



N E W S L E T T E R

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Professor Jonathon Sprent FRS The Prodigal Returns

Professor Anthony Basten, Centenary Institute

Last year Jon Sprent became the third recipient of NHMRC's most prestigious award, the Burnet Award, which will support him on his return to the Centenary Institute in Sydney later this year. This event will be a wonderful boost to Australia's medical research community just as Peter Doherty's return was three years ago.

Jon is a medical graduate of the University of Queensland where his father held the Chair of Parasitology for many years. He completed his PhD in 1972 under the supervision of Emeritus Professor Jacques Miller at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. It was at that early stage in his career that I first met Jon and we had many delightful conversations while reaming the thoracic duct cannulae of 30 odd mice with a horsehair or, when available, a tress from one of the technicians. Between 1972 and 1976 he worked at the Basel Institute and University College, London before being appointed to his first senior post in the Department of Pathology, University of Pennsylvania.

In 1984 he took up his current Professorship in the Department of Immunology at the renowned Scripps Clinic in California. It was always a pleasure to visit him in his ranch which was surrounded by every species of avocado tree and an array of grevillias and was always a venue for heavy gardening followed by a good dinner and chat with his enlightened circle of scientific colleagues. An Australian Port was the traditional ending to these occasions

Jon's major research interests over the years have revolved around T cell maturation in the thymus, T cell homeostasis in extra-thymic lymphoid tissues and the maintenance of immunological memory. Given Centenary's



interests in cell-cell interactions and immune regulation, his research is a perfect fit and will contribute greatly to our productivity.

Since 1967 Jon has published 325 articles in peer-reviewed literature including papers in prestigious journals like *Nature*, *Science*, *Nature Immunology*, *Immunity* and *Journal of Experimental Medicine*. His research has attracted regular funding from the National Institutes of Health. Indeed, last year he was associated with no less than six NIH grants, three as the Chief Investigator. Recognition for his contributions has been sustained. In 1995 he was awarded the J Allyn Taylor International Prize in Medicine and three years later was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society. He also served as President of the American Association of Immunologists, a rare honour for a non-American citizen and has an oration named after him at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research.

These achievements were encapsulated in the following enthusiastic comments by his referees for the Burnet Award:

'Jon Sprent is one of the two or three leading experts in the world of T cell biology'

'Without any doubt whatsoever, Sprent is Australia's most eminent immunologist abroad'

and finally,

'Jonathon Sprent is a classical cellular immunologist, one of the three or four best in the world'.

Well, you can't get better than that!

We are all looking forward to Jon's arrival. Not only is he a wonderful scientist, but he has great personal charm, has a mind that is always searching for how to apply his findings to the clinic, and is a splendid mentor of the next generation of young researchers.

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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

This edition of the newsletter begins with a welcome to a new addition to Australian Immunology (Jonathan Sprent, cover). In addition, we have the first instalment of what will hopefully become our regular “student page” (p14) as well as a report on the FIMSA advanced training and humorous reflections and comments on the recent ASI annual conference in Adelaide in December. Those who were there will need little reminding of how well it went, both in terms of the scientific content, as well as the ambience and general bonhomie. Those who were unable to attend will have to content themselves with the photos and stories (p 8–11), and careful reading of the minutes of the AGM (p4–7).

The final article by Chris Parish, immediate past-president of ASI, reflects on the contribution of theoretical immunology to the development of the field (I promise I only suggested an article – I didn’t specify the subject!).

Thank you to all who contributed to the newsletter – keep the articles coming and remember the big prize (\$100) for best newsletter article in 2005 (won by Gordon Ada in 2004)!

Miles Davenport



Guest speakers receive a gift pack of South Australian wines for their contributions to the conference. (LtoR) Hans-Georg Rammensee (University of Tuebingen), Anne Kelso (QIMR), Hiromitsu Nakauchi (University of Tokyo), Pippa Marrack (University of Colorado), Tsuneyasu Kaisho (Osaka University) (Photo: Su Heinzl)



ASI Annual Scientific Meeting December 2004 Adelaide, South Australia

Professor Anne Kelso delivering the Burnet Oration (Photo: Su Heinzl)

Hiromitsu Nakauchi, Guest Speaker,
University of Tokyo
(Photo: Nick King)



ICB Online Manuscript Submission

Blackwell Publishing and the Australasian Society for Immunology are pleased to announce the availability of online manuscript submission for Immunology and Cell Biology via <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/icb>.

Thus it would be appreciated if all manuscript submissions to Immunology and Cell Biology in the future are made online via this web site. This will speed up the reviewing and acceptance of your manuscripts.

Chris Parish
Editor-in-Chief
Immunology and Cell Biology

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Australasian Society for Immunology

Held on Tuesday 14th December 2004, Meeting Room 1 & 2, Adelaide Convention Centre.
Meeting commenced at 1.00 pm with 36 members in attendance.

1. Apologies

Judy Greer, John Fraser, Allan Cripps, Ian MacKay

2. Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting

Proposed Phil Hodgkin and seconded Geoff Shellam that the Minutes be accepted.

3. Business arising

All covered in other items below.

4. President's Report

Chris Parish reported that 2004 was another successful year for the Society at a number of levels. He also thanked the Secretariat, the Executive and all Council members for their support during 2004. He especially thanked the retiring members of Council, Mark Hulett (ACT Councillor) and Sarah Hook (NZ Councillor), for their contributions to the Society and welcomed three new members, Guna Karupiah (ACT Councillor), John Fraser (NZ Councillor) and Anne Fletcher (inaugural Student Representative).

There were several important immunological events during 2004:

- On a sad note was the death of Derrick Rowley, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Adelaide. In 1970 Derrick played an instrumental role in the founding of the Australian (now Australasian) Society for Immunology and was elected the first President of the Society. He was also Editor-in-Chief of the *Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science* from 1963-1987, which became *Immunology and Cell Biology* in 1988, the official journal of ASI. Upon his retirement in 1988 he became a Life Member of ASI in recognition of his contributions to the Society. Derrick was also a highly respected immunologist, his main research interest being the immunology of bacterial-based enteric diseases. Council had considered a way

of honouring Derrick's outstanding contributions to the Society and had decided that a Derrick Rowley Award for outstanding contributions to ASI would be appropriate. This issue would be open for discussion under item 8 of the AGM agenda.

- On a positive note, the International Congress in Immunology held in Montreal in July 2004 was a resounding success with 6500 delegates from over 70 countries attending. ASI members were well represented, particularly in specialist symposia.

