BSM Course on: 'Diagnostic Mycology' 30th March 1992 at Leeds

The photograph shows the laboratory full of budding mycologists beavering furiously away at the Annual Course at Leeds. Fifty two delegates from all corners of the scientifico-medico spectrum attended the five day course, ably assisted by members of the BSM who were responsible for lectures and practical demonstrations. We extend our thanks to these and in particular to Dr E.G.V. Evans and his team for organising this most successful course. Enthusiasm for the course is high and next year's numbers will have to be restricted to 45-50. Any member of the BSM or colleagues interested in the course should write to Dr Evans at the Regional Mycology Unit, Dept Microbiology, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT for details. The course next year will run 19th - 23rd April.

The course too, is not without its social engagements, modified after feedback from last year's group. The cheese part of the cheese and wine evening was omitted and some impromptu entertainment was provided at the course dinner. Again thanks to the organiser.
The meeting for 1992 was held at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College near Egham in Surrey from 13th to 15th April. The college, part of the University of London, occupies a 100 acre site on the summit of Edge Hill. It was founded by the philanthropist, Thomas Holloway, and opened by Queen Victoria in 1886. The distinctive, ornate original building was based on the Chateau de Chambord in the Loire although more modern developments have been added in recent years. The scientific meeting took place in a modern tiered lecture theatre a short walk from the main building along with posters and trade displays.

On Monday evening delegates visited the historic buildings of Windsor Castle with conducted tours around St. George’s Chapel. Perhaps the only claim to fame for most of us is that we have 'walked on the graves of kings'.

The Annual Dinner on Tuesday 14th April was held in the Picture Gallery of the College, an impressive hall housing a notable collection of 19th century paintings.

The Meeting was attended by 109 delegates and the Tuesday Symposium on 'Diagnosis of Opportunistic Fungal Infections' attracted a further 26. Our thanks to the guest speakers:- Dr EGV Evans, Leeds; Dr DC Coleman, Dublin; Prof. R Hay, London and the Murray Memorial lecturer Dr T Walsh for their excellent contributions and to the local organiser Dr G Midgley, St John’s Hospital, London for a memorable Meeting.

1993 ANNUAL MEETING, OWEN’S PARK MANCHESTER

The Annual Meeting for 1993 will be held at Owen’s Park, Manchester from 4th - 7th April. Owen's Park is the largest of the 15 Halls of residence of the University of Manchester and is situated approx. 3 miles from the city centre. The complex is self-contained and has several meeting rooms, restaurants, bars, common and TV rooms. Nearby, the Armitage Centre has sports facilities for those interested in badminton, squash, volleyball, netball and other athletic pursuits.

The local organiser is:- Dr M.M. Roberts, The Skin Hospital, Chapel Street, Salford M60 9EP. Plan now for this Meeting, particularly paper presentation.

1994 ANNUAL MEETING, CHESTER

The 1994 Annual Meeting will take place at Chester College, Chester from 28th - 30th March 1994. Local organiser is Dr P. Hunter, Chester City Hospital, Hoole Lane, Chester.

1995 ANNUAL MEETING, CAMBRIDGE

The 1995 Annual Meeting will be at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge from 9th - 12th April 1995. Local organiser is Dr D. Kerridge, Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

Sabouraudia-Journal of Medical and Veterinary Mycology
Retired Medical Mycologist wishes to dispose of Vols 1 (1961) to 27 (1989). Must go. Shelf space needed. No reasonable offer refused. Please contact BSM Secretary.

New members

The Society is pleased to welcome the following new members:-
Dr G.T. McCallum, Controlled Therapeutics, East Kilbride.
Ms C.B. Moore, Hope Hospital, Salford.
Dr C.C. Kibbler, Royal Free Hospital, London.
Miss P. Lena, Nicosia.
Mr A.I. Altabet, Department of Microbiology, University of Glasgow.
Dr J. Hartley, P.H. L.S., Truro.
Dr A.P. Pallett, P.H. L.S., Southampton.
Society members now stand at 212 with 6 applications pending.
**BEST COMMENTS SECTION**

The following manuscript has been a little delayed in the post. It was sent to two reviewers but now we offer it to the members of the BSM for peer review.

**The solution of the Secret of Alcoholic Fermentation**

by von Liebig (1839)

Beer yeast when dispersed in water, breaks down into an infinite number of small spheres. When these spheres are transferred to an aqueous solution of sugar, they develop into small animals. These are endowed with a sort of suction trunk with which they gulp up the sugar from solution. Digestion is immediately and clearly recognisable because of the discharge of excrements. These animals evacuate ethyl alcohol from their bowels and carbon dioxide from their urinary organs. Thus one can observe how a specifically lighter fluid is exuded from the anus and rises vertically whereas a stream of carbon dioxide is ejected at a very short interval from the enormously long genitals.

Reviewer 1) The author seems to prefer showering to taking a bath.

