

7 The Pathological Society in the 21st Century

Peter A. Hall and Alastair D. Burt

INTRODUCTION

3 July 2001: in the faded elegance of the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool; in a large room, with a darkened stage and 200 expectant people. The lights dim. A hush falls. Slowly, almost imperceptibly at first, music comes from speakers at the corners of the stage. Familiar music. Everyone remembers the movie, not so many remember the name of Richard Strauss's Opus 30: *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The music moves to a crescendo and then just like the opening of Kubrick's *2001 A Space Odyssey* there is a burst of light: fireworks and lots of them... and what a way to start a meeting! 'Welcome to the 21st Century' boomed Chris Foster, Professor of Pathology at Liverpool University and local organiser of the 183rd Meeting of the Society. Of course it was not really the first meeting of the 21st Century, which had been held in Maastricht 6 months earlier (or for those who cannot count, a year before that at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in London). But it felt like the first meeting of a new era because this was the first meeting to be held jointly with the British Division of the International Academy of Pathology (BDIAP). Furthermore, it was the first summer meeting with a new President: a new Office only created as the new millennium began (see Chapter 6 and the vignette by Eric Walker on p. 79). The first years of the new millennium, the last years of the first century of the Society, have seen big changes and significant challenges. Here we try to put some perspective into these events that will shape the early years of the second century of the Society.

THE PRESIDENCY

There was no raz-a-mataz Presidential campaign and the UN election watch was not needed to oversee the proceedings; there was only one person who could take on this role: Nick Wright. As the first President, he undertook a programme of steps to try to move forward the agenda for academic pathology. Perhaps most important here was the organisation of a residential meeting of diverse groups with an interest in academic pathology, ranging from Postgraduate Deans, cancer Czars, heads of Manpower Planning for the Royal College, researchers, teachers and other groups. The focus of this meeting was to raise the awareness of the fundamental issues facing the profession and to define a series of key action points. Many of these action points were ultimately achieved, although it is fair to say that several were never really addressed. The report can be found as Appendix 11 to this publication.

Wright proposed the abolition of the Association of Professors of Pathology (generally perceived as an ineffective group) and its replacement with an Academic Forum that was then made open to all with an interest in the future of academic pathology. As an annual event the Forum occurs at a lunchtime during one of the Scientific Meetings and acts as a platform for debate and discussion on matters of relevance to the profession. The President has given the Society a voice at a national level

for Clinical Excellence Awards, among other issues, and has worked hard behind the scenes to get the PPP Clinician Scientists Award in collaboration with the College. There was considerable concern about the outcome of the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) where academic pathology was concerned (see Chapter 9) and the President was able to interact directly with Sir Gareth Roberts to ensure that pathology and similar craft-based disciplines received fairer treatment at the 2008 RAE. This influence has been reflected further in the appointment of RAE Panel members for 2008 (Burt, Quirke and Wright are all members of Sub Panels and Wylie is a Panel Chair).

Perhaps the most important achievement of the President lay in an area that neither he nor others could have envisaged or really wanted: the issue of human organs and the alleged scandals relating to them. His introduction to this was sudden – being called late at night to appear on the BBC Radio 4 *Today Programme* on the morning following the publication of the Redfern Report on Alder Hey. The actuality of defending ‘arrogant, condescending and uncaring’ pathologists from John Humphrey and Sue MacGregor left a lasting impression, but he thought he gave as good as he received. There followed a long process of closed and open debate with the Retained Organ Commission, and on the publication of the Human Tissue Bill he led the Academy of Medical Sciences in their response, a document that was also endorsed by the Royal Society, the Council of Heads of Medical Schools and of course The Pathological Society. There followed briefings with a number of MPs, including Frank Dobson and Ian Gibson, and, after the Bill passed through the Commons, with a number of peers. The Human Tissue Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2004 and a number of arguments were accepted and significant concessions achieved. The Society, through the actions of its President and in concert with other groups, had exerted some significant influence. All existing collections continue to be available for research and the use of tissue for educational purposes and for training for research does not require consent. Lord Jenkin of Roding, quoted by Hansard on 25 October 2004, stated in the Lord’s:

‘I was particularly impressed by a note that I received from the Council of Heads of Medical Schools. It made some strong points, and I shall refer to them. The Council simply said that it was impossible, in practice, to separate training for research from training for diagnosis. The Council considers the matter from the point of view of the role of the pathologist. Pathology is the hidden science at the heart of modern medicine. It is vital to the diagnosis and clinical management of disease. Pathologists are central to the delivery of quality clinical care in the NHS, and their work underlies much of the work that must be done subsequently by surgeons and other specialists. The Council also says something that accords with my experience as a Secretary of State for Health and Chairman of a Health Authority: “It is part of every doctor’s role to advance medical knowledge through research and this is especially true in pathology. The techniques which pathologists use in the diagnosis of disease are also those which are used in research, and consequently it is simply not possible to make a distinction between training for research and training for diagnosis.” The work that is done to decide the appropriate treatment for a patient’s cancer and the work that is done to enable research to go forward into the appropriate treatment for a patient’s cancer is, the Council says, indivisible. That is why it argues, as I argue, that there is a wholly artificial distinction in the Bill.’

Whether or not this vigorous activity counted against the President, he was unfortunately not accorded a position on the Human Tissue Authority!

