N E W S L E T T E R

Australasian Society for Immunology Incorporated

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This year marks the retirement of pioneering viral immunologist Bob Blanden from the John Curtin School of Medical Research. In this issue two of Bob's former students pay tribute to his work and unique brand of mentorship. The first is by Tikki Pang. Nick King's article begins on page 6.

Of Injecting Mice and Watching Birds – Lasting Impressions of a Great Mentor

Tikki Pang, Research Policy & Cooperation, World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland

"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn," Albert Einstein once wrote. I thought about this twenty-nine years ago when I walked into Bob Blanden's office and was greeted by a poster of birds on the wall (the flying kind!) and a stack of mouse cages just outside the door (a smell that one never forgets!). As a young BSc Honours graduate in biochemistry I was faced with a difficult decision: after a disastrous and wasted five months pursuing a PhD at the University of Sydney, would I commit to becoming Bob's student – would he help me learn and capture that elusive bird called a PhD? I was to become only his *second* student and there were other possibilities of working with bigger, more established research groups. The offer of a scholarship and the chance to stay on in Canberra with familiar surroundings and old friends were factors, but it was Bob's persuasiveness and down-to-earth, friendly manner which made the decision easy in the end.

Bob's work to that point reflected his belief in the importance of cytotoxic T cells (CTL) in controlling viral infection, in a field previously dominated by the role of neutralizing antibodies. Although the CTL field was originally set by Cerrotini and Brunner in the late '60s and early '70s, I believe it was Bob's "trilogy" of papers at this time (Eur. J. Immunol. 1974, 4, 63-67, 68-72; 1975, 5, 122-127) with Ian Gardner (his *first* PhD student!) and Narelle Bowern which catalysed the entire field through the development of a convenient, reliable, reproducible and robust CTL assay – which, by the end of my three years, I was probably able to do blindfolded! So I joined this small group and began an exhilarating and stimulating 3-year apprenticeship in the intricacies of the CTL response to ectromelia virus infection in mice, in what must remain as one of the most interesting, powerful and biologically fascinating experimental models, and which has led to some of the most important discoveries in cellular immunology. The key qualities of good mentorship was also revealed to me during this period.

Bob was always accessible and ready to offer advice and guidance. We had frequent interactions, perhaps facilitated by the fact that we actually shared the same office!. I used to sit at my desk right behind him so I had access to him virtually at any time. A unique feature of the ANU was also a factor-at the John Curtin School of Medical Research: Bob had virtually no teaching or administrative responsibilities and was a full time researcher who was physically there the whole day. My experience was perhaps rather special and unique but to budding graduate students: don't underestimate the importance of accessibility. During my disastrous

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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

In this issue we pay tribute to the career of Bob Blanden who retires this year. We have reminiscences from Bob's former students Nick King and Tikki Pang. Regrettably I have never met Tikki, but Nick and I arrived at the John Curtin School of Medical Research to begin our PhD on the same day. Nick from South Africa via Adelaide, and me from Perth. We shared the feeling of 'coming in from the scientific outer regions' and became great friends. We also shared an acute naivety about the science and scientists we would find at the famous JCSMR. We quickly learned a lot about both and our markedly different experiences were a point of much discussion and comparison.

I came to greatly admire Nick's supervisor Bob Blanden for his manner of understated guidance, his passion for truth and clarity, and his generosity of spirit. It took a while to see how he worked and to realise his hands off approach was quite deliberate. He guided and aimed, rather than directed. Once he had you pointed in the right direction he held back, not taking credit while keeping things on track. The contrast between Bob and Kevin Lafferty, my PhD supervisor, was striking. Kevin, it is fair to say, micromanaged his lab. He liked to be directly in control of everything going on in his laboratory. The Blanden method of guidance was so different it left a great impression on me, as it clearly did for Tikki and Nick. By the time I finished my PhD, Bob Blanden's style of management was the one I most wanted to emulate in my own career.

Bob was more than an inspiring mentor – he was sharp in debate and mercilessly methodical and logical. He would put to the sword 'stupid' ideas and get excited by new publications of interesting data, frequently imposing his own interesting interpretation. Bob's domain of science was the T cell and he lived through and participated in its glory years. There were many triumphs and near misses, but he always gave the impression that he enjoyed the ride. His passion and enthusiasm for science has inspired many. Only scientists at the top of the tree who are secure in their ability are generous to the extent that Bob was. Bob Blanden is one of the best Australian scientists of his era. I hope he continues to inspire us with ideas for some time to come.

Phil Hodgkin

First Australian B Cell Dialogue, 2003

The first Australian B cell Dialogue was held at WEHI August 14–16.
Judging from the amount of IgM, IgG and IgE consumed it was a great success!

Of Injecting Mice and Watching Birds ... (cont)

stint in Sydney, I met with my supervisor four times in five months - he was hardly available due to his heavy involvement in teaching, administration and outside consulting. For a starting PhD student, there is nothing more demoralising than not getting regular feedback from your supervisor on your efforts and the progress of your work.

Bob also had an unrivalled, passionate and infectious enthusiasm for science, which was coupled with a selflessness and willingness to share his treasure trove of knowledge and experience with others, students and colleagues alike. One of my clearest memories from the heady days of the discovery of H-2 restriction was when Rolf Zinkernagel and Peter Doherty came into our shared office one day in 1974 and described the first results of their ground-breaking experiments and asked for Bob's opinion. I vividly remember Bob's palpable excitement at hearing the results followed unhesitatingly by his advice and guidance as to what they may consider doing next. The rest, as we all know, is history, culminating in the award of the 1996 Nobel Prize for Medicine to Rolf and Peter for their discoveries concerning the specificity of the cell mediated immune defence. My fellow PhD students at the time working in other labs (Wendy Davidson, Malcolm Dunlop, Yvonne Rosenberg, David Jackson and others) would also regularly make their way to our office and discuss their work and seek advice. Bob taught us rigorous analytical thinking and "intelligent scepticism - never to blindly accept the findings of others and to always consider alternative explanations for experimental results. Perhaps the only other subject which could compete with Bob's passion for immunology was bird watching. However, he never quite succeeded in getting me interested in the kind of birds he was interested in – at that stage of life my preference was definitely for the walking and talking kind!

In addition to being knowledgeable about the current state of the science, a good supervisor also needs to be technically savvy. This is especially important in the early stages of a PhD studentship when one is struggling with unfamiliar techniques and more concerned with "how do I get this technique to work-and start getting some results?" than with "what are the profound conceptual implications of my work?". Bob was always ready to "roll his sleeves" at any time and never hesitated to give what was literally hands-on help. I have fond memories of him coming down to the animal house, showing and helping me to inject mice by various routes, and demonstrating how to perform thymectomies on adult mice. With Ian Gardner, we even had races to see how many mice we could inject in 30 minutes by the intravenous route! The end result was a smooth familiarisation period, early confidence in my technical abilities, and that all important first set of experimental results-a great confidence booster. Bob was as excited as I was when I showed him my first set of data.

