

NEWSLETTER

Australasian Society for Immunology Incorporated

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On the importance of size!

Phil Hodgkin

The performance of lymphocytes in the immune system provides a window to the dynamics of natural selection in miniature. The cells are generated randomly, and when appropriate, the most suitable for a task are found, trained, and unleashed on the job. Analogous selection processes are ubiquitous in our society. Individuals are born with a fairly random collection of skills. Due to our society needs and priorities these skills are recognised, trained and developed for our collective good and enrichment.

The similarity between selection processes at the cellular and the societal level place the immunologist, remarkably enough, in a position of some responsibility to educate the public in how selection works, and how it might best be enhanced for public benefit. Numerous misconceptions about selection are commonly held. But the one I want to concentrate on here, is highly relevant to both Australia and New Zealand. The issue is the relative importance of the size of the population on competitiveness, a problem I have written about previously in the context of antibody production (Immunol. Cell Biol 75:604). When applied to people it is commonly believed that population size and success in the world should be related in some linear way, as exemplified by the popular calculation of medals earned in the Olympic games per head of population. As a result of this view it follows, and is commonly believed that:

"Australia (and or New Zealand) are small countries, and can't compete with the US or Europe in substantively important areas."

This view of Australia/New Zealand as small, and therefore, uncompetitive, is deeply

ingrained. While we celebrate our successes we like to see ourselves as the underdogs on the world stage occasionally achieving through outstanding innate ability. It is also an excuse for governments and companies to withhold resources to develop all areas of endeavour. It has also been used to justify the strategy that *"we should try to put money into areas of national interest"* or *"we should try to pick winners early to best use our money"*.

This view can be starkly contrasted with the remarkable recent emergence of Australia as a force in many sporting arenas internationally. Australia has spent large amounts on sport infrastructure, especially leading up to the Olympic games in Sydney. Estimates of 20 million dollars per gold medal were mentioned. Notably, the effort has been disseminated to many different sporting codes. Even sports not directly funded have benefited from the infrastructure and sporting methods and technologies that were introduced and enhanced.

As a result the population of Australia has struggled to come to grips with their own success. *"We are such a small country, it is amazing how well we do at sport"*. *"We have only 20 million people and yet we won as many gold medals as countries five times our size"*.

So ingrained is the notion that we are small and therefore cannot compete with other countries on all fronts, that the sporting success is confusing. One explanation is that this success came about from some innate magical quality – as if it were some sort of property of our soil, or sun, or our digger heritage.

The reality is that the sporting success dramatically illustrates how infrastructure and generous support in becoming competitive is more important than the size of the population. And that funding and supporting a broad base of areas can synergise to yield fruit in unexpected ways. Some simple maths can help substantiate these conclusions.

How many gold medals should Australia and New Zealand win?

We can view the generation of gold medal winners in immunological terms. First our population represents our repertoire – or innate capacity to develop excellence in any field. How big a repertoire is needed to compete, or generate individuals capable of

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Website

The ASI web site (www.wehi.edu.au/collegiate/ASI/) has been fully remodelled and updated. New services include:

- Downloadable forms for ASI awards,
- Positions vacant pages,
- Jobs wanted pages,
- Upcoming conferences listings,

as well as a plethora of links to sites of immunological interest at home and abroad. If you'd like your lab home pages linked to the site, would like to advertise a job or conference, or have a favourite immunology-related site that doesn't currently appear on the ASI site, please e-mail Judy Greer at j.greer@medicine.uq.edu.au

Email bulletin board

To subscribe to the ASI bulletin board, send an email to majordomo@explode.unsw.edu.au with the message: subscribe anz-imm.

EDITORIAL

Reaching 80 is a significant milestone, and anyone at the recent Autoimmunity meeting to mark Ian Mackay's birthday could not help but have been impressed with his sharp and insightful contributions to the meeting. Also impressive was the list of autoimmune diseases that Ian discovered or helped characterise. Ian is a life member of ASI and a great contributor to our society over the years. Congratulations Ian and thank you from the ASI.

This issue sees meeting reports of our annual conference including the results of our limerick competition atop Black Mountain tower. It seems fair to say that the contributions are not at top standard this year so hopefully next year we will get into it before too much wine is drunk. Congratulations to Jenelle and team for organising a wonderful meeting. Canberra was spectacular as always, and the ANU grounds were looking stunning.

An interesting convergence for the newsletter is the discussion of population size and performance by PH in this issue, and the claim by our NZ councillor that the highlight of 2002 has been the NZ cricket team making the final at the expense of Australia. Suffice to say, Glenn, that such random aberrations only serve to make life interesting. More serious is the alarming news from the NZ branch that further sweeping changes to their method of funding research are in store. Sounds like New Zealand's politicians are convinced that they can trust bureaucrats and the invention of formulae to make sure the little money they spend goes to the right people. NZ polities should remember the famous three card trick. No matter how hard you try to find a system to pick the winner you always seem to lose everything. This is especially true if your formula for selection is generally known. The only known solution to this problem is to back all outcomes as best

you can. You might even guess the right card one time in three.

One final piece of news, Geeta Chaudhri generously put her hand up to take on the very significant and important role of ASI secretary. The society will benefit overall but the promotion meant that Geeta would have to end her active association with the Newsletter as one of the editors. Fortunately, Margaret Cooley has stepped into the breach without any coercion on our part at all. So thanks for all your help Geeta, and best wishes in your new role as secretary, and welcome Margaret - may your association with the Newsletter be a long and happy one.