Within the Society, the President proposed the establishment of the Doniach Lecture, now established in our calendar, and also of the Goudie Medal and Lecture, after one of his boyhood heroes. He was also, from the beginning, a fierce advocate of the re-introduction of the winter meeting, and was delighted when this was resurrected (see below). The President has also worked hard to advocate the importance of animals in research, an activity that has led to more trauma from *The Today* programme and some very interesting letters offering him differing degrees of bodily harm. Developing out of this area has come a realisation that the Society needs to engage

actively with the public. The Society has promoted Public Lectures within our meetings and in other fora, and has sponsored a session in the September 2005 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science entitled 'Pathology, Pathologists and the Public'. Quoting from the November 2005 Society newsletter, the President wrote:

'We had collected a panel of lay persons and pathologists, including the President-Elect of our College, Professor Adrian Newland and the chair was Gordon Cropper, who also chairs the College's Lay Advisory Committee. The BA issued a press release, as did the College, and yours truly got the names of all Irish medical correspondents and invited them. We also rather bravely, I thought, invited the pressure group, Parents for Justice, and they promised to come along. And indeed they did, although they didn't say much. We had rather hoped for some animated discussion with members of the public over issues such as organ retention, the Human Tissue Act and the way forward to regaining public trust, which we all believe we have lost. However: animated discussion we did have, but mainly between panel members and scientists attending the British Association, medical correspondents and local pathologists in the audience. The public listened, but did not engage. Not that the discussion wasn't good and lively and went on without a perceptible pause for nigh on two hours in which everything from the role of pathologists in patient communication to the future of tissue based research was covered, but a dialogue with the public it was not. So there you are. It raises several questions: do the public – whoever they are, care? Are we tackling a problem that does not really exist? Are we doing the right things or are there other ways of getting through?'

Clearly the issues are complex but it remains the Society's view that we must continue to endeavour to engage with the public and get the message across that pathology is important in medicine and science and that the events of Alder Hey, etc. do not reflect the reality of pathology or pathologists. Moreover, it seems highly likely that the media response in all likelihood may not reflect broad public opinion!

WINTER MEETINGS, STUDY GROUPS AND 'MEET THE ACADEMIC'

Over the years, the winter meetings were for many the main meeting of the year; some felt the summer meeting more of a social gathering. This was certainly the experience of one of us (A.D.B.) in their formative years who fondly remembers the 'Sleeper from Glasgow' where even as an intercalated BSc student he was given an introduction to both Scientific Meetings and Malt Whiskey (see the vignette by Roddy MacSween, p. 231). However, there was a perception that the withering of academic pathology in these islands meant that there was neither the interest nor the body of research that warranted two scientific meetings a year. This decision was taken in 1999 and arguably marked the nadir of the Society. In retrospect it was a rather strange decision because examination of the attendance at meetings (see Fig. 9.1 in Chapter 9) shows that the winter meetings were, in general, actually the better attended.

The last winter meeting was held in Maastricht in January 2001 jointly with the Dutch Pathological Society. Juan Rosai again entertained the Society with a Guest Lecture on 'Tumours and tumour like conditions of the accessory immune system' and there was a symposium chaired by Professors Quirke and Kluin on 'Exciting advances in molecular pathology'. Most notable (or perhaps infamous), however, was the Committee dinner at the Baluga Restaurant. The genesis of the decision to order Dom Perignon is lost in the mists of time but may perhaps reflect the view that the end of the winter meetings should be toasted: suffice to say the Treasurer was shocked!

The winter meetings were replaced, at the suggestion of the then General Secretary Mike Wells, with 'Closed Study Groups'. The idea was that the Society would sponsor workshops where

a specific topic of interest would be debated by experts and a Consensus or Position Paper would be produced based upon the discussion and data presented. Such a document might then be published in the *Journal of Pathology*, forming the basis for providing an evidence base for clinical practice and research in that area. The first of these was held in January 2003 on the subject of 'Ploidy in Pathology' and organised by Mike Wells. Although this was undoubtedly of interest to those that attended, there was a feeling that the place of ploidy analysis was fairly limited and the data for its widespread adoption in pathology were scanty. As a consequence the output was not thought to merit a Supplement for the *Journal of Pathology*, although some of it was subsequently published in *Histopathology* (Baak and Janssen, 2004; Grabsch *et al.*, 2004; Hall, 2004; Fox, 2005). The second (and final) Closed Study Group was held in January 2004 on the subject of 'Molecular Pathology and Targeted Therapy in Cancer' and organised by Phil Quirke and Kenneth Hillan. Again this was successful in terms of the participants but no written output emanated and we did not achieve the goal of establishing a Position Paper in the area. These two meetings were an invaluable experiment but the fact that they were closed and their failure to achieve their goals led to a reassessment of what the Society should be doing with regard to winter meetings.

A general feeling had developed during the late 1990s and early part of this century that the Society was not doing enough for trainee pathologists. Phil Quirke and Massimo Pignatelli (who by 2002 was the new Meetings Secretary replacing Simon Herrington, who was now Editor of the *Journal of Pathology*) took this forward and with the help of James Underwood (who as President of the Royal College of Pathologists ensured that it was a joint activity with the College) developed the idea of a full day meeting focused on trainees and with the goal of promoting academic pathology. It was Phil Quirke's idea to call it 'Meet the Academics', which was described by Nick Wright as 'a phrase that seems more redolent of some soon to be extinct species'. Despite the name, such meetings proved popular and were run in January 2004 and 2005. The latter meeting occurred the day before the recreated Winter Scientific meeting (see below). In 2006 it was formally amalgamated with the winter meeting, although the newly created Trainees Subcommittee (also see below) may develop this concept further.

With new Officers (in 2002, Pignatelli; in 2003, Peter Hall replaced Mike Wells as Secretary as he moved to be Editor of *Histopathology*, and Alastair Burt replaced David Levison) and with Nick Wright at the helm there was a passionate view in favour of the reinstatement of the winter meetings. There was without doubt some nervousness that we would not be able to sustain this but it was pleasing to see that at the meeting at Bart's under the local Chairmanship of Jo Martin we had 74 proffered abstracts and attracted 143 registrants. This vindicated the resurrection of the Winter Pathological Society, which we hope will now continue to flourish. The Barts meeting also saw the first award of the Goudie Medal to David Wynford Thomas, who gave a lecture 'Modelling multi-step tumorigenesis in vitro: the importance of cellular context'. At this meeting one of the memorable events (apart from the science of course) was the Society Dinner in St Bartholomew's Great Hall. The regular sweepstake on the length of speech by the Meetings Secretary (which has become a regular tradition) was won by the President Nick Wright (by all accounts the first time he had ever won anything!). Fortunately he was persuaded by his wife to contribute the entire amount (£151.92) to the Tsunami Appeal.¹ As this book goes to press the Society, its Officers and Committee (see Fig. 7.1) are gathering in Cambridge with 139 abstracts and more than 200 registrants to begin the Centenary Celebrations. This brings to the authors fond memories of previous Oxbridge meetings with accommodation in cold, drafty rooms, with long treks to showers with a trickle of lukewarm water, fatty bacon breakfasts and very narrow beds. Not for the professors of today, some of whom need more comfort!