Bob also held the view that regular review and consolidation of the work as it progressed was very important. Also, he insisted that manuscripts be written and submitted to academic journals as soon as we both felt that a piece of the research could stand on its own. Importantly, he made it clear that it was ***I, not he,*** who was going to come up with the first draft! This was rather traumatic at the beginning, especially for someone whose mother tongue was not English, but, with his help, advice and encouragement, it was something I learnt fairly quickly and learned to actually enjoy doing. Like many a PhD student, I still remember the joy at having my first paper accepted for publication. Bob also shared the pain of rejection we have all experienced - in one instance waxing passionately about how he was sure that it was a certain individual (a Nobel Laureate, no less) who had rejected one of our submissions. He had come to this conclusion after comparing the typeface on the reviewer's comments to a letter he had received earlier from the same person! During my time as his PhD student, he instilled in me the love of writing and the importance of communicating science succinctly and clearly. The ultimate pay-off, however, was when the time came for writing the PhD thesis. This usually traumatic exercise was greatly facilitated by the fact that one had already published most of the research. When the time came to apply for my first job at the end of my PhD, I'm sure it did my application no harm to be able to list several published papers resulting from my PhD work even before the degree was officially awarded.

In later years, after capturing the PhD bird, I have also come to realize that these qualities I learnt from Bob have an impact well beyond a career in academic science. I made a major career move from bench science to research policy and the very same qualities I learned from Bob have served me well in a large United Nations agency dealing with global health issues, as it no doubt will for those moving into other, science-related career paths. Technical knowledge and credibility, coupled with the willingness to openly offer advice and share knowledge with colleagues dealing with a broad range of issues, is a great promoter for developing collegiality and team-work in a setting which is often beset with petty bureaucracy; a setting often more concerned with doing things by the book than with actually doing something. In an environment where experimental skills are no longer a yardstick, writing and communicating skills become a premium-clear and succinct policy briefings and presentations based on scientific evidence, often with far-reaching implications, are requested at short notice for superiors, other international organizations, national governments and the media. As the United Nations system struggles to maintain its place in the troubled global arena, it needs to be increasingly knowledge-driven and science-based. I am forever indebted to Bob Blanden for emphasizing the importance of, and teaching the skills for, sharing knowledge and communicating science - clearly good birds to have in hand!. As Kahil Gibran said "The teacher if he is indeed wise does not teach or bid you enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind". I have reason to be grateful.

Aims and Objectives of the Immunology Association of Papua New Guinea (IAPNG)

24th July 2003

The Editor

The Executive of the Immunology Association of Papua New Guinea (IAPNG), sends you greetings, and thanks you for acknowledging its existence. It furthermore, thanks you for inviting us to feature in your Newsletter.

The Association was formed in 2001, in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea, under the initiative of Dr C.E. Anyiwo. It is a professional group established within the University and open to everyone interested in advancing the subject of immunology, within and outside Papua New Guinea.

Its first meeting took place on the 13th March 2001, in the Pathology seminar room, UPNG School of Medicine and Health Sciences. It was at this meeting that Dr Anyiwo delivered the first key-note address on the "Fundamentals of Immunology" to an audience comprising mostly medical students, many of whom are now interns.

The School Administration, under the leadership of its Executive Dean, Professor Mathias Sapuri, formally endorsed its formation on the 5th June 2001. On the 6th June 2003, the National Secretary of Health, Dr Nicholas Mann, then officially inaugurated the Association. Professor Sapuri and Dr Mann both serve as Patrons.

The Association has an Executive, and a Constitution. Since the month of March 2001, it has been actively organizing monthly academic seminars, discussing the immunological basis of common diseases in Papua New Guinea, and other tropical issues such as transplantation, application of monoclonal antibodies and autoimmunity. To date, 16 different seminar subjects (or topics) have been presented by medical students and academic staff. Undoubtedly, these seminars continue to stimulate interest in immunology as evidenced by questions and discussions generated by these topics. Attendance is open to anyone irrespective of whether or not they want to join the Association.

The main objective of this Association is to stimulate interest in Immunology, a subject where there is at present considerable lack of specialists. Immunology, undoubtedly, continues to have relevance in medicine and biological sciences, particularly in the pathogenesis, diagnosis, and the management of many diseases.

The primary aim is to groom for the future a crop of young and graduating doctors, laboratory technologists, etc., who will study the immunological mechanisms of common diseases in Papua New Guinea. The membership is open to any persons interested in advancing the subject of Immunology. The participation of notable academics from the School is a source of inspiration and encouragement to many members, both new and old.

In May 2003, the General Assembly of the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) voted in great majority to accepted IAPNG as a member.

Following the acceptance as a member of IUIS, IAPNG paid its 2003 membership dues and is full member of the Union. We, therefore, now look forward to collaborating with other members of IUIS, such as ASI and FIMSA, to advance Immunology in our region.

Thank you.
Yours In Immunology,
Gelinde Narekine
(Secretary)

11th Frank and Bobbie Fenner Conference Adventures in Immunology and Microbiology

28 – 29 November 2003

The John Curtin School of Medical Research, Canberra

Speakers: Gordon Ada, Robert Ashman, Robert Blanden, Gerry Both, Peter Bretscher, Peter Doherty, Frank Fenner, Andrew Franklin, Guna Karupiah, Ursula Kees, Nick King, Mario Lobigs, Arno Mullbacher, Tikki Pang, Matthias Regner, Edward J. Steele, Rolf Zinkernagel

Full details available on the web at
http://jcsmr.anu.edu.au/FennerConference2003/

Sustaining Membership

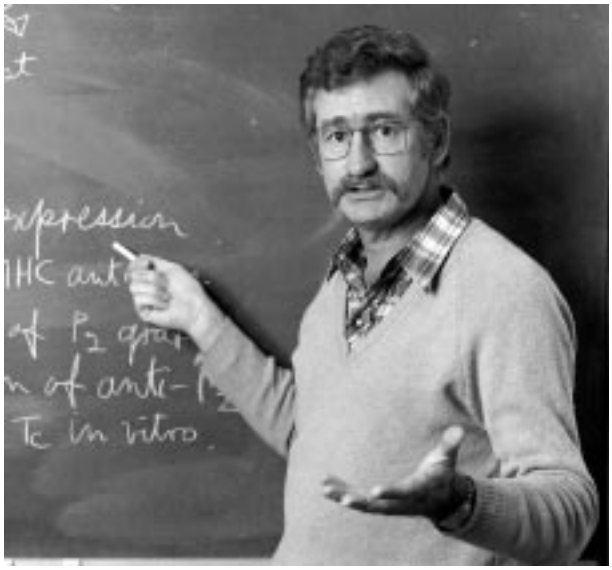
ASI Inc acknowledges the support of the following sustaining members:
- Jomar Diagnostics
- Dynal Biotech Pty Ltd

Retirement of Bob Blanden

A/Professor Nicholas King, Department of Pathology, University of Sydney

I am not going to talk about Bob's scientific achievements. Do a PubMed search on Blanden, RV, if you have no idea. Talk to people. It's impressive.