The Editors

Ian Mackay Turns 80: the 8th Australasian Autoimmunity Workshop

Len Harrison

The 8th Australasian Autoimmunity Workshop was held at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne, March 21-23. The Workshop was not only an excellent meeting but also doubled as a forum to celebrate the 80th birthday of Ian Mackay and his pioneering contribution to autoimmune disease research.

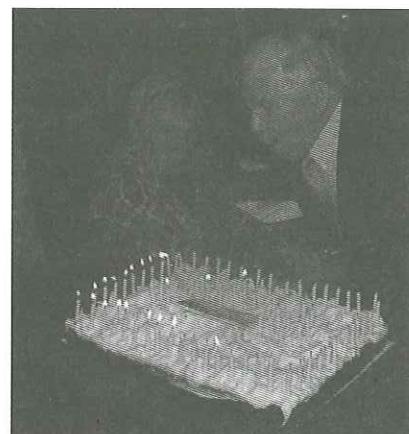
Numerous friends, colleagues and former students from around the world attended the Workshop and acknowledged Ian's inspiration and mentorship.

Ian was at WEHI for 32 years, 24 years as Head of the Clinical Research Unit (1963-1987). During that time he laid the foundations for the modern understanding of autoimmune diseases. His interest in this area dated from the 1950s when, with Carlton Gajdusek (who later received the Nobel Prize for his work on kuru), he recognised that a laboratory test developed by Gajdusek to demonstrate hepatitis A virus was actually detecting an autoimmune reaction between human serum and liver. The autoimmune complement fixation test developed by Ian and Gajdusek was the first to demonstrate autoantibodies in liver disease. This led him to describe

autoimmune chronic active hepatitis, a paradigm for other autoimmune diseases. His subsequent description in 1957 of autoimmune primary biliary cirrhosis was capped thirty years later by the cloning of the gene for the M2 mitochondrial autoantigen of this disease, in a collaborative study with Eric Gershwin.

With Sir MacFarlane-Burnet, Ian formally defined autoimmune disease through "markers" which to this day remain true. His concepts about autoimmune disease in the 1950s and 60s were met with the expected scepticism but since then virtually every disease predicted to be autoimmune in his seminal monograph of 1963 has been firmly established as such. He went on to pioneer the use of immunosuppressive glucocorticoids in the treatment of autoimmune disease and, with Brian Tait and Peter Morris from the Royal Melbourne Hospital, was among the first to demonstrate the associations between autoimmune disease and HLA antigens.

Ian retired from the WEHI in 1987 but has continued to be an active and productive researcher based at Monash University.



Happy 80th IAN
from all your
ADMIRERS,
PROTÉGÉS
and
LONG-SUFFERING DISCIPLES

Go to p.6 for the 'mystery' cartoonist and
p.12 for the 10 Aphorisms of Ian Mackay

The Importance of Size

cont. from p.1

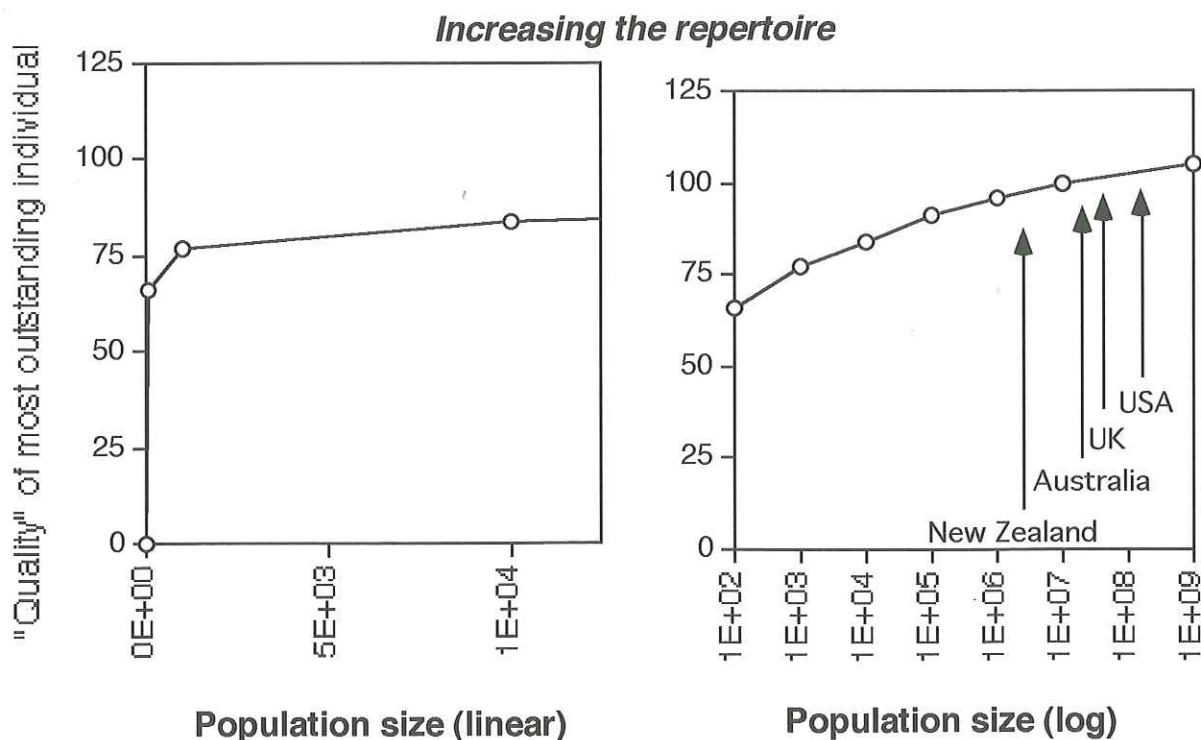
excellence on the world stage (in every field of endeavour)? Expressed like this the question seems daunting, however, surprisingly, important conclusions can be drawn without any further information. Any human ability that can be measured is likely to be distributed within the population according to a normal distribution. All normal curves have common properties that allow general conclusions to be made. Assume for argument's sake that we measure the innate ability of a population in one attribute only. We divide the measurements into bins of unity and find the average performance on our scale to be "50" and the standard deviation of the population "20". We can now ask what is the likely innate ability of the highest ranking individual when selected from different size populations? This is easy to calculate from the normal curve and is plotted in the accompanying figure, on both a linear and log scale. The "quality" of the best individual found improves with expansion in the population but the relationship is far

