

HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR IMMUNOLOGY INC.

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Forward

In December 1991, to celebrate the 21st anniversary meeting of the Australian Society for Immunology Inc in Perth, the December issue of *Immunology and Cell Biology*, Volume 69, contained several articles describing the history of the Society and of immunology in Australia. These articles and their authors appear below.

- The early history of the Australian Society for Immunology. Derrick Rowley, pp. 307–308
- Australian Society for Immunology: the 1970s. Keven Turner, pp. 309–312
- Some highs of cellular immunology in the late 1960s, early 1970s: personal reflection Graham Mitchell, pp. 313–315
- Australian Society for Immunology in the 1980s. Christina Cheers, pp. 317–321
- The Australian Society for Immunology in the 1990s and beyond. Geoffrey Shellam, pp. 323–325

This publication builds on and enlarges the substance of these excellent articles, covering the period from inception to the conclusion of 2010.

Introduction

Two significant events, which were fundamental to the creation of the Australasian (formerly Australian) Society for Immunology, occurred in the late 1950s. These were the momentous decision by Sir Macfarlane Burnet in 1957 to change the research emphasis of the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute (WEHI) from virology to immunology and the appointment in 1959 of Derrick Rowley to the Chair of Microbiology at the Adelaide University. The immunological community in Australia owes a great debt of gratitude to these two scientists.

Macfarlane Burnet's action provided the environment for the development of outstanding immunologists such as Sir Mac himself, Australia's first Nobel Laureate in immunology, Gus Nossal, Don Metcalf, Jacques Miller, Alex Szenberg, Noel Warner, Ian Mackay and many others. Through their efforts the WEHI established a reputation as the foremost centre for immunological research in Australia and one of the most outstanding on the world's stage – a position it still holds today.

With the upgrading of Microbiology in Adelaide University from a section of the Pathology Department to a full department, Derrick Rowley, an immunologist working in the Wright–Fleming Institute, London, was appointed inaugural Professor. Derrick arrived in Adelaide in January 1960 and Charles Jenkin followed towards the end of that year. At that time they were the only immunologists in Adelaide but over the intervening years several other Research Fellows, post-graduate and graduate students joined to make the Department one of the premier centres of immunology in the country.

Apart from these two major players, three other small groups of immunologists existed in the early 1960s: one directed by Frank Fenner at the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra which included Stephen Boyden and Bede Morris, one directed by Neville Stanley in Perth and the other directed by Bill Halliday in Queensland.

The Early Years

In November 1962 Derrick Rowley invited the key immunologists from each of these four centres to Adelaide for a scientific meeting which in reality was the birth of the ASI. The meeting was attended by Sir Macfarlane Burnet, Gus Nossal, Gordon Ada and Alex Szenberg from Melbourne, John Dineen from Sydney, Stephen Boyden from Canberra, Neville Stanley from Perth and Milton Salton, Geoff Cooper, Otto Westphal (visiting Adelaide from Germany), Charles Jenkin, Keven Turner, Peter Reeves and PhD students from Adelaide.

Since the meeting was so successful the decision was made to hold similar meetings annually, with the next meeting to be held in Melbourne, hosted by the WEHI group. David Nelson from Sydney and Ritchie Nairn from Melbourne joined the foundation members at this second meeting and, soon after, the decision was taken that anyone with an interest in immunology was entitled to attend. Informality was the keynote of the organization at this stage as it had no formal rules, no constitution and no membership fees. The only administrative matter that required consideration was the updating of a list of those who might be interested in attending future meetings. This informality was, however, an unlikely scenario for the future as even by the time of the third meeting convened in Canberra by Kevin Lafferty on 3 and 4 December 1964, the group had been styled the 'Australian Society of Immunologists' (ASI) and a 'Presidential Address' was delivered by Macfarlane Burnet.

From 1964 to 1969 the venue for these annual meetings rotated between Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney, with the local members accepting full responsibility for all aspects of the organization. Ian Mackay recalls that "these early informal meetings in the 1960s were not lacking in excitement. Particularly memorable were the stoushes between the John Curtin School of Medical Research at ANU and the Hall Institute on the

significance of the thymus for early lymphopoiesis, and the B and T cell dichotomy, including Bede Morris's famous B.....T wordplay, tactfully referred to by Derrick as 'stimulating and hilarious' and as 'robust debate' ". The thymus has become an obsession with the more vigorous young members of the ASI who have made an award of a thymus (which in reality is a Bursa of Fabricius), encased in a rather prominent structure, to the presenter of the most hilarious poem at the annual dinners of the scientific conferences. Little has changed over the past 50 years!

In December 1969 a symposium on Aspects of Antibody Formation and Unresponsiveness' was held in Melbourne under the name 'The Australian Society of Immunologists'.