- The ASI Annual Scientific meeting held in Perth in December 2003 was a great success, both scientifically and financially, with a \$44,000 profit being generated by the conference. The number of attendees was particularly pleasing, with 300 being expected and 500 actually registering! During 2004 a number of very successful branch meetings were also held, the most notable being the BIG meeting at the Sunshine Coast and the IgV meeting at Beechworth. An expansion of local branch activities such as these should be encouraged. In fact, since the Society has a very healthy bank balance thanks to large profits from recent ASI scientific meetings, Council had decided that some of these funds should be returned to the membership by doubling branch funding in 2005.

- The FIMSA Advanced Immunology Course held in Adelaide just prior to the ASI annual scientific meeting was a great success. Chris thanked the organisers of the course, Lindsay Dent, John Hayball and Bruce Lyons, for their efforts. The organization of the 3rd FIMSA Congress, which was cancelled in 2003 due to the SARS outbreak, will be held in Hangzhou from 18-22 April 2005. The 4th FIMSA Congress will be held in Taiwan in 2008.

- The re-election of the Howard Federal government in October 2004 has important implications for future biomedical research funding. Unfortunately, so far the new Federal Government has shown little

inclination to increase funding for basic research, particularly at the University level, despite the recent Health and Medical Research Strategic Review being highly favourable and an ASMR study highlighting the remarkable returns on biomedical research investment. Internationally future support for biomedical research also appears bleak, particularly in the USA, where it is anticipated only 12% of NIH grants will be funded in 2005. On a more optimistic note, however, is the generous funding of the commercialisation of research findings by the Federal Government. All ASI members, whenever possible, should remind politicians and the general public that there would be no commercial successes unless basic researchers, who make the new discoveries that underpin commercialisation, are adequately funded.

As in previous President's reports, Chris again raised the issue of ASI membership. Chris suggested that ASI members should target students and senior immunologists as new members. It appears that many senior immunologists are unaware that they have not renewed their membership, an issue that needs to be addressed in the future.

Chris reported that the Visiting Speaker Program, thanks to the efforts of Alejandro Lopez during 2004, now has a sensible set of guidelines for its operation. During 2004 there was one ASI Visiting Speaker, Dr David Serreze, and one ASI Sponsored Speaker, Prof Jean-Laurent Casanova. Dr Richard Locksley has already agreed to be an ASI Visiting Speaker in 2005.

It was reported by Chris that Ian McKenzie has agreed to be the Burnet Orator at the ASI meeting in Melbourne in 2005. The commercial sponsor of the event, CSL, has also generously agreed to increase their annual sponsorship from \$3500 to \$5000, the funding increase starting at the Adelaide meeting.

Chris reported that a new publishing agreement for *Immunology and Cell Biology* had been negotiated with Blackwell Publishing Asia which was much more

favourable for the Society. Details of the new agreement and ICB matters in general were to be discussed further under item 10 of the AGM agenda.

Chris discussed the interaction of ASI with other professional societies, notably ASCIA and ASMR. A joint ASI/ASCIA symposium at the Adelaide ASI meeting was already in place and it was hoped that a similar joint symposium could be planned for future ASI annual scientific meetings. ASI could also co-sponsor a similar type of symposium at ASCIA meetings although to date this had not occurred. Chris suggested that the participation of ASI in future ASMR conferences should be considered although the scheduling of ASMR conferences close to the ASI annual meeting made a major contribution difficult. Also, most future ASMR conferences would be very specialised and often of no relevance to immunologists.

Finally, Chris welcomed Phil Hodgkin as the new President of the Society and wished him success during his tenure as President.

5. Secretary's report

Geeta Chaudhri presented membership numbers for 2004 and breakdown by category. She said that we were still around the 650 mark that we have been around for several years and suggested that we should target students and senior immunologists as new members. One way of doing this was by increasing the profile of ASI at the local level and throughout the year. Norbert will address the issue of increasing central funds for local branches in the Treasurer's report. The revitalized VSP would also increase the frequency of ASI-sponsored events through the year. Finally, the new position of Student Representative, currently filled by Anne Fletcher, would hopefully target the student membership, via initiatives such as co-ordinating a Student Page in the newsletter.

Geeta reported that there was one Postdoctoral and four Student International Travel Prizes awarded. These were to support attendance at the ICI in Montreal. In addition, ASI had funded 19 bursaries to assist students attending this ASI annual meeting.

She also reported that Judy Greer, ASI Webmaster, is planning a major update of the website and welcomes suggestions and input from members.

Membership directory will continue to be distributed as a printed copy and due to legal reasons members' contact details will only be included if they have ticked the correct box and given us permission to do so.

Council Membership

Chris Parish thanked all councillors for their work throughout the year, in particular those who retire at this meeting. The council for 2005 will consist of:

President	Phil Hodgkin
Past-President	Chris Parish
Secretary	Geeta Chaudhri
Treasurer	Norbert Kienzle
ACT Councillor	Guna Karupiah
NSW Councillor	Helen Briscoe
SA Councillor	Su Heinzl
WA Councillor	Chris Andoniou
Qld Councillor	J Alejandro Lopez
Vic Councillor	Frank Alderuccio
NZ Councillor	John Fraser
Student Rep.	Anne Fletcher
ICB Editor	Chris Parish
Newsletter Editor	Miles Davenport
Visiting Speaker Program	J Alejandro Lopez
Honorary Archivist & Webmaster	Judy Greer
FIMSA Councillor (Nick King; Vice-President; FIMSA)	Guna Karupiah
IUIS Councillor	Chris Parish

6. Treasurer's report

The financial year of ASI runs from 1st November to 31st of October, in order to have the budget report finalized for the AGM (note the discrepancy to the financial years of the ATO and GST). As of the end of October 2004, we had \$273,389.55 in total current assets. Compared to the last financial year, the gross income significantly rose ~33% and the operating surplus (excluding committed financial liabilities) was ~38% higher; this healthy gain was mainly due to the favourably re-negotiated royalty agreement with ICB and the surplus of the ASI meeting in Perth.

A substantial amount (\$62,313) was spent for the ASI member's benefit. This included Travel Awards and Bursaries (\$23,565), support for visiting speakers (\$6,741), the 7th FIMSA/ASI Advanced Training Course in Immunology in Adelaide (\$10,000) and State Branch funding (\$22,007).

The continuous surplus of annual ASI meetings over the last years and the bigger ICB royalty deal increased the health of our financial status; thus Council decided to return some of the surplus to the membership. The aim of this Productivity Bonus is to increase local branch activities and to benefit each member per se. This year's Productivity Bonus was set to equal the amount and distribution of the State Branch funding (\$22,007), and will be awarded annually on the discretion of Council and depending on the health of the budget.

