of considerable concern. The General Secretary (McEntegart) indicated that 39% of consultants were over 55 and that the ratio of Senior Registrars to such staff was 1:4. Interestingly it was agreed that the promotion of the Intercolated BSc in Pathology was a potential means of promoting the discipline as a career option.

In January 1981 the Society was asked to contribute financially to a project to make a film to be entitled 'What pathology is and what pathologists do'. Today, a quarter of a century later, this undoubtedly would be viewed as a good thing, with engagement of the public and the rest of the profession being perceived as being of huge importance. It is thus salutary to note that it is recorded in the Minutes that a senior person stated '... such a production is unnecessary and may even be unhelpful...'. The project was not supported!

MEETINGS: THE EARLY 1980S

At the heart of the Society's activities were the winter and summer meetings. There were people to meet, friends to greet, sessions to attend, presentations to be made or listened to, posters to view, discussions with those having like interests (sometimes with vigour but rarely heated), conversations and chat (a generic term that encompasses gossip). There was an ambience of intellectual action, reaction and, above all, interaction. Although there were dull moments there was never a dull meeting. In the background were occasions ranging from the Society Dinner to small self-selected groups – usually sharing special interests or training affiliations – where with food and drink one could socialise. Such meetings were informative, lively and enjoyable.

The first meeting of that decade, the 140th meeting of the Society, was held at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford and commenced on Thursday 3 January 1980. This day and date were not arbitrary but determined by the arcane formula of the Thursday after the first Wednesday unless 1 January was a Wednesday. This was out of term for all potential host departments and fitted in with train services, especially from the north. The meeting ran through to Saturday, the last occasion it did so.¹ Accommodation was provided in Merton College and St Edmund's Hall. The

¹ In fact the July 1992 Meeting in Manchester did have a Symposium on the Saturday morning.

latter was the venue for the Society Dinner on the Friday evening, and the reception on Thursday evening was in the Ashmolean.

The Committee met in Merton College on the Wednesday evening. George Williams from Manchester as the senior and willing member was in the chair. This was common practice. The Society since its inception had seen no need for a President or a Chairman so there was no provision in the constitution. Among the matters discussed were freeing the Journal from the limitations of hot metal typesetting and the role of the Society in relation to specialist groups. Both of these were significant discussion points in the early 1980s. The Minutes end with '...many members of the Committee were by now hypothermic so the meeting was concluded at 7.00 p.m.'. This reflection on the ambient temperature in a college out of term in winter is not peculiar to Oxford. At a later meeting in the decade and with a different secretary a similar sentiment is recorded about Cambridge.

In the scientific sessions there were a total of 103 presentations covering an eclectic mix of things pathological, microbiological and immunological. There was an impressive joint symposium in association with the Royal College of Pathologists on 'The cell surface'. There was a paper entitled 'Did the Gonococcus acquire the ability to produce beta-lactamase in 1976?'. One abstract memorably began 'The commonest guinea pig is now the mouse', and the neuroendocrine group from the Hammersmith were beginning to flex their muscles. The techniques employed included histochemistry, immunocytochemistry and electron microscopy. There was nothing to pre-sage the deluge of monoclonal antibodies and nucleic acid probes of only slightly later years. The Business Meeting commenced at 8.40 a.m. on Saturday. Under 'any other business' a senior member, Bernard Lennox (the author of a seminal paper on vitamin B deficiency and brain haemorrhage), who could be delightfully waspish on such occasions, 'Regretted the absence from the session chairmen of a firm timekeeper and requested that the Society return to the clock'.

The summer meeting that year was in Glasgow, from Wednesday to Friday. Of significance were discussions on funding intercalated BSc students and also students on electives. Both of these were subsequently implemented. At the July Committee Meeting the problems of microbiology within the Society were raised (a theme that was to continue throughout the next two decades) and the idea of a Microbiology Meetings secretary to try to help this was mooted. This was implemented with the election of Charles Easmon at the following winter meeting. Interestingly, the Microbiology Meetings secretary did not become an Officer of the Society until 1983.