¹ On Boxing Day 2004 a tsunami devastated the coastline of much of the Indian Ocean, killing more than 250 000 people.

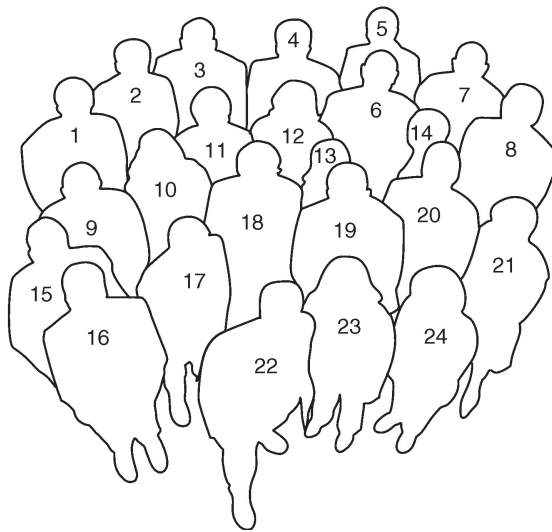


Figure 7.1 The Centenary Committee, Cambridge, 3 January 2006.

- 1 Prof. N.A. (Neil) Shepherd, Gloucester, BDIAP Representative – *co-opted*
- 2 Prof. P.W. (Peter) Hamilton, Belfast
- 3 Dr S.S. (Simon) Cross, Sheffield
- 4 Prof. M. (Marco) Novelli, London
- 5 Prof. A.M. (Adrienne) Flanagan, London
- 6 Dr M.J. (Mark) Arends, Cambridge
- 7 Prof. S. (Stewart) Fleming, Dundee
- 8 Prof. D.A. (David) Levison, Dundee, ***President-Elect (President from July 2006)***
- 9 Prof. P. (Paul) van der Valk, Amsterdam, NVVP (Dutch Pathological Society) Representative – *co-opted*
- 10 Dr K.A. Oien (Karin), Glasgow
- 11 Prof. E. (Elaine) Kay, Dublin, Irish Republic Representative – *co-opted*
- 12 Ms R.A. (Roselyn) Pitts, Pathological Society Administrator
- 13 Miss J. (Julie) Johnstone, Pathological Society Deputy Administrator
- 14 Dr J.W.M. (Jade) Chow, London
- 15 Prof. J. (James) Lowe, Nottingham, ***Webmaster – Advisor***
- 16 Prof. A.D. (Alastair) Burt, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, ***Treasurer***
- 17 Prof. A.H. (Andrew) Wyllie, Cambridge – Winter Scientific Meeting, Host
- 18 Prof. Sir N.A. (Nicholas) Wright, ***President***
- 19 Prof. M. (Massimo) Pignatelli, ***Meetings Secretary***
- 20 Prof. C.S. (Simon) Herrington, ***Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Pathology – Advisor***
- 21 Dr S. (Suha) Deen, Nottingham
- 22 Prof. P.A. (Peter) Hall, Belfast, ***General Secretary***
- 23 Dr H. (Heike) Grabsch, Leeds
- 24 Prof. P. (Paola) Domizio, London, Education Representative – *co-opted*

Other Committee Members (not present in photograph)

Dr B. (Brian) Angus, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
 Dr J.J. (James) Going, Glasgow

Figure 7.1 (Continued)

SUMMER MEETINGS IN THE NEW CENTURY

The last meeting of the millennium was held in Nottingham and is noteworthy because it was here that the idea of a Society logo was born; the Minutes credit Phil Quirke with the idea. The Committee charged David Levison with taking the idea forward and the Duncan & Jordanstone College of Art (part of Dundee University) held an undergraduate competition. The winning entry was subsequently adopted by the Society and is on the front of this volume. The Liverpool meeting of July 2001 has already been mentioned. It was the first of a continuing and highly successful series of joint meetings with the BDIAP. Satellite meetings with other groups also were held, including the British Association of Gynaecological Pathology and the Association of Clinical Electron Microscopy, as well as diverse EQA groups. Joint meetings have proved very popular and several luminaries have proposed the idea of a Pathology Week in which the various societies and groups within these islands may work together to promote the subject.

The Liverpool meeting did have some notable events associated with it. For example, the dissolution of the 'Association of Professors of Pathology' and the decision to replace it with a regular Academic Forum open to all. Indeed, this happened on the same day that *The Times* published an Editorial on pathology and pathologists (see Fig. 7.2) in which they said of pathologists 'It is a life

