Membership of the Queen Square Alumnus Association stands at over 300 and continues to increase slowly but steadily.

QUEEN SQUARE NEWS:

DEATHS:

PROFESSOR ANITA HARDING

It is with sadness that we record the death from cancer of Anita Harding at the age of 42 just before she was to take up the Chair in Clinical Neurology at the Institute. She was the most outstanding British neurological clinician of her generation and a world authority on inherited neurological diseases. She was also enormous fun.

Anita qualified in medicine from the Royal Free Hospital. There her first post was as neurological house physician to Professor P.K. Thomas whom she married in 1977, establishing a highly successful professional and personal partnership. Already committed to neurology, Anita presciently set out to clinically define and classify a variety of inherited neurological diseases, principally those affecting the cerebellum or "balance organ", the peripheral nerves, and the mitochondria that supply energy to cells.

This work resulted in a major series of papers and her classic 1984 monograph The Hereditary Ataxias and Related Disorders. Although these clinical classifications were a major advance, there remained the problem that, both within and between families, the clinical features of some inherited diseases could vary widely. This continued to make clinical diagnosis difficult, and only scratched the surface of the underlying disease mechanism, which resided in the genes.

Anita was therefore also one of the first neurologists to school herself in the new techniques of molecular genetics, with attachments to laboratories in Cardiff and the United States. In 1985, on her return, she established the country's first neurogenetics research group at Queen Square while still a lecturer. After further clinical training at the Hammersmith Hospital and the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery she was appointed senior lecturer in Neurology at the Institute and honorary consultant neurologist at the National Hospital in 1986 at the age of 33, and awarded a personal chair in 1990.
By this time her fledgling group had evolved into a flourishing clinical and molecular genetics unit providing clinical diagnosis, DNA laboratory services and genetic counselling. With a burgeoning and devoted crew of Ph.D and post-doctoral students, it was producing work of major importance.

Anita was also passionately concerned with the education and welfare of neurologists and neuroscientists in training and was one of the driving forces behind the establishment in 1988 of the highly successful European Neurological Society.

Although a prolific writer and lecturer, sometimes stepping off an aircraft from one continent to fly to another, Anita was no workaholic. North American trips frequently involved a short detour to Colorado for skiing, and trips to the Andes or Himalayas for trekking. She also enjoyed good food, good wine, and interesting company, and after a day of lectures could sometimes be found late at night or early in the morning at a Chicago "Blues" bar or, when on "home ground" at Ronnie Scott's.

Both patients and colleagues loved as well as respected Anita. She was unstuffy and always approachable, preferring to call herself the "wobbly doctor" than the expert on spinocerebellar degenerations. Her personality ensured that although there was often no effective treatment for her patients, and ultimately for herself, she succeeded in making people feel better.

In her final weeks, when she knew she was going to die, her main concerns were for those she would leave behind, particularly P.K but also her colleagues and students, whose affairs and projects she set straight from her hospital bed. Never able to resist impish quips, accompanied by a grin and a characteristic darting of the tongue, she was even able to muse on the potential compensations as well the tragedy of her early death: "At least I won't have to buy Windows '95!.

Neurology and Queen Square have lost a very special person. The waste of what else she could have achieved is tempered by the appreciation of her short, yet remarkable, life lived at full tilt. It is a great tribute to her that St. Marylebone Parish Church, where the Service of Thanksgiving for her life and work was held, was absolutely packed out. It was a very moving service, with beautiful music, and readings by, amongst others, P.K. Thomas, Alastair Compston, Ian McDonald and David Marsden.
RETIREMENTS:

There have been two retirements of senior members of the academic staff of the Institute during the past academic year:

Professor Lindsay Symon CBE retired from the Gough Cooper Chair of Neurological Surgery on 31st July 1995.

Appointed as the second holder of the Chair in succession to Professor Valentine Logue in 1978, he created a clinical and basic science research team which rapidly achieved an international reputation in the field of study of cerebral blood flow and metabolism, complementing his interest and extensive surgical practice in neurovascular surgery. In recent years he served for four years as President of the International Federation of Neurosurgical Societies and has been honoured by numerous national surgical and neurosurgical societies. During his many years at Queen Square he has contributed greatly to the development of the activities and reputation of the Institute and Hospital.