The winter meeting in 1981 was at the Middlesex Hospital, London, and was the biggest meeting yet with nearly 150 abstracts. Although the deaths of members are formally recorded at the Business Meeting it was a rare event for there to be a formal tribute. This, however, was such an occasion when Rupert Willis was remembered by Colin Bird, one of his students in the early 1960s. That year the summer meeting was at Ninewells Hospital Medical School, Dundee. Alan Lendrum, from the host department, delivered a tribute to mark our 75th Anniversary '... and, in particular, its activities, during the past 25 years since the last history was published by J. Henry Dible in 1957...'. The committee decided that Lendrum's contribution should be published and, true to their word, it now appears as Chapter 3 of this book, although the Introduction to this book indicates the slightly tortuous route that this took!

The winter meeting in 1982 was at Churchill College, Cambridge, and ran from Tuesday to Friday. A ticket for the Society Dinner was £12 10p, there was no registration fee and B&B was £15, with coffee, lunch and tea being £5 50p. The first day was devoted to a joint symposium with the Royal College of Pathologists, aptly entitled 'The Monoclonal Revolution'. The keynote speaker was Cesar Milstein and there followed some 20 related presentations. It was a meeting with a high impact factor. Behind the scenes, unbeknown to anyone at the meeting, events were unfolding that were to have a major effect on the organisation of the Society. The Committee Meeting had not been in decision-making mode. The General Secretary was about to retire, the Meetings Secretary had recently demitted office and, at the last minute, an apology had been received on the telephone saying that the Treasurer, Wally Spector, was unable to attend. He was

also the Editor of the *Journal of Pathology* and a principal agenda item for discussion was the increasingly strained relationship between the Journal and its publishers. The message was inconvenient but not overly concerning, the impression being that he had acquired some seasonal virus. Decisions were put on hold until the next meeting.

On the last day of the Cambridge meeting it was bitterly cold and the weather forecast was ominous so the meeting was truncated to obviate travel problems. As the attendees (including Committee Members) were dispersing it became known that Wally had died.

There was a hiatus terminated before the end of January by Bill Crane, acting on the senior and willing member principle, convening an emergency Committee Meeting in Sheffield. It was quorate and it was decided to approach a particular member (Neville) to take over as Treasurer and another member (Walker) to chair a small working party to recommend the appointment of an Editor for the Journal and to negotiate a new contract with publishers. The decision to move publishers stemmed from some dissatisfaction with the former publishers (lost copy, lost parts of copy, issues published in the wrong order, etc.) that had led to a falling in the standing of the Journal. After a competitive 'beauty parade' with five established publishers, tenders were submitted and evaluated. In the course of this I phoned Dillwyn, who evinced some surprise when he was requested to send a member of his staff to Companies House (in Cardiff) to obtain a copy of one of the tenderers' annual accounts. This was forthcoming next day. The outcome was that Munro Neville became Treasurer, Dennis Wright became Editor and the new publisher was Wiley. Twenty-four years later Munro and Dennis are now retired but Wiley still publish the Journal. This episode had other long-reaching consequences for the Society. The need for central organisation and a permanent office was implanted in certain minds. The Society subsequently has eschewed secular pluralism.

The summer meeting of 1982 was in Sheffield. The Business Meeting, as was the custom then, was chaired by a member of the host department, Bill Crane. He spelt out the changes necessary for the well-being of the Society but those present were not notably receptive. In contrast, the scientific sessions were especially lively. The Hammersmith and Cardiff departments (or Julia's entourage and Dillwyn's bunch, as they were more usually known) were major contributors. Of note is that the annual Society subscription was then £10.

