History of the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Volume 1
1947 to 1975

By
Dr. William H. McMenemey and
Dr. Peter I.A. Hendry
Seated at the front table amongst the ladies at the VIII World Congress Banquet in Munich 1972 are three distinguished past officers of the World Association

Left to Right: Prof. Maurice Welsch (Pres. 1963-66), Dr. Joseph Ungar (Sec. 1947-66) and Prof. Raoul Kourilsky (Pres. 1954-57)
The History of WASPaLM
1947 - 1975

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Copyright© World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
2015
This volume contains the first two “editions” of the history of the World Association by Drs. William McMenemey and Peter Hendry. Dr. McMenemey completed the text from 1947 through 1957, but he died in 1977 before he could complete the rest. He never wrote an author’s forward, although the Preface is his work. Dr. Hendry completed the material from 1958 through 1975 and wrote the Forwards to both parts.

The illustrations in this volume were originally printed on a newsprint using a “dot–matrix” process and so are of variably poor quality, many looking like they were “xerox” copies. Regardless, they have been reproduced here after scanning, some minor cropping, and – where it improved the image – some digital enhancement of the scanned image. It is unlikely, at this juncture, that better photographs are readily available.

The original text contained a large number typographical errors and I have attempted to correct these, although some may still remain. Any specific “errors” that could not be readily corrected and required comment have been noted by asterisks in the text. Some of the text has been modified for clarity (punctuation; splitting complex sentences into two) and, where text has been added, brackets have been used to set it apart. Casual commentary by the original authors has been set in Franklin Gothic Book Italic. Where there are quotations of text in a language other than English, a translation of the text to English is provided in small capital letters.

In general, the text records events, opinions and actions. It is a history with little context and neither author added any “editorial” analysis of unfolding events.

Volume II, by Dr. Utz P. Merten, extends the history through 2003. It generally follows the organization of volume I, but with the chapters being associated with individual presidencies.

Dr. McMenemey died long before I was active in WASPaLM. Dr. Hendry was a person of legend, but he was still alive when the World Congress was again held in Sydney, Australia in 2009.
World Congress of Pathology, Sydney, Australia 2009

Left to Right: Dr. Utz P. Merten, Dr. Peter Hendry, Dr. Henry (Pete) Travers

Henry Travers, MD, FACP
Chair, WASPaLM Informatics Committee
Past President, WASPaLM
Sioux Falls, South Dakota, United States of America
September 2015
In 1972 Professor William H. McMenemey undertook to write the history of the World Association of Societies of Pathology, but unfortunately died before it was completed. The Association then asked me to take it over and I was given the unfinished manuscript to read. I realized immediately that it would be difficult to continue the history as Bill had begun it. His was a very personal account of a man and his colleagues and their role in establishing clinical pathology as a recognized discipline at an international level. It was therefore decided to publish the manuscript as he left it, a valuable contribution to the history of the World Association and a tribute to its author, one of its most loved and respected members.

The World Association saw its origin in World War II. Many European pathologists who had been displaced moved to the United Kingdom and formed close ties with their colleagues. In 1943, they founded the European Association of Clinical Pathologists, which after the war became the International Society of Clinical Pathology. Prominent amongst the founders was Professor McMenemey, at that time pathologist to the Royal Infirmary at Worcester. In 1949, he moved to the Maida Vale Hospital, where he soon established himself as one of Britain's leading neuropathologists, being the President of the British Neurological Society and British Neuropathological Society from 1957 to 1960. William McMenemey, however, still found time to be actively involved in the International Society of Clinical Pathology and was its President from 1966 to 1969. It was during this time that the Constitution was revised and the name changed to the World Association of Societies of Pathology.