7. Proposed direct debit for membership subscriptions

Chris Parish reported that Council had discussed the idea of having optional direct debit for paying membership subscriptions. The advantage is convenience for members who just forget to renew membership under the current system. The Secretariat would still send out a receipt so that the member is aware that an amount has been deducted. It would be purely optional and you would sign up for a limited period, such as 3 years, at a time. There was discussion of whether there should be any incentives given to people to sign up for direct debit, but there was general lack of support for incentives as problems could be foreseen. It was also discussed that the status of membership changing within the direct debit period, such as transition from student to full membership, may pose a problem. Chris pointed out that the details still have to be worked out, the option would be given to full members only, and that it would not start till 2006 at the earliest. Membership voted unanimously that an optional direct debit system of membership renewal should be put in place.

8. Proposed award to honour Derrick Rowley

Council had considered a way of honouring Derrick's outstanding contributions to the Society and had suggested that a Derrick Rowley Award for outstanding contributions to ASI would be appropriate. Chris Parish pointed out that this would be a prestigious award and a way of recognizing individuals who had made extra-ordinary contributions. There was general agreement that an award to honour Derrick Rowley was a good idea

and that it had to be for outstanding contributions over a period of time, not just someone fulfilling a standard role, e.g. Chair of a Scientific Committee.

Tony Basten suggested it might be for contribution to Australasian Immunology or to the Society. However, general consensus was that a contribution to Society more closely matches Derrick Rowley's own contribution. Pat Mottram suggested that we need guidelines and Anne Kelso added that a long-term plan was required. It was agreed that in order to keep it prestigious, it would be awarded roughly every 3 to 5 years.

Derek Hart said that nominations for the award be solicited from membership and Lynn Corcoran suggested that it should be advertised in the newsletter and website. Anne Kelso pointed out that this runs the risk of people feeling snubbed if they are then not successful and that a better idea would be that Council makes the decision and that consideration of the award be a standing agenda item for Council.

The proposal that "A Derrick Rowley Award be created for outstanding contribution to the Society" was put to vote and carried unanimously. It was agreed that guidelines need to be drafted and that Council will do this.

9. Visiting speaker program

Chris introduced Alejandro Lopez, the Visiting Speaker Program Co-ordinator, and thanked him for setting out a sensible set of guidelines for the program. These guidelines were published in the newsletter earlier in the year and are available on the ASI website. Alejandro requested that membership take a proactive role in nominating potential speakers for the program and emphasized that the procedure for submitting a nomination were available on the website (<http://www.wehi.edu.au/collegiate/ASI/visitors.html>).

10. Report from editor of ICB

Chris Parish reported that the journal has continued to sustain a good impact factor, with the 2003 impact factor being 2.531 which is slightly higher than that achieved in 2002 (i.e., 2.494). *ICB* is now ranked 43rd out of a total of 114

immunology journals, which is the same ranking as in the previous year. Thus we continue to have a ranking slightly lower than *Immunology* which is extremely encouraging as *Immunology* could be considered a sister journal, as it is the official journal of the British Society of Immunology. Chris pointed out that 'Special Features' have continued to be very successful during 2004 and will be continued during 2005 and are a valuable contribution to the journal's increased international impact.

Chris reported that during 2004 a new publishing agreement was negotiated with Blackwell Publishing Asia (BPA), the publishers of *Immunology and Cell Biology* since the 1980s. The new agreement contains a number of changes that will benefit all ASI members. These include:

- **Freezing the cost of the ASI member subscription to the journal** at \$35 per annum for the next 5 years.
- **An increased share of ICB revenue to be received by ASI.**
- **Retrodigitising all back issues of the journal over the next 3 years, free of charge.**
- **The improved ICB Publication of the Year Award.** Previous recipients of the *ICB* Publication of the Year award received BPA books and journals to the value of \$800. With the new award the recipient will not only receive \$800 worth of BPA books and journals but an economy class return airfare to the USA or Europe to attend a major scientific meeting. The scholarship will begin in 2005 and will apply to papers published in *ICB* in 2004. The eligibility requirements are simple. You must be the first author on a Research Article/Brief Communication published in *ICB* and be a financial member of ASI in the year in which the paper is published.

A web-based manuscript submission system and editorial office is in the process of coming online during the week of the ASI meeting. The website has been under development for the last 2 months. It will allow authors to submit their manuscripts electronically on the *ICB* website rather than having to post hard copies of their manuscripts to the Editorial Office in Canberra. Authors will also be able to monitor the progress of their manuscript through the reviewing process and resubmit modified manuscripts via the website as well.

Chris raised for discussion the issue of *ICB* publishing, or just printing for the meeting, the abstracts of ASI annual scientific meetings. This year BPA have offered to place all the ASI abstract from the Adelaide meeting on the *ICB* website. They have also suggested that they could provide the abstract booklet at future ASI meetings without charge if they were given a free display booth at the conference. Hilary Warren suggested that cost issues aside, people may not want the abstracts to be published and if we go ahead with this option, people should be given a choice. Geoff Dandie echoed these concerns and said that there were people at this meeting who did not want their abstracts to be published. If this is to go ahead, details would have to be worked out and it should be done in conjunction with Organizing Committee of the 2005 or 2006 meetings.

11. Report from newsletter editor

Phil Hodgkin noted that Miles Davenport had taken over as Editor of the newsletter and felt that the newsletter will do well under his stewardship. As outgoing Editor, Phil thanked Judi Anderson, ASI Secretariat; Council, past and present; and ASI members who have contributed to the newsletter over the years. He solicited contributions and urged members to continue to support the newsletter.

Phil also reported on the inaugural \$100 prize for best article submitted. The 2004 winner, Gordon Ada, contributed three outstanding articles that put his considerable knowledge of the history of Australian immunology on paper for the benefit of us all.

Chris Parish thanked Phil for his work on the newsletter over the years and said that it had gone from strength to strength in his hands.

12. FIMSA/IUIS report

Chris has now been elected as IUIS representative from this region and takes over from Lindsay Dent. Chris thanked Lindsay for his work and active representation of ASI in this forum. Chris reported that the 2007 international conference would be held in Brazil and the 2010 one in Kyoto, Japan. He also reported that the IUIS executive has a strong Australasian connection with Rolf Zinkernagel as the new President and Peter Doherty as the Vice-President of the Society.

IUIS has asked member societies to support teaching programs in developing countries by supplying a list of people willing to serve as Faculty and also supporting some travel costs for Faculty. There was general agreement that Immunology in developing countries should be supported and that ASI could look to be more active in the local areas, like PNG. Several people volunteered to be on the IUIS database to serve as Faculty including: Jim McCluskey, Alan Baxter, Helen Briscoe, Anne Kelso, Lindsay Dent, Guna Karupiah, and Phil Hodgkin. It was agreed that an email should be sent around to membership once the level of financial support and the process of obtaining it was worked out. More senior scientists probably had available travel funds and may not need financial support from ASI and that ASI would fund one person per year.