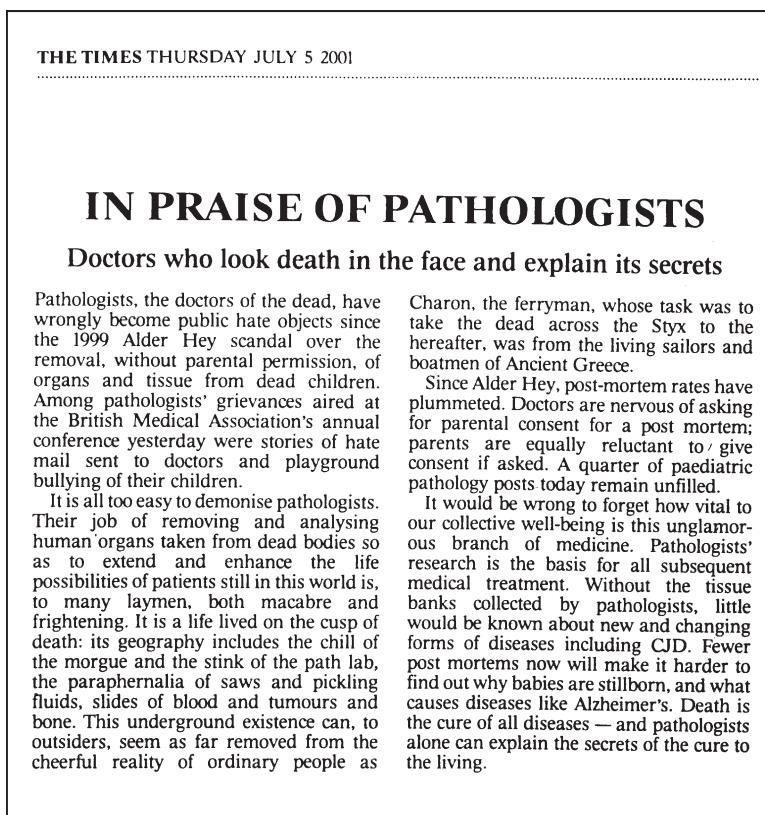


Figure 7.2 The Times Editorial, 'In praise of pathologists', Thursday 5 July 2001. Reproduced with permission from The Times.

lived on the cusp of death: its geography includes the chill of the morgue and the stink of the path lab, the paraphernalia of saws and pickling fluids, slides of blood and tumours and bone'. A rebuttal of the views portrayed in this Editorial was indeed the first action of the Academic Forum, but sadly *The Times* chose not to publish a more reasoned description of pathologists!

Unfortunately some lax editorial control of the Liverpool meeting meant that there were three lectures on similar topics: Nick Wright gave a lecture entitled 'Adventures with the Y chromosome'; the Oakley Lecture by Marco Novelli was on 'Man and mouse as models in gastrointestinal pathology'; and Walter Bodmer spoke on 'The somatic evolution of colorectal cancer'. All were excellent, although there was a perception that all three in fact used varying combinations of the same slides! However, all was forgiven when we were entertained by the 'Bootleg Beetles' in a Liverpool theme evening.

The following year we collected in Dublin as the guests of Trinity College. As with previous meetings in Dublin, the quality of the meeting was surpassed only by the quality and extent of the hospitality! Notable consequences of this included Simon Herrington's fractured 5th metatarsal of his left foot, sustained after tripping down a step in a bar ('I forget which one' he said when asked). In addition there was an exceptional reception at the Guinness Storehouse, after which one of us (A.D.B.) lost his passport in a dingy Dublin pub; fortunately at the time A.D.B. was not Treasurer and did not have the Society credit card in his jacket!

The 2003 meeting in Bristol was the second joint meeting with the BDIAP and was a huge success in terms of registrants, with something for all tastes in the programme. Clearly a model to be followed! It also showed that these meetings could be financially viable. The role of the food in Society meetings should not be underestimated... especially with the succession of gastronomes who have populated the office of Meetings Secretary. The Italian background of the current holder of this office means that food is of crucial importance, so much so that the Officers and Committee members of both organisations were treated to a visit to the Edward Jenner museum in Berkley (Gloucestershire) and then a fine meal followed by more delicacies at the home of Bryan Warren. The culinary skills of Massimo and Bryan made for a considerable addition to the overall mass of those present! Sadly there was no Oakley Lecturer but the slot was usefully filled by Phil Quirke in his position as the Royal College of Pathologists' Manpower Lead when he spoke to the title 'Climbing out of the abyss'. The changing fortunes of pathology manpower are discussed elsewhere (see Chapter 13). Juan Rosai gave another lecture to the Society, this time on the subject of GISTs; and the First Doniach Lecture was given in the presence of Deborah Doniach (widow of the late Isreal Doniach) and her son, where Peter Isaacson explored the borderland between chronic inflammation and lymphoma and reviewed two decades of his seminal contributions to pathological science – a fitting first Doniach Lecture. Dame Julia Polak gave the second Doniach Lecture (which was commendably short!) on 'Stem cells and regenerative medicine' at a meeting held in Amsterdam in July 2004. Sadly, despite an excellent programme and a high number of registrants, the lecture theatres were relatively sparsely populated: perhaps people were drawn to the other diverse attractions of the city?

The third joint meeting with the BDIAP was in the North East. This again was able to attract the same impressive number of registrants that had been seen at Bristol (almost 500). One of us (A.D.B.) was the local organiser and had hoped to educate the entire country about the scenic beauty and cultural richness of the area. The Gods were against us, however, at least for some of the meeting, because Newcastle saw some of its wettest July days on record. The elation of London's successful bid for the 2012 Olympics turned to sadness on the Thursday of the meeting as the atrocities of 7 July in London unfolded. Another problem was that the Medical School in Newcastle had been so successful in research over recent years that it had transformed all of the space it used to have for poster demonstrations into laboratories. As a consequence we had a split site for the meeting, with lectures and posters some distance apart; this probably would have been acceptable had it not been for the heavens opening! The meeting was very successful, however,

and one notable session (run by Hilary Russell and Peter Furness on research ethics) was packed with participants, with the audience literally sitting in the aisles!

The Third Doniach Lecture was given by Dillwyn Williams and the BDIAP awarded the Cunningham Medal and Lecture to Chris Elston, who spoke on 'The modern management of the patient with breast cancer: a celebration of the role of the pathologist'. It was wholly fitting that this inspirational lecture was given at a joint meeting because the subject matter spanned the range of interests of experimentalists and clinical pathologists, and advanced the thesis that pathology really is at the centre of translational research. At the Newcastle meeting, Karin Oien became the first Oakley Lecturer to deliver her lecture twice – or at least some of it twice – because it was interrupted by a fire alarm (and there was a real fire in a lift shaft!). Indeed the fire alarms had caused quite a lot of trouble because their testing earlier that day had caused near-apoplexy in the organisers of a stem cell symposium. In spite of all these irritations the meeting was well received and eventually the sun shone for those who stayed for the final dinner in Harry Potter land at Alnwick Castle.