I'd rather talk about what I learned from Bob. To me these are more lasting and more important achievements. Like cave paintings, stories embodying a culture passed down through each generation. Because what you learn is what you believe in. And what you believe in is what you teach. PhD supervisors are much like parents. When you become a supervisor, you find yourself applying the things you learnt from your supervisor as a student. As a supervisor, your capacity for damage is great. So accordingly, is the responsibility: *primum non nocere*. First, not to harm.



Bob Blanden in 1981

I did my PhD with Bob from 1982 to 1985 at the JCSMR, when Gordon Ada was head of the Department of Microbiology. I'd have to say we were well-matched. He was what I'd call now a hands-off supervisor. He used the technique of the experienced midwife: masterful inactivity. I was a mature age student. I had only recently rediscovered independent questioning thought, having had it thoroughly beaten out of me in medical school. I needed space and independence, which he gave me, and I had open slather within my project. Pig in mud comes to mind.

As most scientists do, Bob had a noticeboard in his office on which various oddments were pinned. A cheque made out to him for 1c and several Leunig cartoons pointed to an ironic and iconoclastic sense of humour. It introduced me to Leunig cartoons, which dovetailed nicely with my own bent sense of humour (it also introduced me to cheques for small amounts of money). Purely by luck, I ended up having to share an office with him. This meant I heard a lot of what I wouldn't otherwise have. And probably, a great deal I shouldn't. Arguably, this might have put me off, seeing such a wide variety of interactions close up, but on the contrary, it made what I learned all the more real.

I think what impressed me first about Bob was his controlled approach to all things. That could often give the feeling of distance, but my own repeated testing never bore this hypothesis out. Rather than a hierarchical approach to students, he was collaborative. He saw his contribution as facilitating what they wished to do. He supplied the long eye of experience coupled with intuition, refined over years of living the experiments he'd done or been part of. This was contexualised by his own 3D bird's eye view from within the history of immunology [*]. In this way, he enabled not only ownership of the project, but ownership of the learning that it engendered, including the techniques, both the hard core technical expertise and the intellectual tools for scientific discovery. It is my increasingly firm view, as a teacher at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, that real understanding can only come from ownership of learning.

Thus students not only underwent research training, as a PhD is called these days by senior people who should know better, but a self-directed education in a controlled environment. In this approach was also his easy and self-confident acknowledgement that the student would be the expert by the end of the project, not he. Accordingly, he was untroubled by data that contradicted what he currently believed and was always willing to be persuaded to another viewpoint by the right data. Indeed, even if he did not believe an experiment worth doing, he would never actively discourage a student from doing it, and if the data bore out the student's assertion, he'd readily acknowledge he had been wrong. He generously encouraged me and another student to write up our findings without him as co-author, to be published in a top-ranking journal. Only subsequently did I come to realise just how unusual such generosity is.

It was here I began to understand that being wrong in science, unlike anywhere else in life (particularly in medicine), was more exciting than being right, that when the result did not conform to the current dogma it may be saying something new. Naturally, such 'novel' data had to submit to close scrutiny. But these new viewpoints put Bob further down the road to understanding. I personally believe this drive to understand was the reason he went into science. Certainly, he renounced the possibility of lucrative clinical dental practice early on. Bob became my view of a scientist. Someone who lives what they love. For whom science is not a job, not a source of income, but a way of life. Something of Zen about it (although he'd probably respond to the last point with a characteristic, "Well that's bullshit!").

For all these easy-going qualities, Bob had hard, high standards to meet. I learned to write concisely, but never to sacrifice accurate meaning. I learned to enjoy the craft of making the written word say exactly what you wish it to, no more or less. To do this, I first had to learn to willingly detach a piece of scientific writing from my own ego. The first piece I wrote him came back more red than black. I was horrified with more than a hint of umbrage, although I carefully disguised these feelings. It slowly became clear to me that there is

* As one-time editor of the ASI Newsletter I discussed several times with Bob possible ways to distil this unique viewpoint in an article or articles, but in the end, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that perhaps such a viewpoint, once metacognitive, is virtual and does not readily submit to the written word.

almost always a clearer way of expressing what you mean. I also learned to read his handwriting. Now and then, I see something handwritten by him again and a charge of recognition ripples through me.

An extension of this in some ways was his behaviour at meetings and seminars. He'd occasionally ask for clarification, but apart from this would seldom say anything, while all the usual suspects made and remade similar points one after the other, which took 10 minutes when two would have been sufficient. When he decided to say something it was short and cogent, and I noticed people listened.

I don't recall ever having a cross word with Bob. We argued, certainly, but they consisted of good-natured, although serious, scientific bantering for the most part; of course, always with the (mostly unrequited) challenge of trying to best him in the argument.

Not everyone got on well with Bob, however. Meetings with occasional individuals blew up. Much to my surprise, he took these interactions with unending equanimity, in the same controlled way he approached everything. He seemed never to let previous negative interactions colour subsequent possible constructive ones. From this I believe I learned to give people more chances than they may deserve, and as I noticed in his case, this mostly pays off. It also illustrated to me the importance of loyalty. Loyalty is usually thought of as being demonstrated by an inferior for a superior, thus from below upwards, and now and then (usually in war movies), occurring between people of the same hierarchical level. A couple of cross-fire incidents during my PhD (in retrospect, mostly attributable to a suicidal combination of enthusiasm and naïvete on my part) taught me that loyalty from your supervisor can be crucial for survival.

Perhaps I would have learned these things without Bob, but probably not from one person and not in this combination. I try to apply the things I've learnt to the supervision of my own students. I remember them, as you see. With luck they will apply them to their students and the cave paintings will continue to be preserved and handed on.

Before I went for an interview for my job at Sydney Uni, I asked him what I should say in an interview. He said, "Just be yourself. If you pretend to be someone you're not and you get the job, they'll be disappointed and you'll be unhappy."