Professor David Bowen of the Miriam Marks Department of Neurochemistry retired on 1st June 1995, sadly as a result of ill health.

He came to the Institute as a member of the late Professor Alan Davison’s original team which established the Miriam Marks Department in 1971, and he subsequently developed a distinguished individual programme of research into the neurochemical bases of dementia, in part in collaboration with the Astra Neuroscience Research Unit at Wakefield Street.

Both Professor Symon and Professor Bowen have been awarded Emeritus titles by the University of London.

APPOINTMENTS:

UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY

Following the death of Professor Harding, Professor W. Ian McDonald has been appointed to the established Chair by the University of London, and will take on the Chairmanship of the Department of Clinical Neurology.

Professor D.G.T.Thomas has been appointed to the Gough Cooper Chair in Neurological Surgery in succession to Professor Symon. The vacant Senior Lecturership in the Department has been filled by Mr. Neil Kitchen from 1st October 1995.
CONFERMENT OF TITLES:

The University of London has conferred titles on the following:

Professor in Clinical Neurology on Dr. S. D. Shorvon, and Readerships in Clinical Neurology on Dr. J.S. Duncan and Dr. P.J. Goadsby.

HONOURS AND AWARDS:

Professor Lindsay Symon has been made an Honorary Fellow of the Polish Society of Neurosurgeons; Professor D.G.T. Thomas has been elected Vice-President of the European Society for Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery; Dr. A. J. Lees has been made a Foreign Member of the Chilean Society of Neurology; Professor R.S.J. Frackowiak has been elected to membership of the Academia Europea and of the Belgian Royal Academy; Dr. A. J. Thompson has been invited to be a Visiting Professor to the Department of Neurological Science in the University of Rome; Professor A.H.V. Schapira was Visiting Professor at Mount Sinai Medical School in New York and the Louisiana State University in New Orleans. In addition he was awarded a D.Sc. at the end of 1994 and the 1995 Buxton-Brown medal from the Harveian Society and the Graham Bull prize for clinical neuroscience from the Royal College of Physicians.

OTHER NEWS

Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology

This new department, previously mentioned in the Newsletter issued in January 1995, is now up and running. It is headed by Professor Richard Frackowiak, and supported by generous grants from the Wellcome Trust and the Leopold Muller Estate.

Migraine Research Unit (within the University Department of Clinical Neurology)

This unit under the direction of Dr. Peter Goadsby, who together with his clinical and experimental research team moved from Sydney to Queen Square, is now established. It is supported by a grant of £900,000 from the Wellcome Trust

Other major grants awarded during the past year include one to Professor W.I. McDonald and Dr. D.H. Miller from the Multiple Sclerosis Society for £534,000 for improving magnetic resonance techniques, and to Professor R.N. Lemon and his colleagues in the Sobell Department from the Wellcome Trust for £587,000 to study pathways of cortical control of movement.
CANDID, Counselling and Diagnosis in Dementia

This is a unique service under the direction of Dr. Martin Rossor, providing information and support to professional carers on the wide range of dementias which may affect people before the age of sixty-five. A diagnosis of dementia at any age is devastating but in young sufferers there may be additional problems, associated with young children, employment and financial commitments. There may also be the issue of a genetically inherited disease.

The service is unique because advice given by the nurse/counsellor (Penelope Roques) to callers registered with CANDID is given in the knowledge of specific clinical details available on the database. It is discussed with a Consultant Neurologist and/or a Psychiatrist and also sent to the caller's general practitioner so that they are aware of problems encountered and advice given. Anyone can call CANDID for general advice.