FINANCES AND NEGOTIATIONS ABOUT ACCOMMODATION

As noted in Chapter 6, one of the key messages to one of us (A.D.B.) on taking up the Treasurer-ship was to make an early approach to the College to secure a fruitful renegotiation of the lease at 2 Carlton House Terrace. It became clear, however, that things were changing in the College and there was significant pressure over space. The proposal we got was that yes we could extend the lease, but in return for downsizing the accommodation. In essence there was a request that we give up the existing 3rd floor Committee room in exchange for an extended lease. Having considered this, we believed that we could indeed give up this space without compromising our activities, but we used the opportunity to find further stability by seeking an extension of the lease until 2024. The process of renegotiation, however, did cause the Officers to consider whether the Society should move elsewhere; a very serious options appraisal was undertaken that included the consideration of moving the Offices out of the capital. There were some investment opportunities with a temporarily depressed property market in London that excited the Treasurer but there was an overwhelming feeling within the Committee that the advantages of staying at 2 Carlton House Terrace in close proximity to the College outweighed the opportunities (and risks) of delving into the property market. The detailed negotiations about the lease have taken some considerable time to sort out (and yet to be finally signed off) but in essence the Society has contributed a large one-off payment to the College towards its Appeal for renovation of the building and in return the Society will have the security of a lease on the Offices until 2024; as part of the deal, one of the rooms in the renovated College space will be named after the Society.

COMMUNICATIONS: THE NEWSLETTER, THE WEB AND THE JOURNAL

The introduction of the Newsletter was one of the suggestions of one of us (P.A.H.) in the early days as the new General Secretary. The first such Newsletter was produced by him in Microsoft Word and then printed. Subsequent editions were commercially typeset with editing and assistance from Julie Johnstone, the Deputy Administrator. Getting copy was always a problem. Persuasion, cajoling and sometimes strong-arm tactics were required but we managed to get some information and newsworthy material from Officers and other Society Members. We tried various devices to encourage readers and contributors: a spot-the-venue competition (won by the only entrant, J.C.E. Underwood, and hence recipient of a glorious Society tie) in Issue 1; caption

competitions with no respondents (Issue 2) and one respondent (Issue 3); and eventually a recipe (Issue 4). Nevertheless, this twice yearly exercise in communication has, we think, been a success and we shall continue with it.

The early history of the Society website was discussed elsewhere (see Chapter 6). The idea of using the web to interact more effectively with the Society members, e.g. to distribute notices, to inform members of developments, to gain feedback and to manage our subscriptions, was very desirable. In 2002 we entered into a partnership with the publishers of our Journal to develop this concept. We were excited by the prospect of a professionally managed website that would link our activities and that of the Journal and be a really excellent portal that many might use as their home page. Sadly, after nearly 3 years and a lot of effort on the part of our Administrative staff, little was achieved. We were forced into terminating the contract and seeking full reimbursement, which we did indeed get! This done, we have now moved to other providers for these crucial services and there will be a new beginning to this for the Centenary year.

The history of the *Journal of Pathology* is considered elsewhere (see Chapters 2 and 8 in particular) but a few words are required because the Journal has been a topic of some debate in the early years of the century. There can be no doubt that it is highly successful and the last two decades have seen it develop into one of the most respected journals of its type. Furthermore, it is hugely successful as a financial enterprise and underpins our ability to support diverse schemes and projects. A central tenet of the relationship of the Society and the Editor-in-Chief, is editorial independence. Although the Society wholly owns the title and the Copyright, the Officers and Committee defer all editorial responsibility to the Editor-in-Chief, who sits as an advisor on the Society Committee and attends the key subcommittee (Finance and General Purposes) to ensure good communication. A consequence of this editorial independence is that the direction of the Journal is set by the Editor. This leads to a tension that some Members are concerned about, which is that the subject matter of the Journal is often distinct from the day-to-day needs of (for example) diagnostic pathologists. The Society recognises this and has debated it extensively *but* as our scientific flagship and key source of income we continue to feel that the need to have a strong internationally competitive scientific journal outweighs any other view.

MATTERS OF OMISSION AND THE CHARITIES COMMISSION

Another of the new Treasurer's and General Secretary's tasks has been dealing with the Charities Commission. As a registered Charity we are bound (and quite rightly so) by stringent rules. However, sometimes we did wonder ..! In 2004 it became apparent that the Commission had not been kept appropriately apprised of the Society's activities and in particular issues relating to the AGM and rule changes. Indeed it would appear that some of the last communications dated back to the 1950s when the mission of the Society included, among other things, 'the promotion of intercourse between pathologists!' In an effort to rectify this error of omission we sought the Minutes for the period in question for the Annual General Meetings and the Committee meetings. That crucial Minutes were missing in fact came to light when Eric Sidebottom tried to research key events in the Society's history for this very book! The matter of a 'lost trunk' is recorded in Chapter 5 by Eric Walker. We have searched high and low, spoken to all living past Officers and searched the archives of Dundee (where Lendrum worked and many of the relevant Minutes are cited in Chapter 3), but to no avail! Egg on face! But the Charities Commission seemed satisfied ... until it became apparent that some years ago the fourth item of the Constitution was changed by previous Officers and the Committee: sadly the power to do this lies with the Privy Council, not with the Society, who can change the Rules but not the Constitution! More egg on face!! However, this error of commission is not in fact fatal and can be easily rectified.

There has been a sea change in the scrutiny under which Charities are placed. There are now very clear guidelines around the responsibilities of Trustees (which in the case of the Society means all Committee members). It behoves each of them to ensure that our financial standing, investment strategies (ethically correct) and expenditure are consistent with our overall Mission. To this end we now receive regular briefings from our investment advisors, Cazenoves, and wherever possible have them attend at least one Committee meeting per year. The coffers of the Society remain healthy, with our overall assets currently approaching £6 million. We shall return to this shortly!