Australasia is also well represented on FIMSA. Nick King has recently been elected as Vice-President and takes over from Lindsay Dent on the FIMSA Executive. Guna Karupiah would take over from Nick King as ASI's nominated representative. The next FIMSA meeting will be in Korea.

13. Timetable for future meetings

- 2005 Melbourne
- 2006 Auckland
- 2007 Sydney
- 2008 Canberra

1. Other business

Alan Baxter asked about the Kevin Lafferty Debate and queried why it was left off the program in this meeting. Geoff Dandie responded by saying that it was too difficult to fit into the program, as this was a combined meeting with HLDA8. He added that Council had agreed to omit it this year and he reported that the Organizing Committee had proposed that it might be alternated between the President's Report (once in two years). It was felt by the membership that the debate should remain as a fixture of the meetings, whether it was every year or once in two years.

Anne Kelso congratulated the Organizing Committee on an excellent job.

Meeting closed at 2.30 pm.

**Contributions sought for
the ASI Newsletter**

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Phone: 08 8204 4539, Fax: 08 8204 5987

7th Federation of Immunological Societies of Asia-Oceania (FIMSA)/ASI Advanced Training Course in Immunology

Every year or two, FIMSA sponsors a major advanced training course in our region. These are intended to provide educational opportunities for early career immunologists and to foster international co-operation in our region. The latest Course was held in Adelaide from 7-10 December 2004, in the week preceding the 8th HLDA/34th ASI Combined Conference and replaced the post-graduate training day usually held immediately before the annual meeting. ASI, FIMSA, the Japanese Society for Immunology (JSI), the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS), the International Council of Scientific Unions and commercial participants provided excellent sponsorship and other assistance for the Course and this allowed the Organizing Committee to offer international travel awards valued at almost AUD\$2,400 each (16 offered, 15 accepted). International travel award recipients were funded to attend both the Course and Conference and these delegates came from India (4), Pakistan (1), Bangladesh (1), Sri Lanka (2), Thailand (3), China (3) and Japan (1). Additional international delegates who found their own funding came from Singapore, the UK and Japan. ASI also offered additional assistance in the form of travel awards to ASI members residing in Australia and New Zealand. This strong financial support also allowed us to provide all delegates with a low-cost all-inclusive registration fee (\$570) that covered course fees, accommodation, food and most drinks and social activities. Our initial target was 90-100 delegates, but as we were reluctant to turn people away, we oversubscribed and ended up with 107 delegates from twelve countries. More than 40 faculty members contributed to the teaching program as speakers, discussion group leaders, demonstrators and facilitators.

Some of the international speakers had been recruited to participate in the HLDA/ASI Conference and kindly agreed to extend their travel so that they could participate in the Course. Other international speakers were recruited specifically for the Course, but agreed to

stay on for the Conference. So in having the Course as an (independent) satellite of the Conference, both programs were enhanced. We also had outstanding support from Australian immunologists, many of whom gave up almost two weeks of their time to participate in the Course and the Conference and for some, the Council meeting and/or Tumour Immunology Workshop, the latter two events being held over the intervening weekend. Many thanks and congratulations to you all for your great generosity, wisdom, patience and good humour.

As the name suggested, the intention was to produce an advanced course (i.e. beyond undergraduate level) that was interactive and maintained a high level of intensity over four full days. Perhaps inevitably, we had applicants from a broad range of backgrounds and with very different levels of preparation and expectations. Some were only just entering the field of immunology, whereas some had been in immunological research or other areas of science and technology for many years. Many were clearly attracted by the technical emphasis of part of the program.

Delegates and most of the faculty were accommodated at the Adelaide Shores Holiday Village at West Beach and for the

first two days we used buses to access the teaching and research facilities of the University of Adelaide and the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, located in the city centre. This phase of the program began with an exploration of some of the latest technology in cytomics (strategies for getting information out of cells and tissues) and applications in advanced research in immunology. There was a strong emphasis on flow cytometry and other more technical issues in laser microdissection and capture, multiphoton imaging, confocal microscopy, elispot and alternative methods of cell sorting. National and international immunologists gave research-based presentations, but with a more technical edge. In addition, our industry partners, Becton Dickinson, DakoCytomation, Beckman Coulter, MabTech, Millenium and Miltenyi Biotec, allowed us to increase the scope of the course by providing speakers, demonstrators and equipment. This industry support was essential for the first two afternoons, when we had two hour sessions of demonstrations, tutorials and limited hands-on activities. This enabled us to have six flow cytometers operating simultaneously as well as other equipment-based demonstrations and methods-based tutorials.



Lindsay Dent, Chair of the organising committee for the 7th FIMSA training course, steers Chi Ma (FIMSA travel award recipient from Beijing) through the rough waters of immunology (Photo: Nick King)

Days 3 and 4 of the Course were held in The Woolshed, a function complex immediately adjacent to the Holiday Village. The Woolshed was also the venue for the welcome BBQ on the night before the Course and for breakfasts and some lunches and dinners. This phase of the course covered a wide range of important contemporary issues in immunology, mostly in seminar and discussion format. Some delegates were intimidated by the break-out discussion groups and active participation in these was somewhat patchy. However there was generally no shortage of questions from delegates after each presentation and/or at the end of each session. The prizes for questions (not to be confused with “cash for comment”) probably only enhanced this marginally!

We very deliberately committed to a residential course format to maximize interactions between delegates and faculty and this was undoubtedly successful. There were many and varied opportunities for discussions between faculty and delegates, both formal and informal and, as is usually the

case with these courses, most people acknowledged this as a real positive (see below). Although the accommodation was generally of a high standard, there were a few grumbles on this score. As the course was so popular and with limitations on both the number of rooms available and the nature of room layouts (mostly designed for family holidays), some people were grouped together in backpacker-style scenarios, while others had a double bed to themselves and a few groups ended up in “budget-class” cabins. Just before your minds go into speculative freefall about what a backpacker scenario might be, let me offer a few more words of explanation. For some, this meant 3 or 4 people to a bedroom, with some in bunk beds (though other permutations may also have been explored on an *ad hoc* basis). However this is how we kept the course fees low and still provided so much – and it also had other benefits. As we had hoped, delegates got to know each other by living cheek by jowl and through the increasingly raucous dinners and post-dinner carry-on, and as a result many new friendships and networks were generated.