Perth became accepted as an additional venue, with its inaugural meeting being held in December 1970. During this meeting Neville Stanley, the Chairman of the Organising Committee, acting on information provided by Gus Nossal, spoke about the necessity for the Society to adopt a formal constitution. Seated in the tropical grove adjacent to Winthrop Hall with the song of kookaburras and parrots in the background, those present considered the two compelling arguments for this: (a) that it was necessary to fulfil the requirements for membership in the newly created International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS) and (b) that it would assist in the process of obtaining subsidies and reduced airfares for members wishing to attend the first International Congress of Immunology to be held in Washington in August 1971. The motion to adopt a constitution, moved by Gus Nossal and seconded by Gordon Ada, was passed unanimously. The Organising Committee for the 1970 meeting in Perth, Neville Stanley, Michael Alpers and Keven Turner, was charged with the responsibility of drafting the first constitution, which was ratified by the remaining members of the Constitution Committee in time to meet the deadline of the end of March 1971 for submission to the IUIS. This constitution was further ratified by all members attending the annual meeting of the Society held in Melbourne in December 1971, which in reality became the first annual meeting of the properly constituted Australian Society for Immunology.

The changes incorporated in 1988 followed the Society becoming an Incorporated body which allowed it to act as a body duly recognized in law, giving legal protection to Council and the membership of ASI. It also formalized the procedure for electing members, giving due status to membership of the ASI as well as defining the terms of office of councillors. This extensively modified constitution was unanimously accepted at the AGM held in February 1988. It provided for a Council comprising the President, Vice President or Immediate Past President, Honorary Secretary, Treasurer and representatives of all the States and Territories of Australia. It also gave the flexibility to affiliate with other societies with related interests, and created several categories of membership such as ordinary, honorary, sustaining, student and associate. There were more amendments in 1994, 2009 and 2010. The latest version of the ASI constitution is available from the ASI website (www.immunology.org.au).

Amalgamation with the New Zealand Society for Immunology

A significant event in the history of ASI was the amalgamation in 1991 of the Australian Society for Immunology with its New Zealand counterpart, the New Zealand Society for Immunology, to form the Australasian Society for Immunology.

In the mid-1960s, immunology was just beginning to be recognized in New Zealand as a separate research area or discipline but there were no structural meetings in New Zealand to provide a forum where they could speak to each other, except as a group within the Microbiology Society.

At that time, the Veterinary School was established in Massey University and there was much enlargement of academic institutions. In 1968 the School of Medicine was established in Auckland. In addition, there were major developments in biological research with the emergence of cell biology and molecular biology. It was the appropriate time to set up in New Zealand an immunology group or society to the benefit of all these parties with similar or overlapping interests.

In 1973, John Marbrook and Doug Wilson with the help of Warren Jonas (Wallaceville, Upper Hutt) and Barbara Heslop (Dunedin) decided to organize an Immunology meeting in Auckland. This was supported readily by the Medical Research Council (now HRC) who provided a grant towards the cost of the meeting which they termed 'An Interdisciplinary Symposium on Immunological Topics'. This title was broad enough to include as many people as possible. The contributions of Ken Shortman and Al Cunningham from WEHI and Canberra respectively added much weight to the meeting and their participation was a forerunner of more extensive future collaboration.

The procedure for setting up the early meetings of the New Zealand Immunology Society (NZSI) entailed simply agreeing which centre should hold the meeting for the following year and choosing the President and organizer from that location. An Australian visitor was generally invited to attend these meetings.

In 1981, Jim Watson returned from the University of California at Irvine to take up the Chair of Microbiology in Auckland. He supported the feeling that it was time to establish joint meetings with the ASI. Consequently, the first combined meeting was held in Queenstown, NZ, in December 1985. This meeting was organized by Barbara Heslop, as the President in Dunedin, with the help of a committee consisting of Margaret Baird, Frank

Griffen, Bruce Gibbons and Mark Bradley. It was generally accepted that this worked particularly well and consolidated the idea that the two societies should become more closely associated.

This led in early 1991 to the opening of discussions concerning the possibility of the two societies cementing the relationship either in terms of an established affiliation or as an amalgamation. In April 1991, Roger Booth, the President of NZSI, expressed uncertainty in the response of NZ members to amalgamation, particularly as it would require significant constitutional changes to the NZ Society.

In May of that year Geoff Shellam, the President of ASI, in correspondence with Roger Booth, accepted the problem facing the NZ immunologists and pointed out the relative merits of amalgamation re affiliation. These in particular concerned sweeping changes which he wished to make concerning the expansion of the role of State Branches of ASI and to ensure that such Branches should exist in all States and in New Zealand should it become amalgamated. These involved assistance in obtaining visiting speakers, strengthening organizational structures and in financial assistance together with giving the Branches a stronger role in the administration of the ASI. New Zealand would, under amalgamation, enjoy these privileges including the right to host annual scientific meetings of ASI every seven years in rotation with the State Branches. Moreover, affiliated, as opposed to amalgamated, members would not have voting rights and would be required to pay a capitation fee as did members of other affiliated organizations such as ASCIA.