Apart from science, Bob's principal espoused passions at that time were Golf and Birds, two subjects which few people at the JCSMR as far as I could tell had much interest in, but which have endured. Every Wednesday afternoon, he would go off and play a round of golf. I had no interest in golf but my sympathy for birdwatching was greater than I think he knew. I came from a family of birdwatchers, but being a recent emigrant from Africa, my knowledge base was in birds of that continent. This put me too far behind to contribute meaningfully to discussions of sightings he'd made on this or that field trip, which I always regretted, since birdwatching is an unusual hobby and serious birdwatchers are rare.

I have a treasured story that combines his passions for golf, birds and science, which in my own mind epitomises Bob.

One Thursday morning he came into the Lab and asked me very seriously what I thought one could give a bird to knock it out for a while. I assayed that I wasn't too sure; I had confidence in my fairly extensive human anaesthetic experience at that point, but I had none in birds. I suggested Nembutal tentatively, and asked him what it was for. He told me the following story.

"In the last few weeks," he began in all seriousness, "when I've been out on the golf course, at a particular part of the course, when I hit the ball onto the green, a crow comes down out of the trees and flies off with my golf ball." He chuckled slightly. "Every time I hit the ball onto the green, the same bloody bird swoops down and takes off with it in his beak!" He made the motion of a crow diving down and doing a touch-and-go off the ground. On the one hand, I could see he was clearly intrigued by the evolutionary issues implied by a crow stealing a golf ball, but on the other, completely put out that he'd lost his golf ball to a mere crow.

He continued, "I thought about it and I figured the bird must think the white ball is an egg. So I went to the pro-shop and bought some *orange* balls."

By now, the other students in the lab had gathered to listen to the story, and it was drawing a small crowd of blow-ins from the passage going past the Lab on the second floor of the Department of Microbiology.

"Yesterday I took the new balls with me and when I got to the section of the golf course where the crow had been knocking off my balls, I took out one of the orange ones. I drove it as hard as I could and it bounced onto the green and lay there. I watched for a couple of minutes and nothing happened. I thought, Bloody brilliant! Outstanding! Got the bastard! and I got out another orange ball and hit it. That one also came down onto the green and bounced a couple of times and stopped." He paused here, as if not sure quite how to express the next sentence. But it burst out, anyway.

"Then TWO crows came down and took BOTH balls!" he spluttered.

I think we must have laughed for a full five minutes before he could get any sense out of us.

When it came to writing up my thesis, I wanted to write an introduction that was a completely historical account of the thread of research pertinent to my project. He said he couldn't see why not. So I did, taking weeks over it, as students do. Knowing I had embarked on a somewhat risky venture, with such a departure from the norm, I was very nervous when I finally handed to him a copy of my introduction that I was satisfied with. Needless to say, supervisors never read thesis copy in a timely manner. I mean, how unreasonable is it, when you hand a supervisor an introduction as he leaves for home, to expect him to get it back to you by the following morning. But I busied myself with other things to keep the tension down to a low worrying hum. When he came in one morning several days later, I saw immediately he was carrying the thick bulldog-clipped pad of paper that was my introduction. Then he grinned and I knew at least I wasn't going to have to rewrite it completely.

"You really enjoyed writing this, didn't you?" he said.

I did, Bob.

Key speakers at our upcoming ASI meeting in Perth, 7–11 December

David Cosman

Human cytomegalovirus subversion of the NKG2D ligand system

David Cosman is presently a Distinguished Fellow at Amgen in Seattle, USA. Prior to the recent acquisition of Immunex Corporation by Amgen, he held the positions of Vice President of Molecular Biology and Senior Investigator at Immunex. His recent research interests have centred around identification of the molecular targets used by human cytomegalovirus (HCMV) to subvert the immune system. This has resulted in the discovery of the LIR (leukocyte immunoglobulin-like receptor) family as receptors for viral and cellular MHC class I molecules, and the ULBP (UL16 binding protein) family of MHC Class I-like proteins that are ligands for the NKG2D activating receptor and targets for HCMV UL16. In the past he spent many years cloning and characterizing various cytokines and their receptors.

Giorgio Trinchieri

Dendritic cells and their cytokines at the interface between innate and adaptive immunity

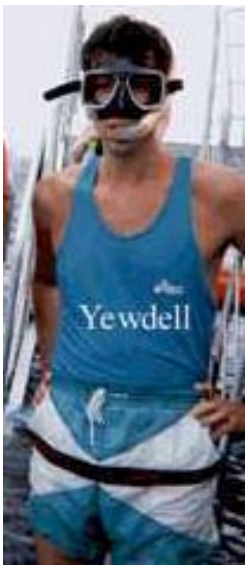
Giorgio Trinchieri is presently director of the Laboratory for Immunological Reasearch (LIR) in Dardilly, France, part of the worldwide Schering Plough Research Institute, leading an exploratory and drug-discovery research effort to harness the immune system and its antigen-presenting cells in the fight against cancer and other diseases. He has been interested for many years in the interplay between inflammation/innate resistance and adaptive immunity and in the role of pro-inflammatory cytokines in the regulation of hematopoiesis, innate resistance, and immunity. In 1989 his group, working at the Wistar Institute in Philadelphia, PA, discovered Interleukin-12 and he has spent many years characterizing the molecular mechanisms of IL-12 production and action, and the role of this molecule in tumor immunity, infections, and autoimmunity.

Jason Cyster

"My scientific career began in 1988 when I was fortunate to be able to undertake my Honors thesis work in Wayne Thomas's laboratory at UWA. This rewarding year was spent mapping epitopes in the newly cloned house dust mite allergen, Der P1, and being strongly influenced by Wayne's incisive scientific mind. My PhD was carried out in Oxford with the late Alan Williams. Alan's lab was one of the first to use monoclonal antibodies to study lymphocyte surface molecules and my work focused on defining structural and functional properties of CD2 and CD43. Highlights of this period (excluding the many trips to Oxford's pubs) were the definition with Paul Driscoll of the CD2 first domain structure (the first Ig-fold without a disulfide), and determination of the dimensions of CD43. During this period I became fascinated by the problem of immunological tolerance and decided to postdoc in this area and also to experience 'science in America'. I was very fortunate that Chris Goodnow had by this time set up lab in Stanford (and still had space). Three fantastic years ensued (1992-5) working with the privilege of Chris's tutelage, during which time we discovered that autoreactive B cells in the periphery are competitively excluded from follicles and eliminated. Other work revealed key roles for the protein tyrosine phosphatases, SHP1 and CD45, in setting thresholds of BCR signaling. In 1995 I obtained a faculty position at UCSF and in my new lab we set out on a quest to determine how autoantigen-binding B cells are excluded from follicles and eliminated. This

exciting journey has so far led us to discover the importance of members of the chemokine family in guiding cells to lymphoid organ subcompartments and has revealed a connection between the organizing role of lymphotoxin and expression of chemokines. In one of our newest adventures, we are applying two-photon microscopy to image cell migration in real-time, discovering an unexpected richness of cell behaviors."