from linear. An exponential increase in the number of people yields only small increases in the level of the best performer in the population. The number of individuals in four countries is shown. As only one individual can win a gold medal at a time, it becomes clear why a well trained and supported few from a small country, can compete with ten times the number of less well supported individuals of similar or slightly better ability from much larger countries.

Furthermore, as the argument applies to every unique field of endeavour, the modest sized population, can compete in many different fields of human interest. However, it is also worth noting that the "quality" of the peak performer will fluctuate from that expected, also randomly. Some fields will have weaker performers and some more outstanding than expected for the size of the population. Where the most outstanding occur cannot be guessed. Where these most out-standing individuals will take us and how they will enrich our society can also not be foreseen. For this reason the notion of picking winners,

or concentrating our efforts to develop areas of national interest, can diminish the proper working and development of the talent of our human repertoire if overdone.

So to conclude, the notion that a linear relation exists between population size and innate ability is markedly untrue. The notion however, when commonly held, can prevent small countries from aiming for excellence in world terms. To best exploit the diversity of our human repertoire of 25 or 3 million we must attempt to support as broad a base of individuals in their abilities as possible to maximise our prospects for outstanding success. The excellence of our infrastructure for finding, training, supporting (and keeping) our best people in all fields of endeavour is much more important than population size, as the sport example, and a few calculations, clearly illustrate. Immunologists can take an active role in educating the public of the potential of the populace and the importance of stable, effective infrastructures.



Awards of the Australasian Society for Immunology Inc. 2002

1. ASI Postgraduate and Postdoctoral International Travel Prizes 2002

Purpose: To support travel to overseas conferences.

Eligibility: Full-time PhD students (who have completed at least one full year of their PhD at the time of application) and postdoctoral investigators (with up to 3 years' research experience after award of PhD at the time of application) who have been ASI members for the preceding year and the year of the award and have paid their subscription for the current year by the time of application. Students who have previously received a Postgraduate International Travel Prize and postdoctoral scientists who have previously received a Postdoctoral International Travel Prize are ineligible to receive a further prize of the same type.

Application procedure: Application forms are available from the ASI Secretariat. Completed forms and the submitted or proposed abstract must be submitted as an original and two copies to Ms Judi Anderson at the Secretariat Office by May 17, 2002.

An application can be lodged before travel to a Conference for the International Travel Prize if the meeting occurs prior to the closing date for application for awards. The prize may then be given retrospectively.

Assessment criteria: Scientific excellence and clarity of abstract, publication record, recommendation of supervisor, and likely professional benefits of the proposed travel, as judged by the ASI Executive Committee or their nominees. Postgraduate and Postdoctoral candidates will be considered separately. The committee reserves the right not to make an award.

Value: One prize of \$2,000 each will be awarded to a Postgraduate and a Postdoctoral applicant.

2. Student Travel Prizes

Purpose: To enable student members to attend the ASI Annual Scientific Meeting.

Eligibility: Postgraduate students who have been members of ASI for the preceding year and the year of the meeting, have paid their

subscription by April 1, and live outside the city where the meeting is being held.

Application procedure: Send a brief CV, a copy of the submitted first-author abstract, and a statement from your supervisor confirming student status to your State Councillor by 1 September, 2002. Regional branches should provide a short list of up to 3 recommendations, together with copies of the applicants' abstracts and CVs to the Honorary Secretary by 1 October, 2002.

Assessment criteria: Primarily the scientific excellence and clarity of abstract and, to a lesser extent, the distance from the site of the meeting, as judged by ASI Executive assisted by rankings provided by State Councillors.

Value: The full cost of a 14 d APEX airfare between student's home city and site of the meeting.

3. ASI New Investigator Award

Purpose: To reward the best presentation by a new investigator selected to speak in the New Investigators Symposium at the ASI Annual Scientific Meeting.

Eligibility: Postgraduate students and postdoctoral investigators (with up to 3 years' research experience after award of PhD) who have been ASI members for the preceding year and the year of the award and have paid their subscription by April 1 of the current year.

Application procedure: Send a brief CV, a copy of the submitted first-author abstract and a letter of support from your supervisor to the meeting organising committee by the due date for abstract submission. Four-six presenters will be selected by the meeting organising committee.

Assessment criteria: Excellence and originality of scientific content, clarity and organisation of oral and audiovisual presentation, as judged by a panel comprising an ASI Councillor, an overseas visiting speaker and a member of the meeting organising committee, none of whom is a past or present supervisor of any speaker.

Value: \$500 sponsored by ASI and presented at the meeting.

4. Today's Life Science Student Poster Prize

Purpose: To reward the best student poster at the ASI Annual Scientific Meeting.