Following this correspondence Roger Booth advised in June 1991 that there was now almost unanimous support amongst NZ members to proceed with amalgamation. Meetings in July finalized the principles of amalgamation, including changes in the constitution and the name of the society. The ASI Executive insisted, however, that it would only be appropriate to change the name of the Society if the majority of members of the current NZ Society joined ASI. These changes were accepted by postal vote of a 75% majority of members of ASI and ratified at the AGM of the Society held in Perth in December 1991, the new Society being called the Australasian Society for Immunology.

Clearly, amalgamation with our New Zealand colleagues has strengthened the Society and the proposed benefits of the merger have been largely fulfilled.

Administration

During the 1970s the Australian Society for Immunology, notwithstanding its formalization by the creation of a constitution, was still a small affair run largely by voluntary labour. With the increase in membership and affiliation with other professional bodies in the 1980s, the society appointed Fay Turner to the role of part-time Executive Officer in 1980 and through her dedication and professionalism laid the foundation for the administration which exists today. Eventually, however, the task proved too much for one person working part time and the business of the society was passed to the Victorian Postgraduate Medical Foundation who acted as secretariat from 1986 until it downsized in 2000 when the ASI secretariat was taken over by Judi Anderson Secretarial Services.

The appointment of a secretariat, however, did not remove the need for the annual appointment of office bearers. A list of office bearers together with the venues of the annual scientific meetings and, where known, the Conference Chair can be viewed on the ASI website..

Conscious of the huge distances between Australian capital cities, in the early 1980s Council decided to establish State councillors to function primarily as a point of reference for Council distribution of information particularly relating to Annual Conferences. In 1991, Geoff Shellam, the then President, moved to create State branches of ASI to provide a forum for immunology throughout the year. These branches, which also include New Zealand, operate via a Management Committee comprising a Chairman and other such officers as is deemed necessary. The regional councillor is a member of the Management Committee but not necessarily its Chairman. The task of the Management Committee is to further the aims and objectives of ASI Inc. at the local level by (a) holding regular scientific meetings, (b) providing an organizational structure to facilitate the visit of ASI sponsored speakers, (c) encouraging an increase in membership in ASI by recruiting members locally and (d) co-ordinating all of the activities relating to holding the annual scientific meetings of ASI and the associated AGM when his/her city hosts these events. The move to consolidate the activities of State councillors has been very successful, providing a functional body in each State and in New Zealand to promote awareness of the discipline and form the necessary operating structures. State councillors are full members of Council of ASI Inc. enjoying full voting rights.

Burnet Oration

In recognition of the outstanding contribution of Sir Macfarlane Burnet to immunology, which culminated in the award of the Nobel Prize in 1960, Council created the annual award of 'Burnet Orator' in 1986. The recipient of this honour, him/herself an outstanding immunologist, was required to present at the Annual General Meeting of the Society a major, general dissertation which related to his or her area of expertise. It was eminently appropriate that Gus Nossal presented the inaugural Burnet Oration at the AGM in Newcastle in 1986.

A list of Burnet Orators and the topics of their presentations is available from the ASI website.

Honorary Life Members

In 1980 Council decided to recognize the outstanding contribution of selected members, over several years, to the Society by creating Honorary Life Memberships. It was eminently appropriate to appoint, in 1981, Derrick Rowley the inaugural Life Member as he had played such an important role in creating the Society.

A list of Honorary Life Members, in the chronological order of their appointment, is available from the ASI website.

The ASI's Journal: *Immunology and Cell Biology* Chris Parish

Immunology and Cell Biology has a long and illustrious history. It was founded as the *Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science* in 1924 by the University of Adelaide. Over the next few decades the 'Adelaide Journal', also affectionately known as "Possum's Pages", became a well-respected international journal. This was due to many of Australia's leading biological and medical researchers at that time contributing manuscripts to the journal. In fact, between 1925 and 1972 Sir Macfarlane Burnet published over 90 papers in the journal.

During the 1970s and early 1980s there were frequent discussions amongst Australian immunologists about the possibility of establishing a new, Australian-based, immunology journal as immunology had become such a strong research discipline in Australia. The establishment during this period of a number of new international immunology journals, such as the *European Journal of Immunology*, the *Scandinavian Journal of Immunology* and *Cellular Immunology*, highlighted this point. In the mid-1980s Ieva Kotlarski, the Deputy Editor of the 'Adelaide Journal', approached the ASI Council with the proposal that the 'Adelaide Journal' change from being a general medical/biology publication to being a journal focusing on immunology and cell biology. It was proposed that the name of the journal be changed to *Immunology and Cell Biology (ICB)*, to reflect this change in content, and that it should become the official journal of the Australasian Society for Immunology. The journal would, however, continue to be owned by the University of Adelaide, with Blackwell Scientific Publications handling the publishing of *ICB*. It was also suggested that ASI should have the right to nominate members of the Editorial Board. The ASI accepted this proposal and even agreed to underwrite any financial losses if they occurred. Thus, the first issue of the new incarnation of the 'Adelaide Journal' was published in February 1987. Ieva Kotlarski became the first Editor-in-Chief of *ICB* and Derrick Rowley, the last Editor of the 'Adelaide Journal', continued as the Deputy Editor.