And now for a few comments about the social life. To the organizers’ surprise and embarrassment, on Day One, virtually everyone had left the dinner before the bus had arrived to take them home! However the socializing soon gathered momentum, to the point where most of us were confident we could not take another day of this “educational” stuff. Predictably, many explored the extremities of the twenty four hours available in a day and the dinners were a big part of this. The last Course dinner was held on the HMS Buffalo, a rather comic reconstruction of the first ship to bring European settlers to South Australia. In true naval tradition, at the end of the dinner, those who would not leave until the grog ration had gone down the hatch, were crowded into the focsle. I understand that although it took several hours to suppress this unruly throng, more stringent maritime crowd control methods were not required. A very polite, but by now very relaxed, Chinese delegate was heard to exclaim at the end of the Course, “You Australians certainly



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know how to enjoy yourselves!”. Fortunately, and in keeping with ASI and broader trans-Tasman traditions, I was able to blame the worst of the excesses on the New Zealanders.

Electronic communication was a major part of the pre- and post-course structure. Thousands of emails were used to keep people in touch and mostly, this worked well. A website available only to delegates and faculty was the main conduit for information. Reading and other materials recommended by the faculty were available as pdf files and web links were used to provide information about accommodation, Adelaide, transport and other matters, prior to the Course. Much of the reading material was subsequently made available in hard copy as part of the Course Handbook. After the Course, many of the faculty very generously made available via the website, versions of their presentations, so months later their efforts continue to benefit delegates.

The Organizing Committee would like to thank everyone the delegates, faculty and industry partners and sponsors, who participated and otherwise contributed in many ways. In addition to the organizations and companies listed above, we would like to acknowledge financial support and/or assistance in-kind from GropPep, Hanson Institute/IMVS, Image and Copy Centre, Jomar Scientific, Novartis, Tranmere Hardware, University of Adelaide and University of South Australia.

In particular, ASI owes a great debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the very small Organizing Committee, John Hayball and Bruce Lyons, to Connor Thomas for setting up the website, and to an only slightly larger team of local students and scientists who contributed in various ways to the organization and delivery of the course.

*Lindsay Dent
Chair, Organizing Committee*

Comments from students

“The FIMSA/ASI Advanced Training Course was very successful, and not only ! facilitated the communion with one another but also improved my knowledge and experience.”

*Dr Wang Haibin
No 302 hospital, PLA
Beijing, 100039
China*

Shenanigans? Plenty. International Stars? Only the best. Home town heroes? But of course. The week long course roamed from advanced techniques such as laser microdissection and capture to the latest musings of Pippa Marrack and the latest fancies of Chris Parish (not the horses, but the eosinophils). The week gave us plenty of good opportunities to get down and talk some drivel and also discuss some great ideas with leading immunologists from Australia and abroad. I would highly recommend this course to anybody looking to meet other students in their field, broaden their range of techniques and catch some terrific seminars.

*Kirsten Fairfax
Walter and Elisa Hall Institute
Melbourne*

The 7th FIMSA provided the right kind of a platform to learn advanced immunological techniques, have better insight into various aspects of immunology and nonetheless, to interact with eminent scientists and research students. Informative lectures followed by the elaborated discussions helped me understand the subject in a better way.

*Ms Neel Kamal
Molecular Biochemistry and Diagnostics Division
Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology
Delhi*

“Spot the Diva” Competition



Three attendees read the latest *Nature* articles to relax during the 7th FIMSA training course. All three are divas in their own way, but can you name all three, and tell us which one is a ‘real’ diva and why? Answer on page 15.

(Photo and idea by Nick King, University of Sydney)

Report on the ASI 2004 Annual Scientific Meeting

The annual scientific meeting of the Australasian Society for Immunology has for decades been the place to be seen for the up and coming, those with their fingers on the pulse, and even (dare we say it) the forefathers (and mothers) of the immunological community. The 34th meeting, held on the picturesque shores of the Torrens River in Adelaide, was no exception in this regard. What was exceptional was the cohabitation with the 8th International Conference on Human Leucocyte Differentiation Antigens and the 27th Annual Meeting of the Australasian Flow Cytometry Group at the same venue.

The Flow Guys largely kept to themselves somewhere in the basement of the conference centre – emerging pale skinned and bleary eyed to partake in their corporate funded festivities. The HLDA participants, on the other hand, had a major influence on the character of the conference. Their meeting brought a larger international crowd than is usual, and it attracted some superb guest speakers. It was clear, however that their meeting had its own character and format, which differed in many significant ways from that of ASI meetings – and the venue (and attendance) wasn't quite big enough to accommodate the two of them. Perhaps the saddest casualty was the Kevin Lafferty Debate. Many people were disappointed to miss out on hearing the Society's premier wits battling it out for oratory dominance. If our new traditions die within three years, what sort of society will we become?

Geoff Dandie, Susanne Heinzl and the rest of the ASI organising committee, and Heddy Zola in his role as HLDA8 Chair, are to be congratulated for the superb standard of the plenary sessions. Rammensee, Botto and Cerundolo were a pleasure to listen to, and Pippa Marrack somehow managed to be herself, and her husband (sometimes simultaneously), with great success – although she did promise to tell us the secret of life and instead only told us why T cells are specific for MHC – a fraction short of the promise. The New Investigator Session was marvellous; Cindy Ma (Centenary Institute), Alberto Pinzon-Charry (QIMR), and Yoshihiro Hayakawa (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre) are to be congratulated for their professional presentations and

especially Amanda de Mestre (JCSMR) for winning the most prestigious prize awarded by the Society. Clearly the future of the Society is in good hands.

Chris Parish presented the President's lecture, which Phil Hodgkin called the Outstanding President's Lecture, managing to be right in both senses. Chris has again proven to be the quiet achiever, providing riveting evidence of a role in tumour surveillance for eosinophils, a leukocyte population never before placed in the same sentence as "riveting".

Anne Kelso presented the Burnet oration in an unusual style in these days of self promotion. She was almost deferential in meticulously acknowledging the contributions of her fellow ASI members with whom she has been constructing a new, undoubtedly more predictive, approach to immunology. She conveyed perfectly the importance of considering stochastic factors when considering biological systems, and introduced the "in" word for the meeting: RANDOM. As in "It's like, totally RANDOM?".

My favourite talk of the meeting was, in fact, an introduction – by David Mason for the Cesar Milstein Oration by Laurence Bousmell. As was entirely appropriate, he told an anecdote from the life of Cesar (repeated here for those unable to attend):

One day I (David Mason) was collecting my lunch in the staff cafeteria when I said to Cesar, "Good morning Cesar. It's a nice day today." To which, Cesar said, "No ... No, I don't think so ... I don't think it's a nice day at all ... it's a ... [looks out window, thinks, turns back] No. I'm wrong – it IS a nice day today." This interaction showed the simple characteristics that made Cesar a brilliant scientist: He doubted every contention; he tested every hypothesis; and if he was wrong, he had no problem in admitting it.

*Alan G Baxter
Comparative Genomics Centre
James Cook University, Townsville*

Challenging the Chair

I must remember at the next ASI meeting to take my ear protectors! Fortunately the Stamford Grand at Glenelg conveniently had a balcony for some of us to escape the distortion that masquerades as music. That was fine, except that the door refused to remain shut and the only solution was to keep it shut with a chair.