In 1970 he retired to Morden, Surrey, with his wife Dr. Robina (Rubie) Insker McMenemey. Here in his delightful cottage set in a lovely English garden, and surrounded by his books and memorabilia, he continued with his other great love, medical history. Professor McMenemey had already established a reputation as a medical historian, having published amongst others "A History of the Worcester Royal Infirmary" (1947) and the Biography of Sir Charles Hasting, founder of the British Medical Association (1959). He was a member of the section of History of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine and had been its President from 1962 to 1964. He died in November, 1977 at the age of 72.
In a short foreword like this one cannot attempt to convey to the reader the William McMenemey his colleagues knew and loved - his delightful whimsical humor, his wealth of anecdotes, his great ability as a teacher, his expertise as a pathologist, his reputation as a connoisseur of food and wine - but those who knew him well will remember all these attributes and many more.

I first met Bill McMenemey in 1960 during an early overseas trip and later had the honor of being his Vice-President in the World Association. However, it was not until after his retirement and during a number of visits to the United Kingdom with my wife, that we really got to know Bill McMenemey and Rubie. Perhaps the following recollection may help to convey to the reader something of the character of this remarkable man. We had had a delightful dinner, cooked by Rubie and served by Bill, and we were sitting in his study talking about the history of the World Association when he rose from his desk, went to the bookshelves and brought back an empty brandy bottle. Taking out the cork he invited me to sniff the contents. There was a faint, but unmistakable aroma of a beautiful old brandy. He said "I treasure that bottle; although we drank the contents in 1947 that aroma transports me back to the early days of the Association and I am once again in a charming French restaurant with Professor Jau main and his colleagues."

Peter I. A. Hendry
Fourteen years and much has flowed under the bridge since the publication of Dr. McMenemey's delightful History. In a concluding remark that I added at the end of that publicity I said: "The beginning of the history so ably presented here will be continued and brought up to date in a future publication".

Little was I to realize this would be my responsibility. However I accepted the task with pleasure, although it required more work than I anticipated. To fit this into a busy life meant adding a bit here, then a pause and then a bit there until what is being presented here eventuated.

To help celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Association it was decided to add this contribution to that of Dr. McMenemey and to republish it in the one volume.

As suggested in Dr. McMenemey's preface the facts as presented in my contribution are taken from the minutes of the Bureau and Council meetings of the Association which are a tribute to a painstaking keeping of records by the first Secretary, Dr. Joseph Ungar, and later his successor, Dr. Bruno Della Vida.

Much of the rest is from the recollection of the writer boosted by remarks and suggestions from many of those whose names are recorded here. Like most recollections they may not be completely accurate, however I believe them to be as substantially so!

It has been my great pleasure and privilege to have been involved one way or another with the Association since the first Congress which was held in London in 1951. I had served in Malaya during the Second World War as a Medical Officer where it had been my misfortune to have been a Prisoner of War so that I was out of circulation for some four years. On my return I took up Pathology and to further my knowledge had enrolled in a one-year course in Pathology at the prestigious Postgraduate School at Hamersmith in London.

It was during this course that the first Congress of the Association then known as the International Society of Clinical Pathology was held and naturally we postgraduate students all attended. I have one of those long photos of all the participants which were
much in vogue in the Fifties which I treasure. It features so many of the prominent pathologists of those days that it is a history itself!

It was a great congress and I was so impressed that when a congress was scheduled for Madrid in 1960, I attended. On the way over I visited Dr. Bradley Copeland in Boston, USA, and found we had a mutual interest in quality control in the clinical laboratory. Brad could not go the Madrid so I agreed to raise the matter there. The result was the formation of the Standards Committee later to become the Commission on World Standards (COWS) with Dr. Copeland as Chairman and myself as Secretary.

From then on I was hooked and have attended all subsequent Congresses except the one held in Brighton in 1985. I have been privileged to serve the Association in a number of capacities including being President of the Association and of the Sydney Congress. My involvement has been a happy one and I hope will continue into the future.

Here is my contribution,

Peter I. A. Hendry
There are minutes of the Association's Bureau and Council meetings and there are programs of the Congresses: from these a future historian could prepare a definite history and assess our good intentions and our failings. But there are also one's memories and those of colleagues throughout the world who were present on those early occasions: these the historian would have only secondhand from what we pen in our lifetime. These memories of mine will inevitably obtrude on the strict historical theme but they are justified if they give pleasure to those who took part in that interesting period which saw the development of a fellowship of pathologists throughout the world; they are doubly justified if they persuade others to record their memories too for the benefit of posterity.