Despite initial excitement over the establishment of *ICB* and ASI gaining its 'own' scientific journal, submission of papers to *ICB* steadily declined during the next few years. Australasian immunologists were not willing to submit their papers to *ICB* and few immunologists in other countries showed much interest as well.

By 1992, when Chris Parish took over as the Editor-in-Chief, the submission rate had declined to an alarming level such that it was difficult to obtain enough quality articles to fill each of the six issues published annually. It was clear that drastic measures were needed. Immediately after taking up the position Chris Parish introduced a new category of manuscript, the Theoretical Article, and wrote a personal letter to almost 200 immunologists worldwide inviting them to contribute theoretical papers to the journal (this was the era before email!). A considerable number of high profile scientists eventually submitted papers. Chris also wrote an article for the ASI Newsletter in which he ranked Australasian research institutes for their support for the journal. Most major research institutes undertaking immunological research scored very poorly and were strongly encouraged to lift their game.

The most important innovation that Chris introduced, however, was the Special Features. A simple formula for Special Features was developed which proved to be very successful. The first Special Feature was published in 1993 in the October issue of *ICB* and covered 'Recent Developments in Veterinary Vaccines'. Since then, *ICB* has usually published 3 Special Features each year and by the end of 2010 had published 59 Special Features containing 300+ articles.

There is no doubt that the Special Features increased the visibility of the journal, with the impact factor of *ICB* climbing above 2 for the first time in 2000. However, over the next 5 years the *ICB* impact factor and the rate of manuscript submissions remained static, with the receipt of enough high-quality papers for publication continuing to be a serious issue. One encouraging feature during this period, however, was that consistently 75–80% of unsolicited articles submitted to *ICB* originated from non-Australasian laboratories, indicating the international nature of the journal. In addition, this period established *ICB* as consistently one of the leading scientific journals in the Asia-Pacific region. This high regional status resulted in the Nature Publishing Group (NPG) approaching the Editor-in-Chief in 2005 and proposing that *ICB* be published by NPG. The ASI Council enthusiastically embraced this proposal and in 2007 publication of the journal was transferred from Blackwell Publishing Asia to NPG.

The move to NPG dramatically increased the visibility of *ICB*. There was also an increase in the number of issues each year from 6 to 8 and a revamped and more international Editorial Board was appointed. Several new article types were also immediately introduced, the most important being 'News and Commentary' articles that have a similar format to the well known 'News and Views' articles in Nature journals. Carola Vinuesa agreed to

act as the inaugural N&C Editor and Stuart Tangye joined her as an additional N&C Editor soon after. By the end of 2010 already over 80 N&C articles had been published by *ICB*. Initially these articles discussed high impact papers recently published by other journals, such as *Nature Immunology* and *Immunity*, but as the quality of *ICB* manuscripts improved, N&C articles began to feature *ICB* articles.

A new article type, the 'Outstanding Observation', was established in 2007 with the aim of giving *ICB* a unique identity to separate it from other immunology journals. This new manuscript category captures research articles in immunology which describe striking observations that have extremely important conceptual implications but do not delineate the underlying molecular mechanisms involved. At the time, it was hoped that the new article type would combat the worrying trend amongst the top scientific journals to refuse to publish novel findings if they did not contain a detailed description of molecular mechanism, even when the observations reported obviously had far reaching implications for the field. At the time of writing (October 2010) the 'Outstanding Observation' articles have already been warmly received by the immunology community, with 19 extremely high-quality articles in this category being received and published by *ICB*.

The net result of all these changes was a dramatic improvement in the *ICB* impact factor and ranking. The 2009 impact factor reached 4.200, which represented a >200% increase over the 2005 value. The ranking of *ICB* within the cohort of 'Immunology' journals also improved dramatically. In 2005 *ICB* was ranked 76th of 115 'Immunology' journals, whereas in 2009 the *ICB* ranking had jumped to 28th of 128 recognized 'Immunology' publications. The *ICB* performance was also impressive when compared with other immunology society-based journals. Thus, *ICB* had a much higher ranking than the *Scandinavian Journal of Immunology* (90th, Scandinavian Society for Immunology), *Immunology* (47th, British Society for Immunology) and *International Immunology* (45th, Japanese Society for Immunology) and was approaching the ranking of the *European Journal of Immunology* (24th, European Federation of Immunological Societies) and the *Journal of Immunology* (22nd, American Association of Immunologists). Other criteria also indicated that the stocks of *ICB* were on the rise.

- **Ownership of *Immunology and Cell Biology***

When the 'Adelaide Journal' became *Immunology and Cell Biology* in 1987 it still remained the property of the University of Adelaide. By the early 1990s, however, there was a strong view amongst ASI Council members that, since *ICB* was the official journal of ASI, the Society should own the journal. As a gesture of support for the journal, in 1992 ASI incorporated a compulsory hard copy subscription to *ICB* in its membership dues. This practice continued until 2007 when NPG replaced the hard copy subscription with an electronic one, as well as free electronic access to a range of Nature journals.