Unusually the winter meeting in 1983 was not in the golden triangle but in Birmingham. It was well attended and most of the academic departments were represented, but numerically Hammersmith was dominant and indeed may have set the record for the number of presentations at a single meeting. Sadly the Committee was informed of the death of Bill Crane, who had galvanised them to activity exactly a year previously. The summer meeting of 1983 was remarkably international. The contributing departments included those from The Netherlands, France, Greece, Portugal, USA, Nigeria, Ghana, Sweden and Norway. This was not attributable to any special effort on the part of the Society but may well relate to the venue, Edinburgh, which has always encouraged and nurtured such connections both at town and gown levels. Comments annotated on the programme indicate Andrew Wyllie's response to a question after his presentation: 'One can never exclude the possibility that something one hasn't thought of might occur'. Henry Harris, Oxford, delivered a keynote lecture 'Where is pathology going?' His message in essence was 'There is a requirement for intellectual input in pathology.' A comment from an unidentified voice as the audience left was: 'He obviously was not present at last year's symposium in Cambridge'. The Committee Dinner, presided over by the Godfather a.k.a. Alastair Currie, had overtones of Burns. An account of the meal overheard at next morning's scientific session had it that Committee Members were bemused and the guests were thrilled: 'He actually killed a haggis at the table before their very eyes and then delivered an epitaph'.

The winter meeting in 1984 was at the Hammersmith. An innovation was that the Minutes of the Business Meeting held the previous July were printed in the programme. This was part of the reorganisation to improve the communication of information to members. The 'in' joke on that

occasion, mindful of the proximity of Wormwood Scrubs, was 'What kind of wright would set up shop beside a prison? A Nick Wright'. Of note from the Committee Minutes was the proposal by E.D. Williams for joint meetings with other bodies and organisations as a way of promoting pathology. This was soundly rejected but sadly the Minutes do not reveal the nature of the arguments. The increasing number of abstracts and the desire to allow as many presentations of professed papers as possible led to presentations being reduced to 10 min!

In 1984 there were two summer meetings. In May, in Bergen, there was a joint meeting of The Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland with the Netherlands Pathological Society and the Norwegian Pathological Society. There were 31 members and 10 guests from the British Isles, 18 members and 7 guests from The Netherlands and 36 members and 4 guests from Norway. Harold Fox featured prominently in the programme. Incidentally it emerged that the fronts, beloved of weather forecasters, was a concept that originated in Bergen in the 19th century. Reindeer was on the menu of the Society Dinner. It was a lot better than swan! In July 1984, Leeds was the venue. There were 141 presentations. The Departments of Pathology and Microbiology gave a reception and buffet at Temple Newsam House and the Dinner was in the Senior Common Room. There was a large microbiology input to this meeting.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE MEETINGS

In January 1985 the Society met at Northwick Park, London, debatably within the golden triangle. There were 190 presentations. The Oakley Lecture was delivered by Barry Gusterson. It was a well-attended, well-organised and friendly occasion but the Dinner venue, the Wembley Conference Centre, was soulless. Despite this, after the Society Dinner those present were given a piece of iced cake made by Miss Christine Bateman (Senior MLSO at Northwick Park) to celebrate the 150th Scientific Meeting of the Society. The summer meeting was at the University College of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff. As expected of a meeting hosted by Dillwyn Williams it was lively, but what sticks in my mind was the Committee Dinner in which for the first time I tasted seaweed – in the form of laver bread, with bacon. Having previously taken this oceanic vegetable for granted it can be stated that this dish was not just novel but memorably tasty. It is worth trying. The reception was in Cardiff Castle, and was also memorable.