THE AWAYDAY AND THE WAY FORWARD

The idea of an Away Weekend arose at the Committee dinner in January 2004. It began, as so many ideas do, as a glimmer of an idea over the port and after a brief gestation (perhaps 5 min!) was enunciated by the President in his speech as a challenge to the Officers and Committee to come up with a way forward (we will return to that phrase) for the Society. The General Secretary was charged with organising the event, which was held at the Templepatrick Hilton near Belfast on 4–5 November 2004. The choice of venue was dictated by cost, the ease of EasyJet flights and, crucially, the General Secretary's comfort.

A range of factors had prompted it. Although the Society has a long history of promoting pathology and in particular academic pathology, it was perceived as facing important challenges, including a shrinking and ageing Membership (see Fig. 7.3). The changes in the nature of academic life and the atrophy of academic medicine in general (and pathology in particular) have dramatically altered the environment in which it functioned (see Chapter 9). In many ways the Society had changed relatively little in the past quarter-century and the seriousness of the shifting landscape was felt possibly to warrant significant alterations in the way we function and support the interests of our Members. Although the Awayday of 1998 had led to some important changes and of course the Presidency, there was concern about what the Society was for. It was with that background that the two-day meeting was charged with answering the issue of where the Society needs to be in 5 and 10 years time.

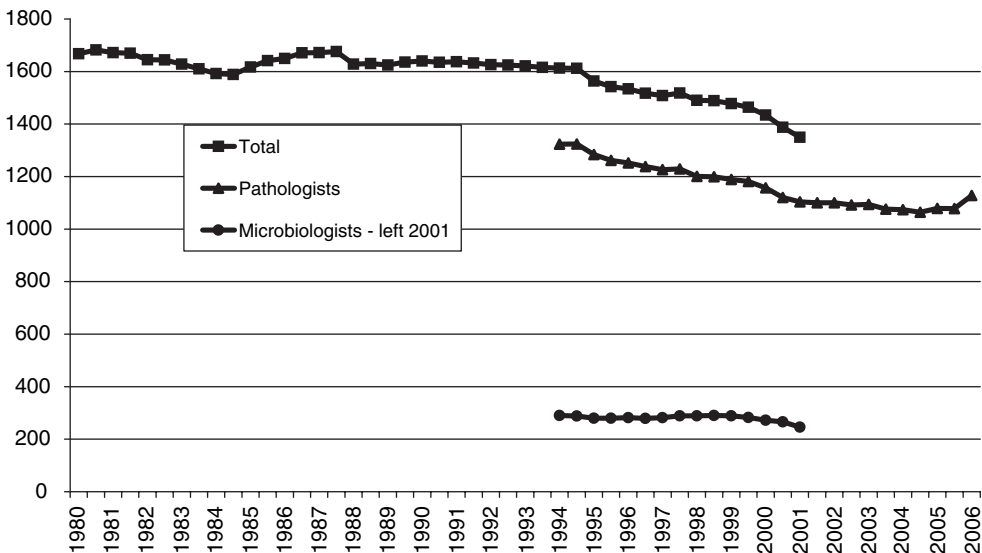


Figure 7.3 Change in membership over the last 25 years.

We hoped to address a series of questions that included: (i) How effectively does the Society achieve the goals defined in its Mission Statement and are these goals appropriate? (ii) How should the Society be involved in undergraduate teaching and education? (iii) How should the Society be involved in postgraduate teaching and education? (iv) How should the Society support and promote research? How should the Society be involved in research ethics? (v) How should the Society engage with the general public? (vi) How can the Society reverse the continued fall in Membership and alter the seriously skewed age profile. (vii) How should the Society manage its financial position and resources to accomplish the above? Other issues included a consideration of the linkages with other bodies, both National and International. In considering these issues we had to remain cognisant of our responsibilities as Trustees of a Charity. In addition we need to be very focused on the needs and desires of the Membership and pose the question: are we doing enough to encourage and support them? It was hoped that the output of this meeting would be a clear plan of how we can proceed over the coming years.

An obvious starting point was the Membership. So what did they think? We had tried to find out! Nick Rooney had undertaken a postal survey in the spring of 2004. However, the response rate of <7% and the fact that the majority of respondents were senior members means that the results lack any validity, although it was an improvement on the four responses solicited in 1998. This might reflect a number of issues but paramount among them was the fact that the Society might not be 'important' to Members. Another key element of any plan for the future was a SWOT analysis. At the Away Weekend this idea was developed by Stewart Fleming, who led a brainstorming session. We could identify some significant strengths, including a sound financial position, the Journal was a lucrative flagship and was a leading and highly respected Journal in the field of experimental pathology and disease. We have an academic focus with sound administration, a strong tradition, a history of good meetings and have good links with other bodies. Unfortunately significant weaknesses existed with a falling and ageing membership. It was argued that our Mission Statement lacks focus and that we lacked broad appeal and may be perceived as a parochial and tired 'meeting organisation' that lacked representation for trainees. In addition it could be thought that our financial programmes may not reach the whole Membership and that the Journal does not reflect the interests of the Membership. On the other hand, opportunities existed with increasing numbers of trainees in pathology, good relations with other bodies and a broad recognition of the crisis in academic medicine, with some action being taken to address it. The Presidency had been a success with burgeoning influence and of course translational research was the order of the day. Of course, equally, there were threats that included the crisis in academic medicine, poor public perception, perceived tension with clinical pathology, changes in the undergraduate curriculum that mean that pathology has no profile and no role models, and financial threats to the income from the Journal as a consequence of the Open Access movement.