Reviewer 2) We must look into the hidden message in this 'script. It clearly employs Nostradamus' techniques. The clues lie with the first word of the first sentence and (in reverse) the second last word of the second sentence i.e. Beer and Small = BSM.

Then we take the third word of the third sentence (endowed) and the fourth from last of the fourth sentence (the), the fifth and sixth give (alcohol) and (interval). The message is therefore :- BSM endowed the alcohol interval. Again a coded message. If we take the first word (BSM) and second from last (alcohol) this gives BSM alcohol. This still doesn't make too much sense until we realise it's an anagram of Lamb school

When I fed this coded message into my main-frame 50 galactobye desktop I got out the figure 42. It took some time to realise that this is exactly the average age of the BSM membership in 42 months' time.
I have already written an account of the origin of the MRCP Medical Mycology Committee and the series of paper-reading meetings from which our Society evolved (Sabouraudia 1978; 16:1-7). What really happened was more fortuitous.

I spent 1939-45 at the Commonwealth Mycological Institute and by the end of the war, with the children starting school, I was caught in the 'poverty trap' built into the salary scale. One Sunday, in the Autumn of 1945, my wife and I took the two children to Sevenoaks to spend the day with the Ingold family. At that time Glaxo, ICAP and other manufacturers of penicillin were finding it necessary to appoint mycologists to their staffs. Before lunch Terence Ingold (then professor of botany at Birkbeck College) said he had an enqury from the Wellcome Foundation which was looking for a mycologist to start a mycology section. Did I know of anyone likely to be interested? I didn't. During the afternoon when out in Knowle Park it occurred to me that I might be interested. Terence put my name forward. I met Dr. C.H. Kelway, the Foundation's chief scientist, and it was quickly agreed that I should head a mycology section at more than twice my current salary.

I took up my new post in January 1946. The Wellcome Mycological Section, where penicillin production had been developed, was at Sutton, Surrey, some ten miles west of the headquarters at the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories at Beckenham, Kent. The building had originally been the London County Council Serum Laboratory and was situated in the grounds of the LCC Mental Hospitals at Belmont.

The accommodation comprised one large low temperature incubator able to cope with two or more replicates of 150 litres of medium distributed in milk bottles, a smaller bench 37°C incubator, and a cold room, together with a range of laboratories and a small canteen. (My first duty on my first morning was to find a replacement for the cook!) I had the support of a graduate biochemist, a graduate mycologist, two senior technical assistants, and some 25 laboratory assistants each of whom had at least half a day off each week to attend technical school classes.

We had a busy and exciting year. We discovered a commercially viable antibiotic (which was patented), and devised a rather Heath-Robinson-like apparatus for producing 150 l. batches of antibiotic-containing broth. In early 1947 several of us visited Farnham Hospital and saw the bouncing baby, which, by exhausting our reserves, had been cured of severe whooping cough by the first clinical trial of our antibiotic. We also grew several batches of streptomycin on a medium we had devised, in the new bottle-plant at Beckenham for penicillin production. Unfortunately during the war the Wellcome Foundation had overstretched itself - stocks of antibiotics were excessive. The Foundation had spent a quarter of a million, it was said, on the new penicillin bottle plant at time when deep culture production was coming into use. Retrenchment was necessary. The Belmont cold room was filled with horses' meat (for conversion into nutrient broth) and early in 1947 I was told that as the most recent development, the mycology section was to be axed. I was offered a post in the bacteriology department at Beckenham, but the Foundation agreed to my suggestion that I should be handed over to the Wellcome Trustees who gave me a grant to work on medical mycology under Dr. J.T. Duncan at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Dr. J.T. Duncan (formerly chief plant pathologist in India but a medical man by training), the abstracting journal of the Imperial Bureau of Mycology, the Review of Applied Mycology, included increasing numbers of abstracts on medical and veterinary mycology. It was Dr. S.P. Wiltshire, Dr. Butler's successor, who during the war approached the Medical Research Council for advice on how to treat this material. One result was the initiation of a separate journal, the Review of Medical and Veterinary Mycology, produced in conjunction with the Bureau of Hygiene at the LSHTM. Another was the setting up of the MRCP Medical Mycology Committee with Dr. St. John Brooks as secretary, and after his resignation Dr. Duncan, who found the position unsuitable, as the Committee was making recommendations regarding the future of medical mycology at the LSHTM. I therefore took over Dr. Duncan's position with Sir Archibald Gray as chairman of the Committee. At first applications for grants in medical mycology to the MRC were referred to the Committee which also reviewed progress reports from the grant holders. It occurred to the Committee that it would be a good idea to bring grant holders and others interested in medical mycology together at a private meeting for paper reading and discussion. The MRC agreed somewhat reluctantly and, as recalled by Roland Davies (in the Winter '91 'As I recall'), the first meeting, held at Exeter, was a success. Further meetings were arranged, at first at centres where members of the Committee were based, then as 'missionary' meetings, at other places. When the MRC withdrew its support, the British Society for Mycopathology was formed to continue and extend what was considered to be a worthwhile activity.