Eligibility: Students who are ASI members for the year of the meeting. The student must be first author on the poster.

Application procedure: Apply by writing "Student" on the submitted abstract and by placing a sticker on the poster (stickers supplied at meeting).

Assessment criteria: Excellence and originality of scientific content, clarity of presentation and visual impact, as judged by a panel comprising an ASI Councillor, overseas visiting speaker and a member of the meeting organizing committee.

Value: \$300 sponsored by "Today's Life Science" and presented at the meeting.

5. Becton-Dickinson Science Communication Prize

Purpose: This award is aimed at fostering clear communication of exciting science to the media and the public.

Eligibility: Postgraduate students and postdoctoral investigators (with up to 3 years' research experience after award of PhD) who have been ASI members for the preceding year and the year of the award and have paid their subscription by April 1 of the current year.

Application procedure: A "non-scientific language" abstract will be submitted and the committee will short-list abstracts for oral presentation. Selected applicants will make an oral presentation at the annual scientific conference in the Becton-Dickinson Science Communication Award session.

Assessment criteria: The award will be made to the presentation judged to best combine good science with clear communication by a panel consisting of immunologists, a science journalist and a lay person.

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ASI Awards, cont.

Value: \$500 sponsored by Becton-Dickinson and presented at the meeting.

6. Immunology and Cell Biology Publication of the Year

Purpose: To reward the best paper in any category published in *Immunology and Cell Biology* in that year with an ASI member as first author.

Eligibility: Financial members of ASI who have paid their Subscription by April 1.

Application procedure: Apply to the Editor at the time of manuscript submission.

Assessment criteria: Scientific excellence, originality and clarity of presentation of the paper, as judged by a panel comprising the *Immunology and Cell Biology* Editor, ASI Vice/Past President and chair of the Awards Subcommittee.

Value: Books and/or journal subscriptions from Blackwell Science to the value of \$800.

The caricature of Ian Mackay on page 3 has an interesting story. It was used at the autoimmunity workshop and attributed to a forgotten, but obviously talented ex-student of Ian's. Alan Baxter at the meeting recognised it as one of his drawings made during lectures, and could point to a very small "AWB" signature. Who knows what other great art works Alan created and lost over the years.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 4th December 2001 at 1.00 pm

Present: 43 people were present.

1. Apologies

Graham Mitchell

2. Confirmation of minutes of the last AGM, held at The University Of New South Wales, Sydney, 13th December, 2000.

The minutes be confirmed and accepted.

Proposed: G. Shellam

Seconded: J. Rolland

Passed.

3. Business arising from the minutes

Timing of the Annual Scientific Meeting

The venues for the meeting in 2002, 2003 and 2004 are already booked for 1 – 2nd week in December. No desire to change these bookings was voiced.

4. President's Report

The death of Kevin Lafferty, Honorary Life Member of the Society, was noted by Jim McCluskey with sadness. He was a stimulating participant in the Society who will be missed a lot. The President thanked Phil Hodgkin and Sue Serjeantson for providing tributes for the Newsletter (September 2001) and Jennelle Kyd and Chris Parish for arranging for condolences to be sent from ASI.

Jim McCluskey thanked Past-President, Jim Watson, the Honorary Secretary, Jane Allan, the Honorary Treasurer, Nik Petrovsky, and Judi Anderson of the Secretariat for the support and work done over the past 12 months.

Highlights of the year have included:

- the return to Australia in 2002 of Peter Doherty supported by a 5 year Burnet Fellowship. Peter has expressed his willingness to promote the goals of the Society.
- the strong performance of immunology in the NH&MRC scheme accounting for 25% of 5 year awards.
- the visiting speaker program which brought through 4 international speakers (Andrew Mellor, Anne Croy, Michael Dustin and Mitch Kronenberg) who delivered 20 lectures.
- the growth in the Society's Journal, ICB, which has doubled its impact factor in a

few years due to the editorship of Chris Parish.

Correspondence:

- letter to the ABC regarding the changes in science programming together with reply were published in the ASI newsletter (March 2001)
- the issue of parvovirus infection was raised with ARC, WA. The reply was published in the newsletter (Sept 2001) and it is understood that ARC will be re-deriving their colonies, a courageous effort
- CSL has committed to sponsor the Burnet oration to 2003.

In 2002 the Society looks forward to a program of visiting speakers that will be run by Bernadette Scott. Speakers of distinction and intellectual vitality are welcomed. Costs at the local level of supporting the speakers are devolved to the local branches.

The President then presented for discussion the resolutions formulated by the meeting of ASI Council:

1. The subscription rate will be increased to \$132 for full members (rounded up) and \$60 for student members (rounded down) including 10% GST and subscription to ICB.
2. That the branch for Tasmania will be amalgamated with Victoria and that funding requests from Tasmania will be considered on a case by case basis.
3. The membership directory will be produced as a PDF file which will be delivered by email as a confidential, not for disclosure, PDF file (a hard copy of the file can be requested from the Secretariat).
4. The number of signatories for branch accounts will be increased to 3.
5. An application can be lodged before travel to a Conference for the International Travel Prize if the meeting occurs prior to the closing date for application for awards. The prize may then be given retrospectively.

These resolutions were passed by the AGM. There was discussion of how best to honour Kevin Lafferty. It was resolved that

6. An annual Lafferty debate would be held at the Scientific Meeting.

1. Honorary Secretary's Report

Membership

The total number of financial members for 2001 (638) was 34 lower than the previous year but within the 5 year range which varies from 603 in 1999 to 713 in 1995. Decreases were apparent in NSW, ACT and overseas membership. NZ, QLD and WA were stable. TAS has continued to have a low number of members (10).