From this rather stark base, those attending (see Table 7.1) then addressed a series of questions. Paola Domizio (who had been co-opted onto the Committee at the suggestion of the new General Secretary to champion educational issues) and Elaine Kay considered the issue of how the Society should be involved in undergraduate and postgraduate education. This was developed by Patrick Gallagher, who had been asked to join the group as a director of an SHO Training School, and Heike Grabsch (at the time a trainee) made an important contribution by presenting the views of trainees that she had derived from a questionnaire (which was much more successful than the Society's one!). How we should be involved in research was addressed by Marco Novelli and Karin Oien. Our involvement in ethics and with the general public was also considered, and there was general acceptance of the view that we needed to be more pro-active in these areas.

A further issue was our Mission Statement. The original Mission Statement developed by Phil Quirke stated 'Our mission is to enhance the capacity of our members to advance the science of disease by discovering, disseminating and applying new knowledge for the benefit of patients'.

Table 7.1 Attendees at The Pathological Society Away Weekend, 4–5 November 2004

Officers:	N.A. Wright (President) P.A. Hall (General Secretary) A.D. Burt (Treasurer) M. Pignatelli (Meetings Secretary)
Committee:	M.J. Arends B. Angus P. Domizio (Education Rep.) S. Fleming J.J. Going E. Kay (Irish Rep.) M. Novelli K.A. Oien N.A. Shepherd (BDIAP Rep.) P. van der Valk (Dutch Pathological Society Rep.)
Advisors:	C.S. Herrington, <i>Journal of Pathology</i> ; Editor-in-Chief J. Lowe, Webmaster
Guests:	P.J. Gallagher, Southampton, SHO School Rep. H. Grabsch, Leeds, Trainee Rep. V. Howarth, Stockport, DGH Consultant
Admin:	R.A. Pitts (Administrator) J. Johnstone (Deputy Administrator)
Apologies:	N. Rooney and P. Quirke

Although valid, this was felt to be ambiguous and lacking in focus or clarity, and it could indeed be the Mission Statement for almost any Medical Charity. This lack of clarity is magnified when the coda to the Mission Statement were considered (they ran to nearly two pages!). Ideally a Mission Statement defines the goals and vision of the organisation and defines in a few words what it is about (the Mission Statement of the Coca Cola Organisation might simply be ‘Beat Pepsi’). It allows those associated with the organisation to instantly understand these goals and share and identify in the ownership of the organisation. The statement should be the bedrock of the Society, from which all else flows. The key words that the group felt defined our values include the words Research, Academic, Teaching and Communication, and our key goal is ‘understanding disease’. As a consequence we decided to make this our ‘strapline’ and a key element of our Mission Statement, which became ‘The mission of The Pathological Society is to increase the understanding of disease’.

Another important element of this discussion related to our relationship with the other three organisations (Royal College of Pathologists, BDIAP, Association of Clinical Pathologists). What differentiated us from them? Why are we different? Why would someone want to be a member of our Society? We felt that people will become and remain members if they see that the Society adds value to their professional lives. To this end we need to have a clear identity and we will not succeed if we cannot be differentiated from the other societies. Perhaps, therefore, we need to accept that our role is academic, with the understanding of disease being the key goal and research and educational activities the means to this goal. We thus synergise with the other societies and provide a focus for a specific subset of pathologists. Hopefully our success in this endeavour will help to foster the view that this is an important aspect of pathology (in the broadest sense).

From the presentations and discussions over the two days a clear consensus emerged that there was a need for change. A four-point action plan was agreed: (i) the development of a new image

with a clear profile; (ii) a commitment to provide tangible benefits to the members; (iii) building partnerships with other organisations to promote pathology; and (iv) enhancing the transparency of the Society with increased member involvement. The latter point led to the development of new Governance arrangements. Historically the Officers held most of the Society's power and decision-making functions. The Officer's Committee was rebranded as the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and new subcommittees that report to the Committee were proposed: an *Education subcommittee* was formed with the intention of it being the focal point for educational activities, undergraduate, postgraduate and lay; a *Trainees subcommittee* was to be formed to promote the interests of trainees; a *Research subcommittee* was to be created with the goals of bringing forward research programmes that support the Society's goals, reviewing the PhD and Pilot grant schemes and allocating the money designated for these schemes by Officers and Committee; and a *Programme subcommittee* was to be created to develop meetings and workshop programmes that support the Society's goals. All of these had been formed by the end of 2005 in time for the Centenary year.

The huge amount of work and discussion that went into this Away Weekend led to the drafting of a report that was presented to Committee in January 2005. This was developed into a full set of proposals entitled 'The Way Forward', which were circulated to Members in the spring of that year and formally adopted by the AGM in July 2005 (see Appendix 12). This was perhaps the biggest change in the Society in its 100-year history, and hopefully paves the way for the future.

THE FUTURE: *PUTTING OURSELVES ABOUT*

The past few years have seen huge developments in the Society. We may have reached a nadir with the ending of winter meetings... but the Presidency, the Beaconsfield Meeting, the Away Weekend, the Way Forward, the new Governance arrangements with the spreading of involvement and responsibility, the developments in Schemes and Awards, the Newsletter and the rebirth of the winter meeting and the development of joint meetings with the BDIAP have all helped in a process of developing the influence and impact of the Society. Our Centenary gives us the opportunity to do even more and the careful financial stewardship over the last 25 years puts us in a position to have an impact: *to make a splash!* As Officers of the Society, we honestly think that we have the potential to move the Society forward and to stimulate academic pathology: but we really need to be even more pro-active and make much more noise... *we need to put ourselves about!*

The Society is in a strong position. We have a sound administrative base and sound finances. Our Membership is once again growing (see Fig. 7.3) and 'The Way Forward' defines what we hope is a set of Governance arrangements and subcommittees that are more responsive to the challenges we face. We are optimistic that our renewed focus on trainees coupled with efforts to use our financial strength will have a positive effect on academic pathology: certainly when coupled with the new Academic Clinical Fellowships/Clinical lectureships post-Walport.² Although our contributions are financially modest compared with some organisations, they are ring-fenced for pathology. We aspire to link other organisations to promote pathology. The joint meetings with the BDIAP exemplify this but we hope that this develops further, perhaps with the development of 'a UK Pathology Week'. Finally we aspire to link with similar organisations in other countries: links to Japan already exist and we are developing associations with China. To take things forward, we believe we need to use our strengths and in particular our financial position for the benefit of the members and for the discipline. We are optimistic that this will have a positive effect. Perhaps

² In March 2005 a report was produced by the academic subcommittee of Modernising Medical Careers (MMC) and the UK Clinical Research Collaboration (UKCRC), providing recommendations for the future training of medically and dentally qualified academic staff. The subcommittee is chaired by Dr Mark Walport, Director of the Wellcome Trust, and has become known anecdotally as the 'Walport' report.

the Manchester Centenary meeting, where this publication will be first presented, marks a turning point. One wonders how they will trumpet the first meeting of the next century of the Society?