Winter 1986 was marked by the meeting at the London Hospital and there were more than 200 abstracts for the first time. The guest lecture was delivered by Luzzatto, entitled 'Gene rearrangements in human pathology'. There was a presentation of 'An autopsy study of mountaineering accidents in Scotland': one of the co-authors subsequently became Minister for Education and Sport in the devolved Scottish Assembly. The take-home message was 'wear a helmet'. Another presentation, adjudged at the time as an effective throwaway delivery with good timing, commenced 'This is a slightly dubious exercise but I undertook it anyway'. A penetrating query from the floor, emanating from a tall Welshman, was prefaced with 'An elegant contribution to the question but not to the answer'. Wordsmiths were to the fore at that session. This was also the first meeting at which markers of lymphocyte phenotype that worked in routine material were presented (abstracts from Andrew Norton and Kevin West), a trickle that became a flood! Nick Wright was the new Meetings secretary and he proposed the introduction of poster prizes of £100, £50 and £25. E.M. (Mary) Cooke took over from Colin Easmon as Microbiology Meetings secretary. The July meeting was in Dublin and held jointly with the Dutch Pathological Society. A symposium on 'New Developments in Pulmonary Pathology' was chaired by Michael Dunnill. The lymphoma phenotyping explosion continued and Quirke, Durdey, Williams and Dixon presented their seminal paper 'Local recurrence after surgery for rectal adenocarcinoma results from incomplete removal'. The dinner was held in the Incorporated Law Society Building and the delights of Dublin were savoured.

The January 1987 meeting was in Oxford with the Committee Meeting being held at Linacre College. Here it was reported that the first full-day Editorial Board meeting was held on 22 October 1986 in the Reform Club. It was noted that the Journal had some significant problems, including lack of copy and a high rejection rate, but that there had been a 40% increase in subscriptions in the previous 12 months. At this Meeting of the Committee the idea of introducing Registration Fees was raised but no action was taken. There was also a discussion on investing in property in South East England, and similarly no action was taken. For the Oxford meeting the accommodation and the Dinner were in St Edmund's Hall. The reception was held in the University Museum on Parks Road. The number of presentations was 252. The weighty symposium was 'Viruses in Human Cancer'. The contributors included Doll, Epstein and zur Hausen. This was the last meeting at which the small abstract book format was used. This last small abstract book contained gems, including the first report to the Society of Ag-NORs by the late John Crocker, as well as the use of Ki67 as a prognostic marker (Hall) and many presentations on the delights of antibody panels.

There was a large colourful introduction to the summer meeting in the form of a blue A4 printed programme replacing the previous white A5 programme. The meeting, in Southampton, was also large and colourful. The weighty symposium was 'Pathology of the Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome'. The contributors included Armes, Millard and Sebastian Lucas. At a discussion session the Chairman, a short Mancunian, declined to read the title and the list of authors of one poster on the grounds that this would take up half of the allocated discussion time of 4 min. Peacock, du Boulay and Kirkham asked if the 'Autopsy was a useful tool or an old relic?'. We now have a clearer view of what the rest of the profession think! At the Business Meeting there was a brief discussion about the desirability of setting up a central office in London to integrate administrative activities, including the organisation of Society meetings. Complaints were noted by several members regarding the Society Dinner in January 1987 when no grace was said, there was no loyal toast and no soft drinks were available: the meeting secretary (N.A. Wright) stated 'he would look into this'. There is no record of any action! Action did take place, however, on the River Boat Shuffle, which went down the Solent and up the Hamble to Buckler's Hard. A balmy evening, with chicken salad and large volumes of lubrication, and with the vessel being followed by seagulls feasting on the remnants of the picnic!

The 1988 January meeting was held at St Bartholomew's Medical School, London. The local organiser was David Levison, a future treasurer of the Society, and this may explain why the issue of Registration Fees was raised again. Again, no action was taken. Peter Toner proposed an Undergraduate Pathology Essay prize to stimulate interest in medical schools. Sadly it was not until 2005 that this was instituted! Action was taken more promptly on another matter, that of accommodation, where it was unanimously agreed that business would be best carried out from a central office. The then treasurer A.M. Neville was deputed to write to the President of the Royal College of Pathologists because it was known that space would become available in at 2 Carlton House Terrace. After a lull, nucleolar organiser regions were the subject of eight presentations in a variety of sessions prompting E.D. Williams to state that he was an 'AgNOR-stic'. Both the reception and the Dinner were in the Great Hall of the hospital. The dinner was £30 although coffee, lunch and teas were now cheaper at £4!