Secretarial services

The subscription renewal form for 2002 will include a tick-box for inclusion of member details in the membership directory in accordance with the new privacy laws. Printing of a hard-copy of the membership directory is not anticipated until there has been >15% turnover in membership.

Corporate memory

Guidelines on how to run the Annual Scientific Meeting and to how to manage the Society's affairs are available as a booklet from the Honorary Secretary. This will be updated following the Annual Scientific Meeting and suggestions are welcomed. Records of the Society will be maintained as files burned to CD disc. For future access at the AGM they will be available on a lap-top computer.

2. Honorary Treasurer's Report

Nik Petrovsky presented the budget and pointed out that the Society is in a good position with net assets of \$177,000. Money was transferred from the Premium Business Account at the Commonwealth Bank to the Term Deposit Account giving a total of \$57,100 in that account. Recent Annual Meetings have run at small loss or break-even and since expenditure has been greater than income in recent years it was decided to introduce fiscal changes. These include an increase in subscription rate that has remained unchanged since 1995.

3. Newsletter Editor's Report

Phil Hodgkin reported that a co-editor system had worked through the year and thanked co-editors Geeta Chaudhri, Gunasegaran Karupiah and Nick King. A new feature has been the Students' Page which will continue in 2002. Copy for the newsletter is always needed.

4. Report from Editor of Immunology and Cell Biology

Chris Parish reported that the impact factor has again risen by 10% to 2.201. Overseas contributions form an increasing component providing 50% of papers. Three times per year there is a special features edition with a 5 week turn around that covers marginal areas. With regard to the prize awarded to an ASI member for the best publication of the year in ICB, Chris commented that not all eligible people respond to the letter asking them if they want to be considered for the award. It was generally agreed at the meeting that all eligible papers will be entered for the award automatically. The Society offered thanks to Pat Basnett who has acted as editorial assistant since 1992. Kathy Hicks will take over from Pat on her retirement.

5. FIMSA Report

Lindsay Dent tabled a comprehensive report. He noted the strength of FIMSA and the high regard that it is held within IUIS. ASI members have attended a FIMSA Advanced Training Course in Taipei and have been recipients of FIMSA travel awards to attend the 11th ICI meeting in Stockholm.

6. IUIS Report

Lindsay Dent reported that the IUIS budget is reduced in comparison to last year. The site of the ICI in 2007 has still to be resolved.

7. Report on Visiting Speaker Program

Tabled and see above, President's report

8. Special Interest Groups and Regional Branches of ASI.

Tabled Reports were noted.

9. Awards of the Society

See above, President's report

10. Results of election of Council Members for 2002 – 2003

Vice President:	Chris Parish
Honorary Secretary:	Geeta Chaudhri
Councillors:	
QLD	Norbet Kienzle
NZ	Glenn Buchan
SA/NT	Sue Heinze
VIC	Mark Smyth

11. Timetable for future meetings

ASI Annual Scientific Meeting

2002 Brisbane, Dec 8 - 12
2003 Perth, Dec 7 - 11 (TIG on Dec 12)
2004 Adelaide

Other relevant meetings

2002 – FIMSA Advanced Course Immunology, Thailand Oct 21–25
2002 – HMRC, Melbourne 25–29 November
2003–3rd FIMSA Congress, Beijing, China, October 22–26
2004 – 12th IUIS Montreal, 18–23 July
2004 – HLDA Workshop, Adelaide, Dec.

12. Other business

The meeting closed with Jim McCluskey warmly offering the Society's thanks to the outgoing Honorary Secretary, Jane Allan, for running ASI affairs so competently. He welcomed the incoming incumbent, Geeta Chaudhri.

The meeting concluded at 2.15 pm.

Minutes prepared by Jane Allan.

Copies of reports are available from the Honorary Secretary and from the State Councillors.

**Contributions
sought for the
ASI Newsletter**

**Deadline for the
next issue**

30th May 2002

Please email your contributions
to the Secretariat by the
above date.

asi@21century.com.au

ASI2001

Canberra was the venue for the 2001 annual national conference. Around 350 delegates travelled from near and far to attend the meeting and participate in a 5-day program of science and social activities. As an organiser, I want to say what great delegates you were and thanks for your enthusiastic participation in all aspects of the conference.

The conference kicked off on Sunday with the Postgraduate training day. This year's focus was on Bioinformatics and Genomics. The attendees heard from experts on how they used these tools in their research and were encouraged to think about how these new "tools" may assist in answering some of our unsolved questions. We received many excellent comments about the program and full congratulations go to Chris Goodnow for organising the excellent program and to all the "faculty" (national and international) who gave up their Sunday to either speak or be group leaders. After such an intensive day, it was straight off to the opening function and a well earned beer.

The 2001 conference had a 4-day program: three days dedicated to the various immunology themes and one day specifically for Tumour Immunology. All speakers gave excellent professional presentations delivered with a clarity that informed and inspired many of us. We heard plenary sessions on applications in Immuno-informatics and genomics; we learnt a lot more about the idiosyncrasies of infectious diseases; some details on the latest in fundamental immunology; and progressed to the wonderful successes of some of the approaches in the fight against tumours and cancer. The plenary sessions were complemented by great keynote speakers in each of the symposia sessions. This year we varied the approach to the poster workshops by asking several of the poster presenters to give a short talk on their poster. These sessions were very well attended and many of the short presentations attracted some very active discussion. The workshop-nature of these sessions encouraged a more informal atmosphere and we were pleased to see how well all the presenters managed to meet the

challenge of communicating the essential elements of their work within four minutes.