REFERENCES

- Baak, J.P. and Janssen, E. (2004) DNA ploidy analysis in histopathology. Morphometry and DNA cytometry reproducibility conditions and clinical applications. *Histopathology* **44**: 603–614.
- Fox, H. (2005) Ploidy in gynaecological cancers. *Histopathology* **46**: 121–129.
- Grabsch, H., Kerr, D. and Quirke, P. (2004) Is there a case for routine clinical application of ploidy measurements in gastrointestinal tumours? *Histopathology* **45**: 312–334.
- Hall, P.A. (2004) DNA ploidy analysis in histopathology. DNA ploidy studies in pathology – a critical appraisal. *Histopathology* **44**: 614–620.

Saddam Hussein and my first presentation

I'd been a lecturer in histopathology for two years and was really looking forward to giving my first oral presentation at Pathsoc in January 1991. I'd done a large study of small bowel lymphomas and had been preparing for months for the presentation. The fact that Pathsoc would be held in Cambridge was even better. I'd loved the city from the time I'd applied – unsuccessfully – to be a medical student there, though I knew that early January would be cold. Most of my slides were ready, but there were some finishing touches that I wanted to make. The few days between Christmas and New Year were the time I'd put aside to make the changes. After all, there would be very little routine work to be done and I'd have plenty of time to do what I needed.

On the 27th December, the first day back to work after the Christmas break, my then boyfriend was called up to serve in the first Gulf War. He was a psychiatrist, but also a major in the Territorial Army, and the government felt that they needed his services in the Gulf. The shock and despair hit me like a ton of bricks. Totally unable to concentrate on work, we decided that we should get married before he left for the Gulf on January 2nd. Instead of working on my presentation, the next few days were spent in getting a special licence and a reception organised. All the authorities were exceptionally helpful – Islington Council even opened up the Registry Office especially for us. On New Year's Eve 1990, we went to work in the morning and were married in the afternoon. And guess what – I hadn't spent a single moment on my presentation!

That evening we went to a friend's party as planned. The chicken drumsticks were a little undercooked, so it was no great surprise when I was forced out of bed the following morning by the symptoms of gastroenteritis. I spent the first day of married life alternating between the bed and the toilet. Still no chance to work on my presentation!

The following day, after tearfully waving my new husband goodbye as he went to war, I wearily travelled to Cambridge. I thought I might be able to look at the presentation on the train, but I was too tired and fell asleep. That night, with my presentation scheduled for the following morning, I retired early to my room, hoping to read through what I'd prepared. I hadn't had any chance to make the changes I'd wanted, but at least I still had something to say. I was staying in one of the older Colleges, and the facilities were primitive to say the least. A huge room with high ceilings and just one single-bar electric fire. It was cold outside. As night fell, the temperature plummeted, so much so that I put on every item of clothing I had with me, including coat, shoes and scarf, grabbed every blanket I could find and curled up in front of the fire. I spent the entire night that way, depressed, still unwell from the food poisoning, shivering uncontrollably and totally unable to sleep.

The morning couldn't come quickly enough. I felt exhausted, unprepared, nervous and still freezing cold. I was convinced I'd do the presentation badly – how could I do otherwise with all that had happened to me in the previous week – but by some miracle, the adrenaline kicked in and the talk went as planned. Afterwards, I was even complimented on how well organised my presentation was!

I've now done hundreds of talks and lectures, some of which have gone well and others less so, but to this day, nothing matches the emotional and physical trauma of my first ever Pathsoc presentation. A truly memorable experience!

Paola Domizio

Hubris

The late 1980s saw a huge growth in the size of the Society Meetings driven in part by burgeoning immunohistochemical methods. Much of this was directed at lymphoma pathology and the 1987 Winter Meeting at Bart's heard of the diagnostic utility of CD15 antibodies such as LeuM1 in the diagnosis of Hodgkin's disease. A senior lymphomaniac from University College argued strongly that LeuM1 was *the* diagnostic arbiter of Hodgkin's Disease. This seemed a little unlikely and Jane d'Ardenne, Alfred Stansfeld and I had presented a poster with evidence for lack of specificity and sensitivity.

'How then' Peter Isaacson pointedly asked in the poster discussion session 'would *you* diagnose Hodgkin's disease?'

Sadly mouth engaged before brain and I replied 'Why a good H&E and 20 years experience!'

I was put firmly in my place when Peter Isaacson retorted even more pointedly 'you do know that both can be quite hard to get!'

Peter Hall

How to write an Editorial that moves and shakes

(1) Become a reviewer and read great articles at least one year before everyone else (a real trip into the future), (2) Convince the editor (this is the easy bit) that the article that you have reviewed is a classic that should be fast-tracked but at the same time will be totally misunderstood by the few who bother to read it, (3) Insist that someone (guess who?) should be cajoled into writing an Editorial that will direct fishers and not swine toward the pearls, (4) Make sure that the title of the Editorial is a great deal funnier than the title of the article, (5) Include an Abstract with the Editorial (Abstracts are highly visible and imply – to the suggestible – the presence of a major research-based article), (6) Voila: 'Serrated route to colorectal cancer: backstreet or super highway? Journal of Pathology 2001;193:283'.

Jeremy Jass