What followed was an interesting display of personality traits as ASI members negotiated with the chair for entry to or exit from the balcony. On one extreme there were those with total disregard for the chair, pushing it aside with anger (and of course not returning it to its rightful place). At the other extreme were those who thought better than to challenge the chair, and found another door. It certainly gave a lot of amusement to some of us – deciding that this was certainly a personality evaluator!

*Hilary Warren
JCSMR, ANU*

ASI Councillors' News

S.A./N.T. News

The South Australian branch was busy organising and hosting the HLDA8/ASI meeting in Adelaide in December. The organising committee was extremely pleased with turn out of the meeting. The FIMSA/ASI training course in the week before the main meeting, the Tumour Immunology Workshop and the HLDA8/ASI34 conference all have been able to attract a list of invited speakers and submitted abstracts of outstanding quality. From all the positive feedback we had so far, we are confident that the delegates also saw the meeting as a success, scientifically and in all other perspectives as well. Delegates and participants seemed to have a good time. I would like to extend my thanks to all members of the organising committee for doing a great job, to all our sponsors for supporting us, but most importantly to all delegates who made this meeting the success we think it was.

The main meeting was preceded by the Tumour Immunology Workshop. Again, all the work being put into the organisation by John Hayball and his helpers was absolutely worthwhile. Last but not least in the listing of major events being held in Adelaide, I need to mention the FIMSA/ASI postgraduate training course organised by Lindsay Dent, John Hayball and Bruce Lyons. I'm sure that everybody who was fortunate enough to attend this 4-day course will agree with me that this was an enormous success. I picked up many positive comments from students as well as the teaching faculty. I'd say one of the nicest compliments came from Pippa Marrack saying how much she enjoyed being part of the course and even more important, how much she had learned.

I would also like to congratulate the two students from South Australia who won the ASI student award to attend the HLDA8/ASI meeting and the FIMSA training course, Claire Jessup and Paul Giacomini. Congratulations and well done!

Our local activities were somewhat reduced this year due to the organising of the annual meeting. We did however

hold our annual student meeting. Again, all the judges were stunned by the quality of the presentations given by the local honours and PhD students. Congratulations to the winner of the first prize, Paul Giacomini (who scored twice with this and the travel prize for the meeting) and the runner up Alison Care.

I'd also like to welcome all the new members in South Australia who joined ASI during that last year!

I wish everybody a good and productive 2005!

*Susanne Heinzl
SA/NT Councillor*

Victorian News



Welcome all to another year and the first newsletter for 2005. There has been little activity over the summer break on the local front. As the Victorian/Tasmanian representative, we would like to congratulate South Australia on their efforts in putting together the ASI annual conference in Adelaide. 2005 will be another busy year for the local IgV council as we work towards the national scientific meeting scheduled for December 4-8, 2005 in Melbourne. A reminder that due to the annual scientific meeting being held in Victoria, there will not be the annual IgV meeting in October at Beechworth. Apart from that, many other activities that IgV provides will still be scheduled.

This is a good time to remind you all again of the benefits of being an ASI member. As scientists, we are supporting our national society and the many benefits it provides. There is annual scientific meeting, local membership support, travel bursaries and the scientific journal. The membership offers excellent value for active members, especially students. With the annual meeting in Melbourne, it is a good time to be a member. I would urge all of you to promote ASI membership to your colleagues and students. Membership information can be found on the ASI website or interested parties can contact me by email at: frank.alderuccio@med.monash.edu.au.

ASI 2005 – Melbourne

Arrangements are well underway for the ASI annual meeting in Melbourne. The theme for the meeting is Genetics and the Immune Response. The meeting is being organised in conjunction with the 14th International HLA and Immunogenetics (IHI) special interest group who will be holding their meeting immediately prior to the ASI conference from 29 November-3 December 2005.

A website for the meeting has been established. Take a few minutes to bookmark the site and pre-register your interest in attending the ASI meeting in Melbourne.



Relevant web sites are:

ASI-IHI: <http://www.asi2005.org.au/>
IHI Workshop:
<http://www.microbiol.unimelb.edu.au/14ihiws/>

*Frank Alderuccio
Councillor*

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8.30am - 4.30pm

Queensland News

The ACT branch of the ASI ranked the postgraduate students applying for the ASI bursaries to attend the annual meeting in Adelaide. The three winners were *Alberto Pinzon-Charry*, *Tammy Maxwell* and *Kelly Kenney* who also received funding from another source and relinquished to the ASI bursary, which was then passed to *Louise Randall*. The work of these candidates merited the selection of two (APC, LR) for oral presentations and one (APC) for the New Investigator Award.

We would like to thank the organising committee in Adelaide (Su Heinzl and the rest of the team) for an excellent and friendly meeting from which we all came back inspired.

The year starts heavily loaded by grant applications but planning for Queensland activities is already on its way. Keep your calendar free for August 18 & 19 when we will have the BIG (Brisbane Immunology Group) annual retreat in SeaWorld, Gold Coast. Prof Richard Locksley has confirmed that he will attend and the complete list of invited speakers will be published in the next newsletter.

J. Alejandro Lopez
Councillor

Report on the ASI Visiting Speaker Program

Two international speakers are now lined up to visit Australia this year.

Between July 12 and 19, Professor Redwan Moqbel from the Department of Medicine, University of Alberta, Canada, a world expert in eosinophil physiology and response to cancer, asthma and allergic inflammation will be an ASI-sponsored visitor. (<http://www.departmentofmedicine.ualberta.ca/prg/moqbel.htm>)

Dr. Richard M. Locksley, from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the University of California San Francisco, well known by his seminal contribution to the Th1/Th2 ideas will be an ASI invited speaker in August (<http://www.hhmi.org/research/investigators/locksley.html>).

The precise schedule of both visits will be finalised and publicised soon.

Once again, we would like to encourage all ASI members to propose prominent scientists to be invited (or sponsored) to visit the branches. For details on the Awards and deadlines for proposals, please refer to the website.

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Vaxine Pty Ltd is currently recruiting researchers and management staff with experience in immunology, vaccines or product development to work on projects to develop novel vaccines and vaccine adjuvants for a range of infectious, autoimmune and neoplastic conditions. Competitive salary packages are available for negotiation.

Vaxine is a private vaccine development company that has recently relocated from Canberra to Adelaide.

Vaxine has a range of products currently going into Phase 1 human trials and plans to seek a listing on the Australian Stock Exchange in 12–18 months. It has recently been the recipient of a large START grant for its vaccine development program.