Morden, Surrey
England
Introduction

Wars bring few advantages in their wake and many would say none; but against the cruel waste of lives and the appalling destruction can be weighed a resurgence of hope for the future and a determination to improve international relations. Enforced movements of populations can result in refugees finding new homes in other lands and the sojourning of armed forces in allied countries is conducive to the forging of new friendships. Out of the 1939 - 45 war came a variety of international and world organizations, several of which were concerned with medicine. Our Association was born in Paris on November 21, 1947, after a long gestation, and before I describe that important occasion I must refer to events that led up to it.

Origins of the Association

The beginnings of the Association go back to the early days of the war and indeed earlier. I shall list them under three headings, the European Association of Clinical Pathologists, AngloAmerican accord in clinical pathology and the Société Française de Biologie Clinique.

The European Association of Clinical Pathologists

Practitioners of medicine on the continent of Europe who foresaw the dangers of the upsurge in nationalism in some countries and in particular the threat to those of "non-Aryan" stock, sought employment in UK, USA, Canada and Australasia while they could still leave their countries. They could not always follow their chosen specialties but they were adaptable and grateful. Many of them were pathologists and others became pathologists. They have enriched the countries of their adoption. The (British) Association of Clinical Pathologists played its part in finding openings for some of
these unfortunate persons and it will not escape the notice of historians that not a few of them were accommodated in the hospitals of the Midlands and notably in Dr. Dyke's department at Wolverhampton and nearby. He had founded the Association of Clinical Pathologists in 1927 in the early days of the clinical pathology "explosion" in England and Wales.

There is little doubt that our European friends found our clinical pathology "way of life" different from the one which obtained in their own countries. In England and Wales, apart from the teaching hospitals, the diagnostic laboratory services were coordinated. The clinical pathologists were often competent physicians (used in the modern British, rather than the original and the American sense) who with the help of technicians undertook the bacteriological, haematological, chemical and histological investigations as well as performing autopsies for the coroners and for the hospitals centered on their laboratories. The teaching hospitals tended to favor the European pattern of separate departments and so they did not provide the service for general practitioners which the Association of Clinical Pathologists encouraged among their members and which proved so helpful and popular. In Scotland the pattern was much the same as on the Continent.

Dr. Dyke's protégés from Europe were so impressed with the value to a community of a pathological service that, at his suggestion there was founded a European Association of Clinical Pathologists, the idea being that at the successful conclusion of hostilities, members would return to their own countries and form their own societies of clinical pathology, which would be coordinated by the parent body. A notice of this intention appeared in *The Lancet*.\(^1\) "Clinical Pathology", it stated, "although itself a special branch, permeates and establishes contacts with all branches of medicine". The signatories of this letter were:

- E.J. Bigwood, MD (Brussels)
- A. Delikatova, MD (Bratislava)
- B.L. Della Vida, MD (Rome)
- F. Duran Jorda, MD (Barcelona)
- S.C. Dyke, D.M. (Oxford)
- S. Fransman, MD (Amsterdam)
- J.O. Gavronsky (Moscow), MRCS
- M. Mandelbaum, MD (Munich)
- F. Pick, MD (Prague)
- G. Popjak, MD (Szeged)
- F. Silberstein, MD (Vienna)
- G. Ungar, MD (Paris)

The inaugural meeting held on April 3, 1943, was reported in *The Lancet*.\(^2\) Dr. Pick was the convener and Dr. Dyke moved the formation of the new body, (knowing full