JONATHON YEWDELL



"I began my research career in 1974 as an undergraduate in Arnold Levine's laboratory (Princeton University) where I studied immune rejection of adenovirus transformed cells. Though our approach was hopelessly naïve (reverberations of the great events unfolding in Canberra were just being felt in New Jersey), I developed an interest in immune recognition of viruses that would become the major topic of my PhD dissertation and post-graduate career. I obtained my PhD (1981) under the tutelage of Walter Gerhard (Wistar Institute), a pioneer in generating anti-viral monoclonal antibodies and using them to understand antigenicity and antigenic variation of influenza virus.

"A one-year post-doc with David Lane (Imperial College, London) taught me the importance of cell biology and the power of light microscopy. I returned to the Wistar Institute (1983) as an Assistant Professor, where I continued a collaboration with Jack Bennink that began when we were post-docs. Together, we mapped the influenza virus proteins recognized by mouse T_{CD8+}: At the same time, I was using mAbs to study the folding of the influenza virus hemagglutin during biogenesis. In 1987, Jack and I moved to NIAID (1987) and established a joint lab. Over the past 15 years we have had a grand time unraveling how antigenic peptides are generated from biosynthesized and exogenous proteins. We've also made a major effort to understand the mechanisms that contribute to immunodominance in T_{CD8+} responses. This led us to serendipitously discover the 11th influenza virus protein, which is proving to be a very interesting creature."

CORNELIS J.M. MELIEF

CJM Melief is currently head of the Department Immunohematology and Bloodbank of the University Hospital in Leiden, and Professor of Internal Medicine. CJM Melief has contributed to several discoveries in basic and clinical immunology. Initially focussing on T cell recognition of transplantation antigens, he has worked systematically in the past 20 years to elucidate the mechanisms that can lead to effective clinically applicable T cell based immunotherapy of cancer.

His main areas of interests are in:

- Tumor immunology and immunotherapy, including: Human papilloma virus-induced tumors, including cervical carcinoma; Murine leukemia virus-induced tumors (Lymphomas leukemias); Non-viral cancers, such as, colon cancer, melanoma, leukemia/lymphoma.
  In these studies the main emphasis lies on induction of T helper (T_H) and cytotoxic T cell (CTL) responses against viral and non-viral target molecules in cancer cells. Non-viral target molecules include tumor suppressor protein p53, carcino-embryomic antigen, melanoma associated gene (MAGE) gene products, differentiation antigens on B cell tumors and leukemia specific chromosomal breakpoint peptides.
- Antigen processing and presentation by dendritic cells (DC).
- Anti-viral immunity, in particular against murine leukemia virus adenovirus and human papilloma virus.

CJM Melief has made many contributions to (clinical) immunology apart from the main line of research. One of these is the first description of a new clinical syndrome, characterized by expansion in the blood of large granular lymphocytes with antibody dependent cytotoxic activity in combination with neutrophil granulocytopenia and recurrent bacterial infections. Many of his achievements have allowed the development of novel immunotherapeutic strategies of virus diseases and cancer.

MURIEL MOSER

Regulation of T helper development in vivo by dendritic cells

"Our laboratory has been involved for 15 years in the field of dendritic cell (DC) biology. We have studied the role and function of murine DC *in vivo*.

"In particular, we have shown that:

- Splenic DC undergo maturation *in vivo* in response to microbial stimuli (lipopolysaccharide) and migrate to the zone where T cells are located in lymphoid organs
  (De Smedt et al. J. Exp. Med. 1996. 184:1413-1424)
- Adoptive transfer of dendritic cells, pulsed extracorporeally with antigen, induces an humoral response characterized by the secretion of IgG1 and IgG2a antibodies (Sornasse et al. J. Exp. Med. 1992. 175: 15-21
- Injection of antigen-pulsed DC sensitizes antigen-specific T cells and induces the development of Th1 and Th2 cells
  (De Becker et al. Eur. J. Immunol. 1998. 28: 3161-3171)
- Splenic DC populations differentially

skew T helper development *in vivo*. (Maldonado-López et al. J. Exp. Med. 1999. 189: 587-592.

- Dendritic cell-derived IL-12 is required for Th1 priming (Maldonado-López et al. J. Immunol. 2001. 167:4345-4350)
- $CD4^+CD25^+$ regulatory T cells control the immune response induced by mature DC *in vivo* (Oldenhove et al. J. Exp. Med. 2003. 198:259-266) (Moser Minireview Immunity 2003. 19:5-8)

"Future studies will include the function of immature versus mature DC *in vivo*, the role of Toll-like receptor engagement on DC, the definition of new genes selectively expressed by DC, etc."

Peter Doherty

Peter Doherty works in the general area of immunity to viruses and shared the 1996 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine with his Swiss Colleague, Rolf Zinkernagel, for discovering "the nature of the cellular immune defence". He was Australian of the Year in 1997, and has (since 1998) been commuting between St Jude Children's Research Hospital (SJCRH) in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Melbourne. He recently returned to spend the majority of his year in Australia, holding appointments as Laureate Professor in this university and as a Burnet Fellow of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

Doherty's undergraduate training was in veterinary science at the University of Queensland, and he is the first person with a veterinary qualification to win a Nobel Prize. He worked as a veterinary officer in the Queensland Department of Primary Industries, then went to the Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh, where he completed a Ph.D. in pathology at the University of Edinburgh Medical School. The discovery that won the Nobel Award was made during his subsequent tenure as a Research Fellow at the John Curtin School of Medical Research (JCSMR), Canberra. Over the subsequent 25+ years he has led substantial research efforts in viral immunology at the Wistar Institute, Philadelphia, the JCSMR, SJCRH, and is now developing a new program in Melbourne.

While continuing to maintain a laboratory at SJCRH, he is now spending a substantial component of his year promoting the cause of biomedical research, education, and cultural values based on rational enquiry, within the broader community. He has given a number of public lectures, written articles for newspaper and magazine formats, and participated in a variety of media formats, including talk back radio. This has been a steep, but ultimately satisfying, learning curve. His current obsessions are (with the input of some very effective, junior colleagues) to get the research program at the University of Melbourne underway, and to do whatever he can to promote the focus on science, technology and intellectual activity within Australia, particularly among the young.