This year there were many prizes to be won. Some delegates were even rewarded for attendance at the sessions by winning bottles of wine or chocolates. Congratulations to the following students and post-docs on your achievements and success in winning awards in the following areas:

The New Investigator Award:

Ben Quah, School of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Australian National University.

The Becton Dickinson Science Communication Prizes:

Judges prize: Michael Jefford, Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research

Audience Prize: Christine Hawke, Centenary Institute for Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology

Today's Life Sciences Poster Prize:

Daniel Gray, Monash Medical Centre

The Kevin Lafferty Memorial Prize in Autoimmunity:

Patrick Bertolino, Centenary Institute for Cancer Medicine and Cell Biology

The Graham Jackson Memorial Prize in Mucosal Immunology:

Abu Nasar Md. Aminoor Rahman, Centre for Animal Biotechnology, University of Melbourne.

This year's Burnet Orator was Dr Maureen Howard. Maureen has made a great contribution to immunology and was our first female Burnet Orator. Maureen had also been a great friend of Kevin Lafferty and paid a nice tribute to him and his work. Although I think Kevin was having a joke with us when I accidentally sent the screen displaying his picture up into the "heavens" during an audiovisual "glitch" in the system. However, the presentation did resume and if you ever need any cartoons to demonstrate a point, Maureen certainly has the most extensive collection I have seen in a long time.

Of course, the social activities are almost as important as the scientific program (some may even think they are more important). It was great to see everyone catching up with

old friends and colleagues, making new friends and generally having a good time consuming the food and drink. The conference dinner was at the Tower restaurant. This venue certainly lent itself to some fun communications. Phil Hodgkin et al encouraged the limerick writing and many "ditties" could be found circulating on the windows of the revolving restaurant. The dance floor attracted a very keen group of jiving immunologists whose level of energy and enthusiasm was inversely proportional to the amount of alcohol left in the bar and directly correlated with the lateness of the hour.

Provision of all those little "extras" wouldn't be possible without the wonderful support of the many sponsors. The organisers would like to thank all the sponsors who provided prizes, financial support and terrific exhibitions. We also enjoyed the great array of "give aways" at the stands.

Many thanks must go to Linda, Sarah and the team from Conference Co-ordinators. As part of the planning, the PCO assures you that things are all taken care of, but it is not until the conference starts that you realise just how much organisation they take on for you. It is not hard to recognise dedication to duty when they answer your midnight cry for help when the last bus from the conference dinner fails to front. Great job and would recommend their services to anyone.

Finally, as all those who have gone before us will know, the meeting takes a lot of time and dedication from the select group of individuals that volunteer on the organising committee. Thanks go to Anne Gallagher, Scott Thomson, Ruth Foxwell, Chris Goodnow, Allan Cripps, Joe Altin and Nik Petrovsky.

Jennelle Kyd

Sustaining Membership

ASI Inc acknowledges the support of the following sustaining members:

- Bioquest Limited
- Dynal Pty Ltd

Found on the windows at the annual dinner

It's funny how one thing leads to another. Our annual dinner at the ASI meeting in Canberra was held atop the famous Black Mountain tower. The excellent dinner included among other dishes "peppered carpaccio of veal" and caramelised walnut mesclun fig salad". I am not renowned as a great rememberer, or as a gourmand, but I can relate the complete meal two months later as I have reconstructed a menu from fragments I have in front of me. I have these fragments because I dutifully collected them after the dinner. The reason I did so is a direct consequence of the fact we were in a revolving restaurant in which we could only see a few people at a time. The wonderful changing view had made it impossible to hold the annual ASI limerick contest – or so we thought.

I believe it was the South Australian table who came up with the solution. Large paper menu's, stationary windows and revolving tables they reasoned, there must be a way. They wrote the following on a 3" x 4" scrap of menu (at around the time of the fig salad judging from the stains) and pasted it to the window.

Please notice this note on the window
What it means ... your imagination will show
Come on, show your wit
Be confident! Add to it
So the ASI limerick tradition can grow

Within 20 minutes this clever opening limerick had visited each table as it circulated around the room, and the challenge was on. The following brace of wit I found stuck on the windows of the restaurant at the end of the night. The quality is variable, reflecting the late start and the lack of oxygen atop the tower. All were anonymous, and many were unfinished. There were also some fragments that contained enigmatic notes, for example: "You're so ugly" and – "Hi, WORD SALAD". Who can guess.

The accompanying picture entitled "Log Model: Biotechnomology" was also found. I'm glad I found it. It would have been a great loss to science? Anyone who can enlighten us on its meaning, real or imagined, can have space in the next newsletter.

But here are the legible limericks

At the top of the tower we be
Uninfected by old HSV
Wart-free we are all
We're having a ball
And hope to go home virus-free

At the top of the tower we are
As specific as an old TCR
Funded by microarray
We're drinking the night away
Our affinity's high for the bar

We work on B and T cells, cancer and fish
We put them in flasks, plates and round petri dish
We feed them with passion
In singular fashion
And they proliferate against our best wish
(ed: - fish?)

There once was a restaurant that went round
Immunologists perched far from the ground
Their thoughts were nefarious
To match the food at its airiest
On the day the Lafferty debate was refound

As you can see, we're having a lot of fun
As we are from South Australia, is it from too much sun?
The fun we are having
Is due to our saving
Up for all the prizes we have won.