When Geoff Shellam (1991–1992) and Roland Scollay (1993–1994) were serving as the ASI President, informal ownership negotiations began with the University of Adelaide. Negotiations were complicated by the fact that Blackwell Scientific Publications were keen to purchase the journal for a tidy sum and that Blackwell Scientific were willing to consider joint ownership with ASI. Both of these arrangements were not acceptable to ASI as they would result in *ICB* being associated with the same publisher indefinitely. In 1997 the ASI established a subcommittee, comprised of Anne Kelso, Geoff Shellam and Chris Parish, to negotiate a deal with the University of Adelaide. It took another two years to broker a deal but, thanks largely to the efforts of Anne Kelso, in 1999 the University of Adelaide transferred the ownership of *ICB* to ASI for the princely sum of \$1!

- **Impact of the 'Adelaide Journal'/*ICB* on the Field of Immunology**

Over the last 86 years numerous important immunology papers have been published by the journal, many of these classic papers being published before the 'Adelaide Journal' became *Immunology and Cell Biology*. In fact, it could be argued that, based on this performance, *ICB* is the second oldest immunology society associated journal in the world, only eclipsed by the *Journal of Immunology* that was founded by the American Association of Immunology in 1913. A list highlighting some of the most important immunological publications can be found on the ASI website.

- ***ICB* Future Prospects**

The future of *Immunology and Cell Biology* looks very bright. The journal has now become firmly established as a leading publication in the field of immunology. Due to its high stature *ICB* has also remained very financially viable, despite the global financial crisis in 2008–2009, the ASI now receiving \$50,000–\$80,000 per annum from NPG as their share of the journal's income.

A number of changes are planned for the journal in the near future to handle the substantial increase in submitted papers. In 2012 the number of issues published each year will increase from 8 to 10, with monthly issues being a likely possibility in the next few years. The editorial make-up of the journal has changed in 2011, with the Editor-in-Chief being assisted by three new Deputy Editors. Chris Parish has retired as the Editor-in-Chief and Gabrielle Belz has been appointed as the new Editor-in-Chief, although Chris will continue as one of the Deputy Editors during 2011. With the revamped editorial arrangements, increased rates of manuscript submissions and increasing numbers of issues, *ICB* is poised to become even more prominent in the field of immunology in future years.

Special Interests Groups (SIG)

As the ASI developed it became apparent that the discipline was very diversified covering a range of specific interests that were unique to various groups of immunologists. Accordingly, Council considered during an Executive Committee Meeting in 1991 the possibility that these interest groups should form their own specialist bodies while still remaining within the orbit of the ASI. The first of these was the Clinical Immunology Group (CIG) which predated this 1991 meeting since it was formed in 1982. The Mucosal Immunology Group was formed in 1992, the Infection and Immunity Group in 2008 and the Tumour Immunology Group, known as the Tumour Immunology Workshop, in 1998 following a 'one-off' meeting in 1996. Attempts to activate members of ASI with special interests in other related fields such as Behavioural Immunology, Reproductive Immunology, and Neuroimmunology to form SIGs have not been successful to date. Unfortunately, the formation of the Cytokine Research Association independent from the ASI prevents this active and important aspect of immunology from being included in the ASI SIGs.

It was proposed during the Executive Committee Meeting of 1991 that recognition of the SIG could take the form of limited financial assistance from ASI and the assistance of the Secretariat in providing names of potential members of that special interest group to facilitate interaction. Special interest groups would be encouraged to conduct meetings as satellites of the annual national ASI meetings, which might influence the selection of some invited ASI speakers. SIGs would forward a report of their activities annually to Council and these would be published in the Newsletter.

- **The Clinical Immunology Group (CIG) Tony Basten**

When ASI was established, immunology as a recognized clinical speciality did not exist. There were, however, two immunopathology units located in Melbourne at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute and the Alfred Hospital headed by Dr Ian Mackay and Professor Richie Nairn respectively. The former was more clinically orientated with the focus on autoimmune liver disease, while the latter dealt more with immunopathology *per se*. The practice of allergy was separate and overseen by the Australian College of Allergists.

The early 1970s saw the development of clinical immunology services across the country some of which encompassed immunopathology testing and/or allergy. In recognition of the need for a formal training program spanning clinical immunology and allergy, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia established three diplomas, one each in immunopathology and clinical immunology (including allergy) with the third (and most popular) being a conjoint diploma from both colleges.

The focus of ASI during this period was on promoting basic immunology as one of Australia's strongest research disciplines, rather than its clinical aspects or for that matter allergy. Consequently, the annual scientific meeting did not cater for the interests of the broad church of clinicians involved in the applied aspects of the field. Nevertheless, the Council of ASI as early as 1972 did move to establish a subcommittee to liaise with the Royal Colleges over provision of training courses in clinical immunology. Convened by Richie Nairn, this subcommittee included Ian Mackay, David Nelson, Ron Penny and John Sands (representing the Colleges) and by the next annual meeting had prepared a comprehensive report on training requirements. Following acceptance of the report by ASI, it was converted into a full standing committee and accorded executive powers to negotiate with the Colleges and government on clinically related matters. In further support of this decision, Council resolved during its meeting in 1976 that consideration should be given to holding the next workshop on allergy and that an invitation should be extended to members of the College of Allergists to attend both the workshop and scientific meeting of ASI. They would also be invited to join the ASI if they felt it would be an appropriate body. It was resolved at the Council Meeting of 1981 to discuss the potential co-operation between the College of Allergists and the ASI.