For further information contact:
Professor Nik Petrovsky, Chairman,
Email: nikolai.petrovsky@flinders.edu.au
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CRITICAL DATES

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION DEADLINE	FRIDAY 6 MAY 2005
EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DEADLINE	MONDAY 20 JUNE 2005

Organised by The Australian Society for
Cytokines, Inflammation and Leukocytes

Under the auspices of the International
Association of Inflammation Societies

Christmas Goodwill meets Petty Violence in Adelaide – A day in the life of a student rep

In a stunning display of insight, ASI recently decided to appoint their first student rep. I approve of that! But then something happened and this gossamer vision suddenly involved me. My lot in life – along with tripping over nothing, losing my car keys, and an embarrassing tendency to find everything hilarious while in seminars – appears to be student representation. You can't argue with destiny.

I didn't, anyway. I just shut up and agreed.

As a result of the shutting up (a strategic career move my supervisor has been advocating for years now), I attended the December ASI council meeting in Adelaide.

I was looking forward to it. This was where the magic happened. I pictured being privy to secret handshakes, abusive partisan politics, emotional appeals to Mr Speaker, and possibly being able to cross the floor in a heartrending conscience vote over student bursaries. I would be a tug-of-love student rep, caught in the riptide between student justice and rigid bureaucracy. It was a plum role for Julia Roberts and I was going to retire in luxury at age 30.

Instead, I found wholesome egg and lettuce sandwiches, an ageing overhead projector, and polite, intelligent discussion on agenda items, which almost always ended in decision by consensus. A typical chat went something like:

Chris (president): Well, we've made a modest profit on the last ASI meeting. What are we going to do with that money?

Norbert (treasurer): I know ... golly, why don't we spend it?

All: Oh yes, that's a *great* idea Norbert! Let's return it to the members.

Anne (seeing Julia vanish): Why don't we give it to me?

All: Oh yes, we could do that, good idea Anne. Thanks for your input! ... Or we could give it to the membership. That's a good idea too.

Anne: Oh of course, you're quite right. Sorry, I must be having another of my seizures.

All: Oh, but your idea was good too, and thanks for sharing it! Don't apologise. More egg and lettuce sandwiches anyone? Go on, be a devil - *have two!*

In the end, it was eight hours of responsible decision making before we left with the hearty glow of a job well done. I was so full of calm efficiency, justice and goodwill that I had to kick a busking Santa in Rundle Mall until it wore off. He looked like a Crows supporter anyway.

Speaking of community service, ASI are revamping their strong commitment to look after their student members, so if you've got any suggestions (other than for me to shut up) as to how we could help you get more out of your membership, please email me. We're planning a student function at next year's ASI conference in Melbourne to improve interaction between speakers and students, and, with some help, the student page in this newsletter will hopefully be full of things other than my cunningly tinted accounts of meetings.

So – I'd be interested to hear about anything at all that concerns you as a student: news and views about your PhD (awards, gloating elation at your stunning prospects, etc), student life, submission (thesis or cowering), supervisors, conference reviews, the sheer unexpectedness of the box pleat mini (come on, who saw that coming?) ... whatever floats your boat. This page is for anything that will interest students, so you could either send me an account I can publish or send me the problem/news and we'll see where it goes.

My email address is:

Anne.Fletcher@med.monash.edu.au

And thanks to Lauren Young for our first Motivational Message for 2005:

Becoming an air-hostess is not the goldmine it seems.

*Cheerio,
Anne Fletcher
Hapless student rep
Helpless science nerd
Hopelessly devoted to you*

Have you applied for an ASI student bursary yet?

ASI offer a number of travel awards, covering conference registration and airfares. Check out the details at <http://www.wehi.edu.au/collegiate/ASI/> or see your state councillor

NEXT ISSUE: SUPERVISORS

*You can't live with them and you can't live with them! **

What's yours like? We'll cover all the major categories.

Have you got any supervisory anecdotes? Names will be changed to protect the doblers. Go on, it's therapeutic as well as altruistic.

* it's completely unethical and can only end in trouble.

An invitation and a request to all ASI members

to contribute copy that they think might be interesting, useful, historical, humorous or thought provoking.

- We invite our student membership to voice their views on issues that interest or directly concern them.
- It's our newsletter, so let's support it and strive to make it even better.
- The ASI newsletter comes out 4 times a year and we welcome your contributions.
- **AND NOW YOU COULD WIN \$100 FOR THE BEST ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN THE NEWSLETTER!**

One conference – Two views

Do you remember the time?

Well, I'm told I have to remember what happened at ASI and write something down. Six weeks on, it's a little hard. To tell you the truth, it was pretty hard to remember what had happened the day after. But let me think ...

I'm remembering now ... There were early morning wake-ups, grey and gloomy weather, long walks to the convention centre, mountains upon mountains of posters, dinners, pseudo 'cocktail parties' minus the cocktails, and there were talks. Yes! How I loved the talks! Plenaries, orations, symposia, workshops – I went to them all and drank deeply from the font of other people's knowledge. Vincenzo Cerundolo and Masaru Taniguchi with the NKTs, and Anne Kelso, who made T cells look like a work of art. Before ASI I didn't even know what plenary meant. There were plenty of NKT talks but I must admit I ran madly from session to session, in mortal fear of missing a single 12 minute gem. In the words of Willy Wonka "so much time, so little to do ... Stop! Wait! Reverse that".

And then there was the conference dinner, or so I'm told. I'm recounting now the flash of the night lights, a smoky atmosphere, copious amounts of heavenly juice, the constant swaying of sweating bodies, and the doof of the pumping sound box. Oh yes, ASI was grand! With the likes of Hans, Martin and the Melbourne Uni Crew celebrating the recent advances in modern day immunology, ASI was truly something to remember!

Jonno

Jonathon Coquet is a PhD student supervised by Assoc Prof Dale Godfrey at the University of Melbourne. In his spare time he writes under the name "L. Ron Hubbard"

ASI in Adelaide

Having read Jonno's account, I think we might have been attending different conferences! (I did hear that the Australian Society for Intoxication was in town at the time). ASI 2004 was my first conference, so I wasn't sure what to expect, but if I had to sum up the experience, I'd say it was both useful and inspiring, and to be honest, a little overwhelming for the first-timer. I thought the plenary sessions were fantastic but I particularly enjoyed the 'snapshot science' of the symposia. Probably the most valuable aspect of this forum was the broad array of techniques, cutting edge research, and scientific thought that I otherwise wouldn't have been exposed to. Even when I was listening to a talk that I wouldn't ordinarily have considered to be 100% relevant to my particular field, it was amazing how many bits and pieces related back.

I must agree with Jonno, however, that the cocktail sessions were a little light on for cocktails. The conference dinner was a great night out, a bit messier for some than others, but I was impressed at the standard of booty-shaking that went on. The less said about the limericks the better though. As poets, you all make fantastic Immunologists.