The summer meeting was in Newcastle. On the Wednesday morning an event waiting to happen occurred. There were concurrent sessions and they became out of sync. A paper was called 5 min ahead of its programmed time and no-one appeared to present it. A voice from the audience said 'They are speaking next door'. The chairman was indulgent and replied 'With your consent we shall wait'. Right on time there was a commotion towards the rear of the lecture theatre as the Hammersmith histochemical horde, led by Julia and urged on by the new Meetings Secretary, entered. The chairman exclaimed 'In the nick of time'. In the Committee Minutes the first mention of the University Grants Committee (UGC) Research Selectivity Exercise (a.k.a. RAE) was made. It was agreed to send a letter to the UGC suggesting that the Society be able to nominate members

to specific subcommittees, and to ask that clinical workload not militate against departments and that cognizance be taken of the big cutbacks in pathology departments that had taken place in the past decade! The impact of the successive Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is documented in Chapter 9.

The winter meeting in 1989 was at University College, London, hosted by Peter Isaacson. A reception was held in the Courtauld Institute (the old one in Woburn Square). The venue was unique, with *objets d'art* ranging from a Florentine dowry chest to Manet's 'Bar at the Folies-Bergere'; eclectic, with taste. The visual arts were reinforced by the performing arts – a musical duo (one was the host's daughter) that blended with the setting and contributed to the ambience. The heavyweight symposium, unsurprisingly, was 'Pathology of the T-cell'. The Oakley Lecture was delivered by Kevin Gatter on the subject of immunohistochemistry (see Chapter 15).

The July meeting in the last year of the 1980s was in Aberdeen. The local organiser was John Simpson. A striking feature was that the weather was perfect. The sessions were in the Zoology Building, which is situated alongside and has direct access to the Cruikshank Botanic Garden. Morning coffee and afternoon tea were more often than not taken in the open air. The heavyweight symposium was 'The New Genetics and Human Cancer' and contributors included Steel, Cowell and Andrew Wyllie. The guest lecturer was Enzinger. A poster with particularly fine illustrations was presented by Jennifer Young. At the Society Dinner the Meetings Secretary reported that with 288 presentations 'this was the largest summer meeting on record'. Interestingly, at the last Committee Meeting of this decade Rab Goudie posed the question 'should not the Society have a President.' It took another decade to get a clear answer.

CHANGING TIMES

Regarding the Society as a whole during the decade the membership was of the order of 1500: major themes, trends and developments are readily identified. The impact of new molecular biological methods on investigative pathology is clear from the scientific programmes. At the beginning of the decade immunocytochemistry was largely polyclonal: by the end this was almost entirely replaced and considerably extended by the advent of monoclonals. In the late 1980s came the polymerase chain reaction and *in situ* hybridisation. The joke at the time was that the election of the new Meetings Secretary in 1987 was an example of 'nick translation'. Under a succession of Meetings Secretaries the scientific programme evolved to deal with varied interests, and the increasing number of submissions, concurrent sessions, symposia, keynote speakers, posters and poster discussions became regular features.

Even the Society Dinner was shaken up. Up to the 1970s this was a pleasant but low-key function with one brief speech, 'the vote of thanks', usually delivered by a member who had been fingered a day or two earlier. There were no oratorical excesses. There were no prizes to give. Seating was more or less a free for all. Through a succession of small changes, some attributable to the Meetings Secretaries and some attributable to members, the occasion became what it is now: table plans were introduced so that names could be written in; poster prizes were awarded; the winner of the slide quiz received a crate of champagne that had to be distributed before the end of the dinner; and the speech became the responsibility of the Meetings Secretary. Last was the emergence of the sweepstake based on the duration of the speech. This was an unintentional but welcome consequence of the introduction of seating arrangements. Inevitably this had led to some mono-departmental tables, the noisiest of which was Southampton (closely pressed, on occasion, by Cardiff) and it was that table that started the sweepstake. Adjacent tables expressed an interest and at subsequent meetings the sweepstake became a general feature of the Dinner.