Despite these initiatives some clinically focused senior members of the Society felt that their interests were not being adequately catered for and, headed by Roger Dawkins, set up a discrete Clinical Immunology Group in 1982. This led to a vigorous debate among the immunological community resulting in the merging of the fledgling CIG with the ASI's standing committee in 1983 with the name of CIG being retained. The new CIG rapidly took responsibility for representing the speciality of clinical immunology (now incorporating allergy) during negotiations with government and the Colleges over the training programmes, fee setting for immunopathology tests and quality control of diagnostic laboratories – all recognized functions of other clinically oriented speciality societies. The formal title of CIG was established at the AGM of the ASI in 1984 as the Clinical Immunology Group of the ASI, a title that would appear on its letterhead for all correspondence. The CIG was requested to report to ASI at the annual Council Meeting and the AGM and to forward copies of relevant correspondence to the Secretary of ASI.

In retrospect, the initial retention of CIG under the umbrella of ASI was the right strategy to adopt while the clinical speciality matured; however, ultimately and due in no small part to its success, CIG became the launching pad for an independent entity in the form of the Australasian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA). This concept of amalgamating the CIG with the Australasian College of Allergy was discussed during the AGM of the ASI in 1991, a feat requiring even more tact and diplomacy than was needed

for the CIG and taking the best part of five years. Importantly, both societies are now flourishing in parallel and between them are catering well for the expanded range of activities and personnel involved in the field. In the case of ASCIA, it has brought clinical immunology and allergy together and provided a respectable professional home for the latter; it has also ensured that the clinical discipline is properly represented at government and College levels to the benefit of both societies.

- **Mucosal Immunology Group Special Interest Group**

A brief, but comprehensive, history of the Mucosal Immunology Group was published by its founder, Allan Cripps, in the ASI Inc. Newsletter of December 2010 and is reported in part here. (Ed.)

Early in 1992, the ASI raised the concept of establishing special interest groups with discussions occurring between Geoff Shellam and Allan Cripps about the possibility of an SIG in mucosal immunology.

With support from Roger Booth who chaired the ASI organizing committee for the Auckland meeting in 1992, the Mucosal Immunology Special Interest Group (MI-SIG) was formed in December 1992. A Symposium on Mucosal Immunology was held and Jerry McGhee from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the then President of the International Society for Mucosal Immunology gave an ASI plenary lecture. The prominence given to mucosal immunology at the Auckland ASI meeting was a great launch for the MI-SIG. Over 50 people attended the first AGM and the membership was established. The principal goals of the MI-SIG developed at this meeting area as follows:

- (1) To provide a forum for mucosal immunologists to meet through workshops and symposia to advance the research of mucosal immunology through debate and collaboration;
- (2) To be recognized as a specialist group within the ASI and to create a formal association with the International Society for Mucosal Immunology; and
- (3) To organise a network of Australian and international researchers in the field of mucosal immunology.

Over the years the MI-SIG has continued to provide a forum for mucosal immunologists and colleagues with associated interests to meet at ASI symposia and workshops as well as a number of mini-symposia organized around international visitors.

At the eighth International Congress of Mucosal Immunology (ICMI) held in San Diego in 1995 Allan Cripps and his MI-SIG colleagues won the bid to host the ninth ICMI in Sydney in January 1997. Allan and the late Graham Jackson were appointed by the MI-SIG to co-chair the 9ICMI organizing committee. This meeting, with over 1000 delegates, was the high spot for the MI-SIG. The success of this meeting and the international acclaim that it brought for Australian researchers in the mucosal immunology field demonstrates without a doubt the value of strong special interest groups within the ASI.

The MI-SIG has made a very substantial contribution to the ASI community over the past two decades through workshops, symposia and more recently full-day satellite meetings. It has also supported young researchers through awards and travel grants to attend conferences. Allan retired as the MI-SIG Chair at the end of 2009 having served in this role for 15 years of the MI-SIG's 18-year existence.

- **Infection and Immunity Group Ashley Mansell**

The Infection and Immunity SIG was officially accepted by the ASI executive in October 2008 following a proposal to '...provide a forum and focus for researchers from across different fields of interest to interact and collaborate on the common interest of immune recognition and response in both immunological directions: innate and adaptive'. The aims of the SIG were to provide an opportunity to further enhance and develop research within ASI to understand the 'ritualistic dance' between host and pathogen interactions.

A committee was formed, with Ashley Mansell as the inaugural chair (and Victorian representative) in addition to representatives from nearly all ASI state branches: Queensland (Matt Sweet), NSW (Nick Gorgani), South Australia (Susanne Heinzl, replaced by Erin Curry), Western Australia (Andrew Currie) and New Zealand (Roslyn Kemp). Infection and Immunity also launched their website in early 2009 (www.iiasi.org).