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\(^1\) *Lancet*, 1943. 1:382 (March 20)
\(^2\) *Lancet* 1943. 1:506
well that the ACP would agree). He was supported in this resolution by Professor Bigwood, Dr. K. S. Rosenberg (Prague) and Dr. Joseph Ungar. Dr. Dyke was then able to read a letter of welcome from Dr. A.F. S. Sladden, President of the ACP. Ten countries on the continent of Europe were represented (as above) and a committee was set up consisting of Drs. Della Vida, Dyke, Mandelbaum, Pick, Silberstein and Joseph Ungar. Dr. M. Maizeis of University College Hospital and Dr. (later Sir) Philip N. Panton, Director of the Clinical Laboratories at the London Hospital and Advisor in Pathology to the Minister of Health then spoke. The latter made the interesting remark that laboratory workers on the Continent were too specialized to take charge of hospital laboratories. The meeting was not to pass without a characteristic quote from the Bible by Dr. Dyke: on this occasion he chose St. Mark chapter 4, verses 31 and 32 on "the grain of mustard seed".

An invitational letter addressed from Walsall General Hospital by Dr. Pick and dated May 1943 to "all medically qualified men and women of all European nationalities engaged in any branch of medical laboratory work" stated that the entrance fee had been set at 5/- and that the next meeting was to be held in London at the Holborn Restaurant on Friday, May 21, at 6:30 PM. Wartime regulations required that it must finish by 9:30 PM (when restaurants closed) and the dinner would cost 5/- (the maximum permitted price). The provisional committee had recommended that the President should be Dr. Dyke (Oxford and London); Professor Bigwood (Brussels) as Vice-President; Dr. Pick (Prague) as Secretary and Dr. Della Vida (Rome) as Treasurer.

There is no record of this meeting at the Holborn Restaurant but the councilors who were to be elected on this occasion are named in a second invitational letter from the Secretary, Dr. Pick, dated August 1943. They were Dr. A Benau (Belgrade), Dr. D.C. Canne (Amsterdam), Dr. F. Duran Jorda (Barcelona), Dr. G. Ungar (Paris), Professor F. Silberstein and Dr. J. Ungar (Prague). In this notice Dr. Pick reported that all members of the EACP were welcome at ACP meetings which afforded "peculiarly fruitful occasions for the gathering together of practitioners in the different branches of medicine on a ground of common understanding and interest in the progress of medical science." One paragraph should be quoted in full because it clearly sets out Dr. Dyke’s long-term hopes for the future:

"It is the dual aim of the EACP to advance the standard of medical, practice and also to further a spirit of amity and cooperation between the medical
communities of the people of Europe. With these ends EACP hopes as soon as circumstances permit to set up a system of free interchange of workers in Clinical Pathology between all countries of Europe, to establish a Journal devoted to Clinical Pathology, and to arrange joint scientific meetings of all branches of EACP”.

The Association, concluded Dr. Pick, had the approval and support of the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning.

The constitution was adopted on November 26, as appears from a copy of Dr. Dyke's "encyclical" dated Christmas 1943, and circulated to the 60 members from 14 countries. He reported that at this first annual meeting and dinner there was an attendance of 30. Considering the state of the country, and the hazards of gatherings this, in retrospect, may be reckoned highly satisfactory, especially since the time coincided with an influenza epidemic. The meeting, which was held at the Royal Society of Medicine, was reported in The Lancet by Dr. Dyke (letter from Dr. E. Clayton-Jones to Dr. Della Vida dated December 18, 1943). A charming account of it by Dr. Della Vida appeared on invitation. Foreigners outnumbered the British it seems and all spoke in English except for one Frenchman, George Ungar, who at the dinner insisted on speaking in French. "... it was a very welcome change to hear again such musical words" wrote this excellent commentator. He concluded prophetically that with more such meetings more people would appreciate how pleasant it is to be "a good European".

In an editorial entitled "Commuters", The Lancet welcomed the emergence of this society of pathologists. Implicit in this new organization, they commented, was the will to break down barriers and bring about free commerce of ideas between the medical communities of Europe. The membership now stood between 70 and 80, yet it was less than a year old. They evidently approved of the proposal to promote a system of exchange of personnel and to set up a central Bureau. Clinical pathologists they concluded, might point the way to other departments of medicine, and indeed to bodies of many sorts interested in the furtherance of science and learning.

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3Lancet, 1943, 2:798
4Lancet, 1943, 2:809
5Lancet 1944, 1:341