Overall, I think the conference broadened my knowledge and changed my outlook, so I'm really looking forward to ASI 2005 in Melbourne.

Katerina Vlahos

Katerina is a PhD student supervised by Assoc Prof Richard Boyd at Monash University. She is a Libran who enjoys moonlit nights, dancing, and walks on the beach.

UPCOMING LECTURES & CONFERENCES

20–24 August, 2005

7th World Congress of Inflammation
"Inflammation – the key to much Pathology"
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
www.inflammation2005.com
Abstract Deadline – 6 May 2005
Earlybird registration – 20 June 2005

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Institute of Medical Research**
WEHI Seminars on the Web:
www.wehi.edu/seminars/

Spot the Diva – Answer

The three people pictured are (left to right) Barbara Fazekas de St Groth (Centenary Institute), Philipa Marrack (University of Colorado) and Carol Hill (wife of Ken Shortman). They are all divas in their own way: Philipa Marrack is a Fellow of the Royal Society, Member of the National Academy of Sciences, former president of the American Association of Immunologists, and one of the best known immunologists in the US; Barbara Fazekas is an NHMRC Principal Research Fellow with an interest in T cells (who is sometimes known for her vocal contributions to conference discussions), but the correct answer is Carol Hill who was, in an earlier life, an operatic soprano (a soloist with the New Zealand Opera, when it existed).

Sustaining Membership

ASI Inc acknowledges the support of the following sustaining members:

- Jomar Diagnostics
- Dynal Biotech Pty Ltd

The Value of Theoretical Immunology cont from p.16

explanation of why Burnet published his clonal selection theory in the *Australian Journal of Science* in 1959 is that it was one of the few journals at the time that was willing to publish unsolicited theoretical articles without a fuss. In an attempt to overcome this deficiency when I became the Editor-in-Chief of *Immunology and Cell Biology* in 1992 one of my first acts was to introduce "Theoretical Articles" as a manuscript category. Since that time *ICB* has published a considerable number of theoretical papers from many countries. So if you are contemplating writing a theoretical paper or have been inspired to write one after reading this article please remember that *ICB* is very willing to consider your manuscript for publication.

The Value of Theoretical Immunology

Chris Parish

Division of Immunology and Genetics
John Curtin School of Medical Research



Being the retiring ASI President, Miles Davenport thought it an appropriate time for me to contribute a short, hopefully provocative, piece to the Society's Newsletter so here goes.

Working for many years as an experimental immunologist I have gained the distinct impression that the field of "theoretical immunology" is greatly undervalued by many of my scientific colleagues. I suspect that if the 500+ immunologists that attended the recent ASI annual scientific meeting in Adelaide had been asked what they thought of theoretical immunology many would have the view that experiment-based research is the major driving force in the field, with the theoretical approach merely complementing the experimentalist. Referees of research papers often epitomise this view. In my experience as an author and journal editor, referees often chastise authors for including speculative statements in the discussion section of papers. In fact, in my own papers I no longer include explanatory figures that attempt to provide a model for the data. Such figures are more trouble than they are worth and, in some cases, even jeopardise acceptance of the manuscript!

On the other hand, if the same 500+ immunologists assembled in Adelaide last December had been asked who they regarded as the most influential Australian immunologist of the 20th century Sir Macfarlane Burnet would have been chosen by many. But the extraordinary feature of Burnet's career is that his contributions to immunology are entirely theoretical in nature. Lets briefly review his contributions to immunology to highlight this point. First, in 1949 Burnet proposed the theory of acquired immunological tolerance, which suggested that to avoid the problem of autoimmunity the developing immune system is made "tolerant of" or "non-responsive to" self antigens. I believe Burnet carried out a limited number of experiments with influenza virus in an attempt to prove his theory without

success. Soon afterwards Sir Peter Medawar used models of transplantation tolerance to validate the theory, with Burnet and Medawar sharing a Nobel Prize in 1960 for this work. Not a bad effort for a theoretical immunologist!

This was only the beginning for Burnet. In 1957 he published in the *Australian Journal of Science* his clonal selection theory, one of the most influential theories ever proposed in immunology. A question that is frequently asked is why was this seminal theory first published in such an obscure Australian journal. My understanding is that Burnet feared that another immunologist, Niels Jerne, was thinking along the same lines and might be close to proposing a similar theory. Burnet reasoned that the *Australian Journal of Science* was the ideal journal as it would publish his manuscript rapidly. A less charitable explanation is that Burnet regarded the theory a tad speculative so buried it in an obscure journal. Thus he established scientific priority for the idea but would not be ridiculed by his scientific colleagues if it was subsequently proven to be incorrect. The fact that soon after publication Burnet had no hesitation in widely publicising the theory suggests that the latter explanation is incorrect.

Finally Burnet proposed his tumour immunosurveillance hypothesis in 1967, the hypothesis being based on less well developed theories of Paul Ehrlich (published in 1909) and Lewis Thomas (published in 1959). This theory, which suggests that one function of the immune system is to eliminate tumours, fell out of favour for decades but has had a rebirth in the last 5 years. Thus, Burnet's outstanding reputation in immunology is entirely based on his theoretical contributions to the discipline. He made little or no attempt to experimentally verify his theories (although Burnet was a superb experimental virologist) but his ideas were so provocative that they inspired others to experimentally test them. To me this is the essence of Burnet's contribution. As in the field of theoretical physics (a highly respected discipline based entirely on theory), his concepts provided a good model of the available experimental data and, most

importantly, made predictions that were unexpected but experimentally testable.

I should emphasise that Burnet is not the only individual to make major theoretical contributions to immunology. There have been many others. For example, the proposal in 1989 by the late Charlie Janeway that the innate immune system plays a crucial role in activating adaptive immunity was an elegant reinterpretation of data that had been ignored by immunologists for decades, ie, why adjuvants are needed for the induction of strong immune responses. Similarly, the two-signal model of immune induction proposed by Bretscher and Cohen in the late 1960s has influenced the interpretation of experimental results for decades.

It is hard to believe that theoretical immunology will not continue to shape the field in the 21st century. One of the beauties of this branch of immunology is that it does not require large research grants and expensive items of equipment. All that is needed, I believe, is the ability to step back from current dogma and the detailed minutia of experimental data and think of theoretical answers to fundamental immunological questions. Also, Burnet is definitely a good role model. For example, it must be remembered that he stringently applied evolutionary concepts to his theoretical models. He was acutely aware of the continual interplay between a pathogen and the immune system of the host which is, undoubtedly, an extreme example of Darwinian natural selection.

Finally a comment about publishing theoretical articles. During my scientific career I have been acutely aware of the difficulties faced in publishing theoretical articles in mainstream scientific journals. My own

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