While Infection and Immunity was a relatively new SIG, it gained immediate popularity amongst ASI members and had attracted almost 60 affiliate ASI members by ASI2009. Continued expansion and interest from ASI members attracted almost 100 members within a year. The Infection and Immunity SIG Workshop organised by Matt Sweet (Queensland representative) at ASI2009 Gold Coast attracted over 80 participants, attracting the highest attendance of all the SIG workshops organised, again demonstrating the popularity of the SIG. The program for the workshop was bolstered by the involvement of Paul Kaye (UK), one of ASI2009's international invited speakers who generously gave up his time to also speak at the SIG. He was ably supported by national invited speakers Chris Engwerda, Richard Ferrero, Michael McGuckin, Andrew Brooks and Mariapia Degli-Esposti. A similar workshop was held at the ASI2010 Perth meeting.

Infection and Immunity also organised a very successful joint session at ASI2009 with the Mucosal Immunology SIG which was headed by Brian Kelsall and Philip Hansbro. This co-operation between the SIGs has continued such that the joint session is an on-going feature of the SIG workshops at ASI annual meetings.

Despite its recent beginning, the Infection and Immunity SIG has become involved in local branch activities and organization of ASI events as a means of promoting and highlighting the research, collaborative efforts and profile of the SIG. Infection and Immunity is actively playing a role in the organization of current ASI annual

meetings and will continue to provide a forum for ASI members with an interest in host: pathogen interactions and infection and immunity. Infection and Immunity SIG currently has 96 ASI members as affiliate members (2010).

- **Tumour Immunology Group Joe Trapani**

The Tumour Immunology workshops (TIW) of ASI commenced formally in 1998, following an initial ‘one-off’ meeting in 1996 organised by Bruce Robinson and held in association with the ThymOz meeting of that year. The 1996 meeting was seen as highly useful by immunologists interested in cancer, as it provided a new forum dedicated to their topic of interest. The idea of a meeting devoted to ‘immunology and cancer’ was driven from the belief, prevalent at the time, that the broader ASI community only infrequently dealt with the topic and the related issue of immune-based cancer therapies. Given the controversy and lack of consensus on the immune response to cancer over the previous several decades, perhaps this was not surprising!

The early 1990s saw a major rekindling of interest in tumour immunology, driven largely by two factors: first, molecular and cellular immunology techniques had unequivocally demonstrated that certain human malignancies (particularly melanoma) are immunogenic and that circulating cytotoxic T cells directed against tumour antigens could be isolated and expanded, and, second, the first dendritic cell vaccines were being applied to human disease (particularly cancer), providing the hope of a cellular adjuvant that might prove effective in augmenting the response of vaccinated patients to synthetic tumour antigens with which the DCs had been pulsed.

The first ‘official’ TIW was held in association with the 1998 Melbourne ASI conference, and was jointly organised by Geoffrey Pietersz, Mark Smyth and Joe Trapani at the suggestion of Bruce Robinson and Ian MacKenzie. The conference worked well, as the workshop attracted well over 100 registrants and several international guest speakers. This meeting was also the occasion of the inaugural Gordon Ada oration, which to today recognises an Australian tumour immunologist considered to have made important contributions to the field. At the Melbourne 1998 meeting, Professor Gordon Ada presented the first of these orations, on the topic of AIDS, the immune response and cancer development.

The TIW has continued to flourish since that seminal first meeting, having complemented every ASI meeting to the present day. The ‘timing’ of this series of meetings could not have been better, given the massive amount of activity in this area of research, and the plethora of associated clinical trials over the past decade. The TIW has no formal standing committee and each workshop is organised by an *ad hoc* committee of interested scientists and clinicians from the ASI host city. In general, the TIW has occupied the greater part of the opening day of each ASI meeting. CSL Limited has generously provided financial support for the TIW since its inception. Along with modest registration fees, CSL’s support has typically enabled at least two renowned international speakers to present their work at TIW and to cover a separate topic at the associated ASI meeting. Apart from Gordon Ada, other Ada orators have included Ian Frazer, Denis Moss, Chris Parish, Chris Schmidt, Bruce Robinson, Ian MacKenzie, Jonathon Cebon, Mark Smyth, Peter Hersey and Joe Trapani. Mac Burnet would be very pleased to have seen the TIW become such a feature of ASI, given his seminal contribution as an architect of the cancer immune surveillance.

Association with other Organizations both internationally and nationally

With its growth in membership and function the Society felt the need to become associated with other organizations with which it shared professional interests, particularly in immunology. Foremost of these is the International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS).

- **IUIS**

IUIS was founded at a meeting in Brugge, Belgium, on 5 May 1969 by the representatives of ten Societies. The Australian Society of Immunology was not represented but expressed support and later was accepted as a founding member after it had created a constitution.

There are currently 54 Member Societies of IUIS, many of which belong to one of four Regional Federations encompassing Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia-Oceania.