Once in the town of the poli
We had a great time and were jolly
We loved to debate
The future and fate
Of bio-informatic hyperbolly

The gene jockeys invented genomics
The biochemists dreamt up proteomics
The cellular fold
Left out in the cold
Invented their own cult of phenomics!

The final complete one seems to have summarised the situation at the end of the night pretty well:

There once was a restaurant going round
We all thought about limericks being found

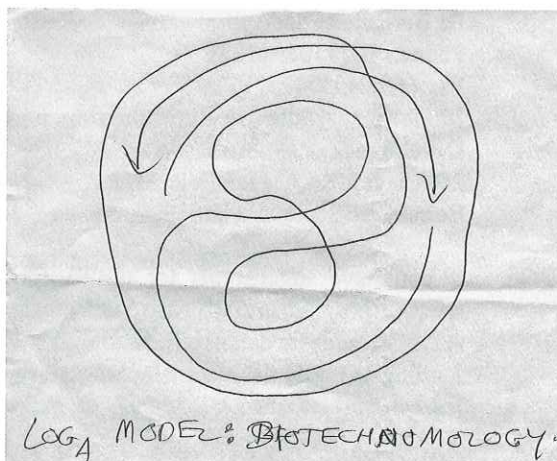
After a lot of fun
We still found none
So we have to get back to the ground

There were a number that were found
circulating incomplete. I guess no-one on the night could think of a good last line. So in the hard light of a few months to think about it, can anyone complete the following?

Scrapings from teeth we will take
For exciting discoveries to make
To put in arrays
Till the end of our days

A well known virologist named Frazer
Looked up the lens of a laser
And now you will find
Alas, he is blind

Our dancing is thermodynamic
Enough to make a man panic
Kinetically quick



Now you should be warned that this annual event is worth quite a few NHMRC grant dollars by impressing anonymous referees with your wit and style. It will be on in Brisbane so why not start planning your 'spontaneous' verse now!

Phil Hodgkin

ASI Councillors' News

Queensland News

Please, let me introduce myself to you as the new ASI councillor for the Queensland branch for the next two years. I look forward to many and fruitful interactions with you in the future. At this point, I want to congratulate the outgoing councillor, Graham Leggatt, for his wonderful and dedicated work for ASI over the last years. In the name of all ASI members, a big thank you to you, Graham !

I want to make all interested members aware of a novel study facility to learn more about and brush up your skills in T and B cell immunology. Last year, ASI members Drs Chris Schmidt and Norbert Kienzle from QIMR organized and conducted an inaugural post-graduate lecture series entitled "Concepts in Adaptive Immunology". These 16 lectures combined basic textbook immunology with specialized seminars given by distinguished invited speakers. More details about this series, including free access to power point presentations, can be found on QIMR's webpage at <http://www.qimr.edu.au/research/courses/index.html>. Due to the overwhelmingly positive response to this lecture series, a video copy of each lecture is also available via the QIMR library.

Finally, let me prime you for the upcoming annual Brisbane Immunology Group, BIG, retreat to be held at the wonderful Noosa Lake Resort, 29-30 August 2002. More specific information will be available in the next newsletter.

Norbert Kienzle
Councillor

Victorian News

Year 2002 winds itself up with most of us writing NH&MRC Projects and Program Grants. A quick reflection on last year, we must firstly congratulate our peers who managed to secure NH&MRC Program Grants in Immunology. Victoria was awarded three Program grants that concern Immunology: one to Drs Eugene Maraskovsky (Ludwig Institute) and Ken Shortman (WEHI) for studying dendritic cells in immune responses; a second to Professor Jim McCluskey, Assoc. Prof. Frank Carbone and Dr Andrew Brooks (University of Melbourne, Microbiology and Immunology) and Dr William Heath (WEHI) for studying immune responses to viruses and autoimmunity; and a third on infectious diseases (malaria and tuberculosis) to a large team led by Dr Alan Cowman from the WEHI. This is an outstanding recognition of the strength of immunology in this state.

The first ASI sponsored speaker for 2002 was Dr Howard (Pete) Petrie, the Head of the Developmental Immunology Laboratory of the Sloan Kettering Institute, NY. Howard (Pete) trained for sometime at the WEHI and was hosted by Ken Shortman and Richard Boyd whilst in Melbourne. The emphasis of research conducted in Dr Petrie's laboratory concerns identification of the processes that regulate cell fate during T-lymphocyte differentiation. More about his research can be seen at: http://www.ski.edu/lab_homepage.cfm?lab=162

I would encourage all Victorian members to contact our new ASI Visiting Speakers Coordinator,

Dr Bernadette Scott
Phone: (+613) 9594 7221
Fax: (+613) 9594 7211
Monash Institute of Reproduction and Development,
246 Clayton Rd, Clayton, Vic. 3168 Australia
Bernadette.Scott@med.monash.edu.au

if you have suggestions for the visiting speakers program in 2002. Also check out the ASI homepage for details on how to apply for funding. In particular, we are looking to hear from members in SA and NZ to make

suggestions and organise visitors since these places have had fewer visitors in recent years. Particular thanks to Lorena Brown and Jim McCluskey for doing such a great job in 2001.

Mark Smyth
Councillor

S.A./N.T. News

The 2001 annual student meeting of the SA/NT Branch was held on 18th December. In all, seven postgraduate students presented first-rate talks covering a broad range of topics. The prize for best presentation (\$200 and an ASI membership) went to Mae Wong, an honours student from the Hanson Centre for Cancer Research in Adelaide, for her excellent presentation on 'Modulating signalling through the high-affinity IgE receptor in IgE-mediated anaphylaxis and mast cell activation'. Congratulations!