ASI would like to thank CSL for sponsoring the Burnet Oration for another four years

Rolf Zinkernael

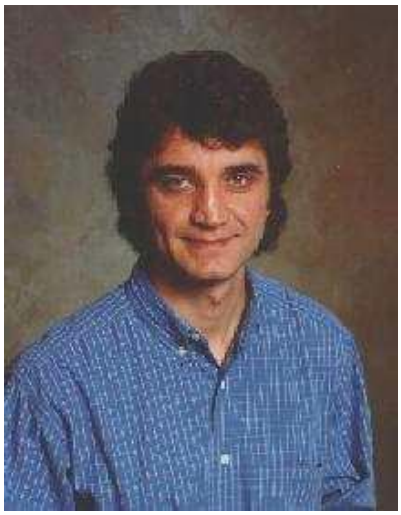
Burnet Oration Title: 'On tolerance and on reactivity''

Born and raised in Basle, Rolf Zinkernagel went through Medical School of the University of Basle, got his MD degree in 1968 and wanted to become a surgeon. After about 1½ years he decided to look into immunological research problems, went through the Postgraduate Course in Experimental Medicine at the University of Zurich and spent 2½ years in the Institute of Biochemistry of Lausanne working on immunity against infections. From 1973-1975 he was a postdoc at the Australian national University John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra, Australia, where Peter Doherty and he made seminal observations on how cytotoxic T cells recognize virus infected cells in an infected host. Subsequently at the Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation in La Jolla, California, and after 1980 at the University of Zurich, he studied antiviral immune protection and immuno-pathology caused virus infections.

Besides his interests in solving uncertainties and discrepancies in Immunology he tries to further biomedical research and its application in Zurich, in Switzerland and Europe. He has supported gene technology and animal experimentation in various votations in Switzerland and Europe, and has helped to popularize science in tabloid newspapers.

RUSLAN MEDZHITOV

Toll Pathway of Host Defense



Ruslan Medzhitov is presently Assistant Professor, Yale University School of Medicine, and Assistant Investigator, Howard Hughes Medical Institute in New Haven, CT. His research focuses on many aspects of innate immunity and includes the following areas:

1) Molecular mechanisms of innate immune recognition: Identification and analysis of receptors involved in innate immune recognition (Pattern Recognition Receptors) and signaling pathways activated by these receptors. Of particular interest is the recently identified family of Toll-like receptors, which plays an essential role in innate immune recognition in both mammals and insects.

2) Control of adaptive immune responses by innate immune recognition. Signals induced upon innate immune recognition (co-stimulatory molecules, cytokines and chemokines) are necessary both for the initiation of adaptive immune responses and the control of effector functions. We are interested in molecular mechanisms that translate the signals recognized by Pattern Recognition Receptors into signals that control the activation of naive lymphocytes and their differentiation into effector cells.

3) Mechanisms of autoimmunity and allergy. Inflammation is a normal component of the host response to infection. However, excessive inflammation, or inflammation in the absence of infection, may lead to a variety of pathological states, including autoimmunity and allergy. We are studying the cellular and molecular basis of inflammatory disorders that are caused by the dysfunctions of the innate immune system.

WAYNE YOKOYAMA

Prof. Wayne Yokoyama is a Howard Hughes Memorial Institute Investigator at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. He is also Professor of Medicine and of Pathology and Immunology, where he holds the Sam J. and Audrey Loew Levin Chair for Research in Arthritis and is Chief of the Rheumatology Division in the Department of Medicine. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Rochester and his M.D. degree from the University of Hawaii. Following training in internal medicine and rheumatology at the University of Iowa, he was a postdoctoral fellow with Ethan Shevach in the Laboratory of Immunology at the National Institutes of Health. Prior to joining Washington University, Prof. Yokoyama was on the faculty at the University of California, San Francisco, and the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. He recently received the Novartis Prize for basic immunology.

Prof. Yokoyama's scientific interests have focused on natural killer cell receptors involved in target cell recognition, identification of the ligands for these receptors, and application of this knowledge to dissecting the role of NK cells in innate immunity. His laboratory was the first to describe the molecular basis for "missing-self" when they identified Ly49A as an MHC class I inhibitory receptor. Since then, his laboratory has gone on to describe a genomic complex of NK cell receptor genes, i.e. the NK gene complex. In a decade-long collaboration with Tony Scalzo at the University of Western Australia, they have defined the basis for genetic resistance of mice to murine cytomegalovirus infections.

An invitation and a request to all ASI members

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

- Our Student Page is specifically designed for 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.

Honorary Secretary's Report

1. *Immunology and Cell Biology* Publication of the Year Prize

We are pleased to announce that the 2002 *Immunology and Cell Biology* Publication of the Year Prize has been awarded to Simon Prasad and Chris Goodnow for "Intrinsic *in vitro* abnormalities in dendritic cell generation caused by non-MHC non-obese diabetic genes" *Immunology and Cell Biology* 80: 198-206.

Just to refresh your memory, the award is given to the best original research article, with an ASI member as first author, published in *Immunology and Cell Biology* in that year. The prize is $800 worth of books and/or journal subscriptions from Blackwell Science.

2. ASI Postgraduate and Postdoctoral International Travel Prizes

As you know starting this year we have two rounds of applications for the ASI Postgraduate and Postdoctoral International Travel Prizes. For the first round, we had a number of very good applications and the winner of the Postgraduate Travel Prize was Diego Silva, from the Australian National University, who will attend the 'Autoimmunity: Mechanisms and Novel Treatments' meeting in Greece. The Postdoctoral Travel Prize was awarded to Dr Scott Byrne, from the University of Sydney, to attend the European Macrophage and Dendritic Cell Society Conference, UK. Congratulations to both the award recipients.

Applications for the second round of these awards close on 30 November 2003 (for meetings in the first half of 2004). Further information on these and other ASI awards may be obtained from http://www.wehi.edu.au/collegiate/ASI/awards.html.

3. ASI 2003 meeting in Perth

If you haven't registered for the Annual Scientific Meeting to be held in Perth from 7-11 December you still have time to do so, but be quick to take advantage of the early registration rates! The theme of the conference is "The Interface between Innate and Adaptive Immunity" and it promises to be an excellent meeting. For further details please check the conference website at http://www.congresswest.com.au/ASI2003/.

Also, a reminder to student and postdoctoral (with up to 3 years' research experience after the award of PhD) ASI members that you are eligible for the following prizes at this years' conference in Perth: ASI New Investigator Award, Today's Life Science Student Poster Prize and the BD Science Communication Prize. In addition, ASI offers Student Travel Awards for eligible students to enable student members to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting. Please check the Conference or the ASI web pages for more details of the application process and closing dates for all awards. Time lines are getting short, so be quick!

4. ASI Membership Directory

You should find the 2003 ASI membership directory enclosed with this newsletter. Given the feedback received, we have reverted from the PDF file back to the booklet form of the directory. If you have strong views on the subject, either way, please raise them at the AGM in Perth and the decision for next year can be made on the consensus reached.