International Congresses of Immunology (ICI) are held in different locations every 3 years under the auspices of IUIS. The first ICI was held in Washington in August 1971 and the third in Sydney in July 1977 where Geoff Cooper functioned brilliantly as General Secretary. This Congress, which 600 registrants attended, marked Australia’s coming of age immunologically. The 16th ICI will be held in Melbourne in 2016 following a successful bid by a committee chaired by Jose Villadagos.

Australasian immunologists have, since its inception, given strong support to IUIS and to ICI’s in particular being well represented in attendance and on the scientific programs. Both Gus Nossal (1986–89) and Peter Doherty (2007–10) have held the offices of President of IUIS following appointment as Vice-President in 1983–86 and 2004–07 respectively, Anne Kelso held that of Secretary General for the triennium 1998–2001 and Nick King was elected IUIS Treasurer in 2010. In addition the Australasian Society has been represented by elected councillors since the inception of IUIS.

- **FIMSA**

The Federation of Immunological Societies of Asia–Oceania (FIMSA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1992 to advance, by holding workshops and educational programs and holding congresses every 3–4 years, the science of immunology in the Asia–Pacific region. All immunological societies and associations within the Asia–Pacific region who are members of IUIS are eligible to become members of FIMSA. The ASI is a founding member of FIMSA and hosted and organized the first FIMSA Congress which was held in Adelaide from 1 to 5 December 1996.

- **ASMR**

The Australian Society for Medical Research (ASMR), established in 1961, is the peak professional society representing Australian health and medical research. ASI is one of the 57 affiliated professional societies and Medical Colleges which together comprise 100,000 Australians actively engaged in health and medical research within the ASMR network.

- **ANZCCART**

The Australian and New Zealand Council for the Care of Animals in Research and Teaching (ANZCCART) was established to inform scientists and teachers of the technical and ethical issues relating to the use of animals in research and teaching. ASI is a full member of ANZCCART.

- **ASCIA**

The Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) was formed in 1990 by merging the Clinical Immunology Group of ASI with the Australian College of Allergy. While the CIG was a Special Interest Group of ASI, ASCIA emerged as a separate and highly successful Society with its own constitution and governance although both bodies maintain and foster the close and trusting relationship expressed at the inaugural meeting of ASCIA. Many members of ASI are also members of ASCIA and both Societies attempt to hold their annual scientific meetings to coincide if possible.

ASI Inc. Newsletter

The ASI Newsletter began informally as a quarterly news sheet sent out by Fay Turner when she was appointed Executive Officer in 1980. When the Society's business was handed over to the Victorian Postgraduate Medical Foundation in 1984, Dick Briggs temporarily took responsibility for the Newsletter with the help of the then current Honorary Secretaries. Dick expanded it and accepted paid advertisements. It was then administered by a series of editors, who like the *ICB* Editor-in-Chief are non-voting member of Council.

The newsletter has become a forum for discussion of ASI news and views, particularly those presented in the President's Report, publicizing forthcoming immunological seminars lectures and conferences and local or international meetings, providing information on major events held by the various branches, reviewing books, and advertising job vacancies and fellowships. It is published quarterly and plays an important role in the effective running of the Society.

Summary

From the early informal gathering in Adelaide in 1962 of eleven practising immunologists and a few PhD students, ASI Inc. has grown dramatically into a vigorous society of 1012 (as of December 2010) members from both Australia and New Zealand. In so doing ASI Inc., together with its own scientific journal, has earned its just place amongst the leading international immunology societies.

This rapid expansion of numbers for a relatively small country reflects the emergence of the discipline, or rather our recognition of it, as playing a central role in most aspects of medical and veterinary science. In the 1960s and early 1970s we were struggling to understand the nature and characteristics of antibodies and the role of B and T cells in regulating the immune response. Today Australians are researching widely diverse aspects such as molecular immunology, lymphocyte traffic, MHC restriction, monoclonal antibody therapies, immunogenetics, cytokines and chemokines and speculating on how these new tools and concepts might be applied to the control and eradication of disease. Pity the poor veterans of my era to whom these studies constitute a foreign language.

The Society is honoured that three of its most outstanding members, Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet, Peter C. Doherty and Rolf Zinkernagel have been made Nobel Laureates. Macfarlane Burnet and Peter Medawar were co-recipients of the 1960 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for demonstrating acquired immune tolerance, research that provided the experimental basis for inducing immune tolerance, the platform for developing methods of transplanting solid organs. Peter Doherty's research focuses on how the body's immune cells protect against viruses. He and Rolf Zinkernagel, the co-recipients of the 1996 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, received their award by demonstrating how T cells recognize target antigens in combination with major histocompatibility complex (MHC) proteins. These three outstanding members of ASI Inc. should serve as role models for current and future members of the Society.

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The following documents can be viewed on the ASI website (www.immunology.org.au)

Appendix 1 Constitution of the Australasian Society for Immunology

Appendix 2 Office bearers of ASI and meetings

Appendix 3 Burnet Orators and their topic of presentation

Appendix 4 Honorary Life Members of the Society

Appendix 5 Some of the most important immunological publications that appeared in *Immunology and Cell Biology*