The major development in the 1980s was organisational. Up to that time the Society was run initially by two and subsequently by three officers and their respective and respected secretaries. The

best known of these was Zadie Milner from Leeds, a lady of formidable mien who regularly attended the Business Meetings up to the early 1970s (see Vignette: Fame at last P. Scheuer p 11). When the officers changed, currently relevant papers were passed to their successors and earlier documents were sent to whichever officer had the large tin trunk. Such arrangements were appropriate for the earlier years of the Society but were patently not up to late 20th century requirements. Spector's untimely death crystallised the situation. Eventually, after due enquiry, consultation and discussion, the Committee agreed unanimously 'that the business of the Society should be conducted from a central office in London, preferably in the same building as the Royal College of Pathologists'. This was at the winter meeting in 1988. On 1 February 1989 the Society opened its central office in London at 2 Carlton House Terrace (2CHT), and the foundation Administrator, Jacqui Edwards, was installed. The proponent, indeed driver, of these necessary changes was Munro Neville and he implemented them. Three years later he was 'poached' to be Treasurer of the Royal College of Pathologists and the Society did not get a transfer fee. Was this perhaps a foretaste of the Bosman ruling?

The preceding paragraph harbours a mystery. Was the large tin trunk a society myth or was it a reality? Well, a large tin trunk and several associated cardboard boxes were subsequently retrieved from Bart's and eventually transported to 2CHT. It contained Minute books, attendance logs, journals and all sorts of odd papers that are now filed in the central office. It was only when this centennial publication was being discussed that it was recognised what was not in the trunk. This cannot be dealt with in an account of the 1980s because at that time these omissions were not recognised. Perhaps the subsequent contributions to this publication, relating to later years, will shed light on the matter.

Anyhow the trunk has again disappeared. It was last seen in the office in the early 1990s – nondescript and battered. At that time the office was in the basement and extensive building renovation works were going on at 2CHT. The contents of the trunk are certainly on file in the relocated office on the top floor of 2CHT but the trunk is not there. Possibly it was put in a skip or maybe it was incorporated in a floor or put behind a wall (builders do these things). On an encouraging note, the basement of 2CHT is about to be renovated as an educational centre. There is a remote chance that the large tin trunk may reappear.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jacqui Edwards for reminiscences over dinner and in true mandarin minder style subsequently providing notes of the conversation. Thanks to Ros Pitts for ready access to the minutes and numerous cups of coffee. Peter Hall added some material to early versions of this manuscript. The opportunity is taken to respond to Peter Hall's e-mailed question 'How did the officers manage before the central office was established in 1989?'. The answer is 'With *great* difficulty'.

Colin Bird's mandible

I was warned at an early stage of my career that the meetings of the 'Path Soc' were the academic equivalent of the Colosseum in Rome (at the height of the fashion for gladiatorial combats). The 1987 Path Soc meeting was hosted by Professor Gerry Slavin at Bart's. Being on the academic staff at Bart's I could no longer escape my fate and made my belated entry into the arena. To survive the ordeal I knew that I had to fortify my presentation (which was on polyposis) with a thumbs-up message and therefore slipped in a pre-publication and tightly embargoed aside on the location of the APC gene on chromosome 5. This produced a sudden sound (followed by a loud and long groan) from the auditorium. I later learned that the sound was caused by the mandible of Professor Colin Bird hitting the floor-boards. It transpired that Professor Bird's research group was a mere sword-stroke from the same discovery.

Jeremy Jass