Also to remind everyone, for a member to be included in the Membership Directory, the person must have agreed to have his or her details included. This is to conform to the Privacy Laws. You would recall, there was a box to tick on your renewal or new application form to indicate whether your contact details were to be published.

5. Nominations for positions on ASI council (2004-2006)

The current term for a number of positions on Council comes to an end in 2003. These include Vice-President, Treasurer and State Councillors for QLD, SA/NT and VIC/TAS. A nomination form for 2004-2006 is enclosed in this issue of the newsletter. I know that it adds to your workload, but there are definite rewards (some tangible and others intangible) arising from serving on Council. If you would like further information about any of these positions, please contact the relevant councillors (see contact details on Page 2 of the newsletter). I have no doubt that they would be happy to share their wisdom with you!

Cheers from a still chilly Canberra.
Geeta Chaudhri

ASI Councillors' News

Victorian News

A recent and yet again successful event was the 2003 IgV Techniques Workshop on Friday July 4th at the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, University of Melbourne. The day was once again well attended (about 150 participants) with 10 invited speakers on topics such as antibody engineering, small animal PET; ENU mutagenesis, and confocal microscopy. Thank you to those speakers, Dale Godfrey, Lori Brown, and David Tarlinton for organising the workshop and Becton Dickinson BioSciences for their very generous sponsorship.

After the success of last year's meeting at Beechworth we are again organising our annual IgV meeting at the Latrobe University campus at Beechworth. The meeting will be held from 12-14 October 2003 and is open to any ASI members, students and other interested groups. Meeting details will be updated on the IgV website at http://www.microbiol.unimelb.edu.au/IgV/ To have a look at the venue and surroundings you can visit the Latrobe Beechworth web site at http://www.latrobeatbeechworth.com.au/ We also look forward to some members from Canberra and Tasmanian Immunology communities joining us this year.

ASI Visiting Speaker Dr Andreas Radbruch will be giving a seminar at WEHI on Friday August 15, 1pm. The title of the talk will be "The cytokine memory of Th lymphocytes".

Mark Smyth
Councillor

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8.30am – 4.30pm

Queensland News

The financial books of last year's ASI meeting in Brisbane are in their final closing stage. Apart from a highly successful meeting, both on the scientific and social level, this annual highlight of ASI activities delivered a healthy net profit of about $26K. This surprising surplus was due to the high number (400+) of registrants. The Queensland organizing committee wishes to thank all of you for your active participation, and we look forward to meeting you again at this year's conference in Perth. In order to assist future ASI conference organizers, the registration, financial and logistic statistics of the Brisbane conference are summarized in a professional report; hard copies and electronic attachments have been provided to the organizing committees for the upcoming conferences in Perth and Adelaide, and to the ASI Secretariat.

The Brisbane Immunology Group, BIG, will soon enjoy the 4th BIG meeting at the Rydges Oasis Resort in Caloundra, Queensland, from 21-22 August 2003. Right now, the conference organizer is putting the finishing touches to this annual event, which promises to be (again) a highlight of BIG activities. The BIG meeting becomes BIGger with each year, we await more than 120 registrants. More information about the meeting can be viewed at the BIG webpage http://www.qimr.edu.au/BIG, and a conference report will appear in the next issue of this newsletter.

Norbert Kienzle
Councillor

W.A. News

Two junior immunologists from Western Australia were joint winners of this year's Raine Research Prize. The prize is awarded for the best scientific paper published by a scientist within five years of completing their PhD. Congratulations to the winners Dr Corey Moore (Centre for Clinical Immunology and Biomedical Statistics, Royal Perth Hospital) and Daniel Andrews (School of Biomedical and Chemical Sciences, UWA). Dr Moore's work regarding HLA-restricted immune responses in shaping HIV-1 evolution in vivo was published in *Science*, while Daniel Andrews identification of dendritic cells as prominent targets for cytomegalovirus infection was published in *Nature Immunology*. The judging panel was unable to separate the two entries, and so, for the first time two first prizes were awarded.

A/Prof Ranjeny Thomas travelled to Perth in July and gave a presentation entitled "Regulation of immunity by dendritic cells – from molecules to medicine". In addition, Ranjeny gave a presentation to Honours and PhD students emphasising the qualities required to successfully complete a PhD. Both presentations were extremely informative and well received by local members.

Nobel Laureate Peter Doherty (University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia) is the latest addition to the list of distinguished scientists who will be presenting at ASI 2003. Go to http://www.congresswest.com.au/ASI2003/ for all the latest information regarding the meeting in Perth, and remember early bird registrations close on 15th September.

Christopher Andoniou
Councillor

S.A./N.T. News

Within the last month we had two fantastic guest speakers in our ASI speakers program, both from Brisbane. First, David Hume came down to Adelaide, primarily to see Essendon get smashed by the Crows but also to give two excellent seminars to the local immunologists community. His talks were about (you might have guessed) the biology of macrophages and we were devastated to hear the non-belief in dendritic cells. Everybody really enjoyed the talk and I had a lot of positive feedback from the local membership. Then we very much enjoyed the company and scientific knowledge from Anne Kelso. She gave us some insights in CTL and their unexpected behaviour under certain circumstances. Again many local ASI members got back to me afterwards to tell me how much they enjoyed the talk (and

that means something considering the usual level of feedback from the local members ...). Both visitors gave us a lot to think about scientifically. We have to thank them even more as in both cases the speakers had to leave sunny Queensland to fly into really nasty Adelaide winter weather!

Both visits were co-sponsored and co-organised by the Child Health Research Institute (CHRI). Many thanks to RDA and Heddy!

The plans for an Immunology in SA retreat are shaping up and we are looking at having the retreat in October. Anybody who is interested in coming along or to know more about it, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Apart from that we are busy getting the 2004 conference on its way and are very pleased by the rate of acceptance to our invitations to overseas speakers.

Su Heinzel
Councillor

A.C.T. News

Over recent months the ACT ASI members have enjoyed a number of outstanding seminars by leading local and international speakers. These have included Prof. Jim McCluskey who presented a talk at the JCSMR entitled "Structural aspects of antigen selection and T cell recognition is specific immunity", Prof. Ian Frazer on "Vaccines to prevent and treat cervical cancer", and Prof. Dennis Moss on "Treating EBV-associated disease by adoptive transfer of cytotoxic T cells". Most recently the ACT branch hosted Prof Andreas Radbruch, the director of The German Rheumatoid Research Centre, Humboldt University Berlin, as part of his ASI-sponsored visit to Australia and New Zealand. Andreas gave a spectacular talk on his exciting work in Long Lived Plasma cells and cytokine memory of T helper cells. ACT members had an opportunity to meet with Andreas at organised meeting and informally over dinner.