CANDID provides personal counselling to carers and patients as well as people worried about other aspects of dementia. Regular study days are run as well as a forum enabling a wide range of professionals working with younger sufferers to meet others similarly employed.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NEUROLOGY MEETING IN MARCH 1996 IN SAN FRANCISCO

An Alumnus Reception will be held during this meeting. Dr. Michael Finkel has kindly agreed to organise this and further information may be obtained direct from him. His address is as follows:

Midelfort Clinic Ltd.
733 West Clairemont Avenue
P.O.Box 1510
W1 54702-1510
USA

Telephone: 715 839 5222. Fax: 715 839 6732
MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN NEUROLOGICAL SOCIETY IN
THE HAGUE, HOLLAND

This will take place from 8th-12th June 1996 and will
be organised by Professor J. van Gijn. A Reception
for Alumni will be held on Monday, 7th June at 7.00 p.m.
The venue will be in the Congresgebouw. Alumni wishing
to attend should contact Professor J. van Gijn direct
at the following address:

Professor J. van Gijn
Professor and Chairman
University Department of Neurology
Postbus 85500
3508 GA
Utrecht, The Netherlands

Telephone: 030-507975
Fax: 030-542100

ALUMNI NEWS:

Deaths:

Dr. J. D. Bergin

Dr J.D.(Jack) Bergin who died on 22nd July 1995 was a
distinguished physician and member of the Wellington
community. He graduated with distinction in medicine
from Otago University in 1943 before serving with
the New Zealand Medical Corps in the Middle East, Italy
and Japan. He returned to New Zealand and worked
in medicine in Dunedin and Wellington hospitals before
travelling to Britain where he was a student and house
physician at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School
at Hammersmith. A Nuffield fellowship led to his
appointment at the National Hospital for Nervous
Diseases, Queen Square. He was the first New Zealander
to be appointed to this Institute after the conclusion of
the War. During those years in London he trained with young
doctors who became prominent figures in neurology in many
parts of the world. With them he remained life-long
friends and with these friendly contacts maintained his
continuing knowledge of new advances and the great changes
in medicine, particularly neurology which served as a
background to his professional career.

(Abstract from the obituary in the New Zealand Medical
Journal written by Dr. R. A. Hornabrook and Dr. L. Haas)
OTHER NEWS:

Queen Square Alumnus Association Committee.

Following the death of Professor Harding, the new Chairman will be Dr. Niall Quinn, and the new committee member, Dr. Peter Goadsby.

Professor T.J. Murray (Canada)

In June Professor Murray gave the Richardson Lecture at the Canadian Congress of Neurological Sciences in Victoria, British Columbia. The lectureship is the main lecture of the Canadian Neurological Society, and was named for the late Dr. J. Clifford Richardson, also an alumnist of Queen Square.

In April Professor Murray became the Chairman of the Board of Regents of the American College of Physicians, the first Canadian to chair the Board, and the first neurologist to chair the largest specialist organisation in the world.

Dr. T. Hattori (Japan)

In September 1995 Dr. Hattori was appointed Professor of Neurology at Chiba University School of Medicine.

CERTIFICATE FOR MEMBERS OF QSAA

We have had requests from members for a certificate to hang on the wall of their consulting room. A sample certificate is enclosed for your information. I think this may take sometime to produce as there is considerable artwork etc, to be done, but I will let know how things are progressing in the next Newsletter.

REGISTER OF MEMBERS:

I am trying to organise a register of members with hospital and home addresses plus telephone and fax numbers. I would be grateful, therefore, if you would complete and return the enclosed form to me as soon as possible. I do, of course, have a list of all your names and addresses, but not necessarily your home address and telephone and fax numbers.

May we take this opportunity of wishing all members of the QSAA a very happy and peaceful New Year.
REGISTER OF MEMBERS OF THE QSAA

NAME: ..........................................................

ADDRESS (Work) ............................................

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TELEPHONE No. ............................................

FAX No. ....................................................

ADDRESS (Home) ..........................................  

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TELEPHONE No. .............................................

FAX No. ....................................................

BLOCK CAPITALS THROUGHOUT PLEASE

Please return form to:

Pat Harris
Hon. Secretary Queen Square Alumnus Association
Institute of Neurology
Queen Square
London WC1N 3BG

Fax No. 0171 278 5616