I'm settling in to the new job as the state councillor so naturally the first couple of months have commenced fairly slowly. The main focus is momentarily set on this year's speakers program.

Su Heinzl
Councillor

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A.C.T. News

Being the first newsletter for the year, this will be brief and provide a reminder to the local members on some of the activities to look out for. In March, we will be hosting a visiting speaker. Please join your colleagues for an interesting seminar and get together. Your membership is due now and should be paid before 1 April. This is particularly important for those considering applying for any ASI awards. Remember, membership also gives you a subscription to Immunology and Cell Biology, the regular newsletter plus discounted registration to the annual conference and other benefits.

During this year I would like to have two half-day workshops. Last year because our time was so consumed by the organisation of the conference, these did not happen. If we can plan to get together in April and September, it will provide great continuity post the conference in December and build our links within the ACT.

Jennelle Kyd
Councillor

N.Z. News

I suppose the highlight of the 2002 year so far has been the NZ cricket team making the final at the expense of our Aussie friends.

On the immunology front there have been some comings and goings. Margaret Baird has left on sabbatical leave for six months and is currently spending time in the laboratory of Gary Halliday at the University of Sydney before heading for the Northern Hemisphere. Sarah Hook has joined the Otago University School of Pharmacy from the Malaghan Institute to take up a lecturing appointment; and Euan Lockhart has left Otago to take up a postdoctoral position with Alistair Ramsay in New Orleans.

After the success of last year's Immunet meeting, organisation of this year's is already well on the way. The Malaghan Institute will host the meeting in early July and we would welcome any interest from across the ditch.

It would seem that the NZ government is bent on yet another round of changes to research funding. The TEAC report has suggested that universities have \$120 million taken out of their operating budgets to be redistributed according to Research output. This will be

assessed by a formula which includes the number of postgraduate students produced (25%), external research funds attracted (25%) and Peer review (50%). The consequences for university based research are enormous and if implemented without modification would lead to the demise of several universities. The impact on Immunology is unclear as researchers are spread across a number of universities and CRIs. It would seem that governments continue to ignore the real problem holding back progress and innovation which is lack of funding for research.

Glenn Buchan
NZ Councillor



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2007 International Congress of Immunology (ICI) – Rio Gets the Nod

The process to decide the venue for the 2007 ICI has been unusually long, complex and contentious. Two very high quality bids were received from teams hoping to stage the Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (a joint bid from the Latin American Association of Immunologists and the Brazilian Society for Immunology) and in Osaka, Japan (a bid from the Japanese Society for Immunology). After difficulties with the voting at the General Assembly of the International Union of Immunological Societies in Stockholm in July 2001, a complicated series of decisions led to a revote of Assembly members. The results of this revote were announced on 28 February 2002. By another narrow margin (47 votes to 45 votes) the General Assembly has decided in favour of Rio de Janeiro as the site of the 2007 ICI.

Closer at hand is the 2004 ICI which will be held in Montreal, Canada, 23-28 July, 2004. The web site for this meeting is currently <http://www.nrc.ca/confserv/immuno2004/index.html>. The serious work of putting together the scientific programme for 2004 is now underway, so if you have any suggestions, contact Marianna Newkirk (email Marianna.newkirk@mcgill.ca).

Lindsay Dent,
IUIS Councillor

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THE TEN APHORISMS OF IAN MACKAY

(Collected by Alan Ebringer B.Sc,MD,FRCP,FRACP,FRCPATH. Professor of Immunology at King's College London and Clinical Registrar in 3 East in 1965)

Aphorism 1:

If you have done only 10 drafts of your paper, then you have not really read it.

Aphorism 2:

Once you have done 20 drafts, your paper is approaching the publishable ideal. (My paper on "chloroquine neuromyopathy" went through 22 drafts.)

Aphorism 3:

Do not quote a paper in your references which you have not read, sooner or later you will be found out.

Aphorism 4:

Every chronic disease is autoimmune unless proved otherwise.

Aphorism 5:

An alcoholic patient is usually dominated by a strong willed mother or wife, and sometimes both.

Aphorism 6:

When giving a research talk, remember there are only 2 or 3 people in the audience to whom your presentation is addressed; the others do not count.

Aphorism 7:

There is no such thing as a "slough" or routine case in your ward, every patient can teach you good medicine.

Aphorism 8:

You have no right to play "god" with incurable diseases, but must do your best till the end.

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research – Seminars

May 1 April Kelly (Development & Neurobiology Group) – Cytoskeletal regulation; the biology of LIMK interactions

May 8 Ann Cornish (Cancer & Haematology Division) – Perturbed T cell homeostasis in mice deficient for SOCS-1

May 15 Chris Dyer (Autoimmunity & Transplantation Division) – DNA Immunisation: Tale of two citations

May 22 Vikki Marshall (Genetics & Bioinformatics Division) – Genetic studies on a malaria-resistance locus

May 29 Dr Philip Hodgkin (Immunology Division) – A theory of antibody with class

WEHI Seminars on the Web:

www.wehi.edu/seminars/



Dr Ian Mackay

Aphorism 9:

The concept of "euthanasia" interferes with clear medical thinking and has been banished from 3east.

Aphorism 10:

Mouse immunologists usually have a poor grasp of medicine and inevitably will make fools of themselves during ward rounds.