Upcoming immunology talks as part of the JCSMR seminar program include A/Prof. Mark Smyth in on September 3 who will be talking about tumour immunity, Dr Mariapia Degli-Esposti on September 17 about anti-viral responses and David Tarlinton October 15 on B cell differentiation in the germinal centre.

After discussion with members of ACT branch members, the planned ACT ASI meeting scheduled for October will now be postponed until March/April next year. This was thought to be a more attractive time due to the "overload" of conferences in the latter part of the year, as well as to promote attendance by ACT ASI members at the upcoming NSW and Victorian branch meetings.

Finally, I would like to bring to the attention of ASI members the upcoming 11th Frank and Bobbie Fenner Conference which runs from Friday 28th to Saturday 29th November at the JCSMR, Canberra. This year the symposium will focus on areas of immunology and microbiology to mark the retirement of Prof. Robert Blanden from a distinguished career at the JCSMR. Full details available at http:/ jcsmr.anu.edu.au/FennerConference2003/

Mark Hulett
Councillor

discussion on this topic.

Upcoming Lectures & Conferences

28–29 November 2003
11th Frank and Bobbie Fenner Conference:
Adventures in Immunology and Microbiology
Canberra, ACT
Website: http://jcsmr.anu.edu.au/FennerConference2003/

November 2003
Fourth International Translational Conference –
Cell Death and Disease: Advances in Therapeutic Intervention
Cancun, Mexico
Email: eshdi@chu-stlouis.fr
Website: www.esh.org

7–11 December 2003
33rd Annual Scientific Meeting of ASI
Perth, Western Australia
Website: www.congresswest.com.au/ASI2003

July 2004
12th International Congress of Immunology 2004 (ICI-FOCIS 2004)
Montreal, Canada
Website: www.immuno2004.org

October 2004
1st International Conference on Basic and Clinical Immunogenomics
Budapest, Hungary
Website: http://www.diamond-congress.hu/bci2004/

Contributions sought for the ASI Newsletter

Deadline for the next issue

1st November

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

asi@21century.com.au

The Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research

Wednesday Lectures
1pm, Lecture Theatre

October 1
Flt3 and dendritic cell precursors – Wu Li

October 8
Interferon – key molecules in DC of neonates for the defense against viral infections – Mark Suter (University Institute for Virology, Switzerland)

October 15
Biochemical pathways regulated by the tyrosine kinase Lyn following B cell receptor signallying – Yuekang Xu

October 22
Arming killer T cells in the fight against viruses – Gabrielle Belz

October 29
Microarraying the microenvironment of ovarian cancer. What can we recover from single-channels? – Natalie Thorne

November 5
SOCS3 – A critical negative regulator of G-CSF signaling and emergency granulopoiesis – Andrew Roberts

November 12
SERA: A multigene family in plasmodium – Tony Hodder

November 19
Environmental - mucosal interactions in the natural history of type I diabetes: A germ-free model – David Funda

November 26
Characterisation of a TID susceptability locus – Tania Tabone

WEHI Seminars on the Web:
www.wehi.edu/seminars/

Catching up with Jacques Miller, AC

Phil Hodgkin

Jacques Miller was awarded the Companion in the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list "for eminent achievement and merit of the highest degree in service to Australia and humanity at large".

Jacques is famous for discovering the role of the thymus and, therefore, the T cell as well as for making important discoveries in T-B collaboration and auto-immunity.

Jacques Miller retired in 1996 but is seen regularly around WEHI, where he still maintains an office. I caught up with Jacques to see how he took the news and what he is up to at the moment.

I found Jacques and Margaret Miller huddled together in Jacques' office working on some correspondence. Jacques told me he was honoured and delighted to receive this award. "It is a privilege to receive such a high civil honour," he added. Margaret agreed and said it meant a lot to Jacques to receive the award, especially to be remembered after he had retired.

Retired for seven years, Jacques still comes into work 3-4 days a week and has "lots to do". Some of this work is maintaining scientific collaborations with Bill Heath's and Richard Boyd's laboratories, but much of his work is in support of other people. Being very famous and respected, Jacques is a highly prized referee and sponsor for career advancement. I asked whether he ever thought of retiring completely. Typically Jacques noted that he would be letting down a lot of people and that he was happy to do the work. Margaret added that she didn't mind Jacques coming in as it meant he kept in touch with his colleagues and it was generally good for him. Jacques, beaming, countered with, "Margaret doesn't mind because she is a wonderful lady".

I asked Jacques about his legendary skill at neonatal thymectomy – did he still do that occasionally to teach the latest generation? He replied that he does still teach it although he strongly advises anyone interested in such animals to use the nude mouse alternative as it was a lot easier. He also noted that his eyesight wasn't so acute for the operations any more. "In my prime I didn't even need any glasses, now I have to use a dissecting microscope," he lamented.

Pressing on, I asked about Jacques' famous interest in art. He told me he currently attends an art class twice a week and still enjoys painting regularly. He is particularly enjoying painting landscapes and seascapes on location at the moment. Adorning the walls of his office were two line drawn nudes. He proudly told me he was selling many such works and has an exhibition coming up at the Skepsi gallery in Carlton. "People seem to like them because they are simple and done quickly," Jacques noted. Jacques gave me a flier for the exhibition which will be on between 6th and 26th of September. In the notes for "Bodyline" by Jacques Miller I read: "Working from the model I strive to capture the pose, form, movement, personality in no more than 5 minutes … I like the challenge it offers me, it is uncompromising, permanent and the results are absolutely one off … This expressive outlet was not so much a distraction from my medical research and scientific work, but a kind of therapy and, more importantly to a creative person, a challenge, an intrigue, a connection with the human condition."

Jacques spent much of his working life in Australia. I asked him if he had any regrets about that. That was met with an "absolutely not". "The institute was extremely well set up by Gus (Nossal) and the mouse facilities were much better than I had in London".

"What about now?" I asked. "Well, I think any Australian PhD should seek experience overseas," he replied and then added, "but please come back if you are any good!"

Was he still optimistic about science? "Oh yes, definitely. You have to be with so many advances. Look at genomics and look at the stem cell programs. Did you see the recent paper on cell de-differentiation?" he asked, sounding extremely excited.

I left Jacques and Margaret huddled together working on a reference for another hopeful young scientist. I felt pleased to see that the famous enthusiasm hadn't left Jacques and that the civil honour had given him a great thrill.

A Jacques Miller "bodyline" drawing.
His exhibition at the Skepsi Gallery in Carlton (Vic) runs from September 6–26.