

The Association of Clinical Pathologists

Winter 2006

acp News

ISSN No. 0260-065X

GET CARTER:
PATHOLOGY
UNDER THE
MICROSCOPE



www.pathologists.org.uk

Commentary on the Independent Review of Pathology Services in England
Clinical pathologists as medical professionals
Pathologists as knowledge managers
Appraisal and the Rule of Fear

Association of Clinical Pathologists

Officers

President

Dr C E Coulson

President-elect

Dr G P Spickett

Vice-Presidents

Dr R Reid

Dr W A Telfer Brunton

Chairman of Council

Dr M J Galloway

Secretary

Dr A N Stark

Treasurer

Dr W J Fuggle

Scientific Meetings Secretary

Professor T M Reynolds

Editor/Publications Secretary

Dr M D Harris

Assistant Editors

Prof K G Kerr

Dr J L Burton

Dr P J Twomey

Postgraduate Education

Secretary

Dr M S Morgan

Management Course Organisers

Drs A and M Galloway

Membership Secretary

Dr P Wilson

Secretariat

The Association of Clinical Pathologists

189 Dyke Road

Hove, East Sussex, BN3 1TL

Tel: 01273 775700

Fax: 01273 773303

email: info@pathologists.org.uk

<http://www.pathologists.org.uk>

General Administrator

Ms A A Martin

Administrator – Finance

Miss T Moynan

Editorial Assistant

Miss J Rush

(Correspondence should be addressed to:
The Editor,
Association of Clinical Pathologists,
189 Dyke Road, Hove,
East Sussex, BN3 1TL
Email: mdharris@doctors.org.uk)

© ACP News 2006 all rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be
reproduced in any way whatsoever
without the permission of the Association
of Clinical Pathologists.

Charity registration number: 209455

Contents

Editorial

Editorial	3
Review of NHS Pathology Services in England	3
The editor's holiday	3
Lost in translation: more holiday ranting	3
The editor vanishes	4
Skull	4
In this issue	4
and finally	4
– Dr M D Harris	

Cover Story

Get Carter	5
------------	---

Invitation

Invitation to contributors	5
----------------------------	---

Leading Article

A commentary on the Independent Review of Pathology Services in England by Lord Carter of Coles	
– Adrian Newland	6
Independent Review of Pathology Services in England, chaired by Lord Carter of Coles	
– Tim Stephenson	8

News

Report from Council	
– Mike Galloway	11
Five years standing	
– Mike Harris	11

Practical Pathologist's Meeting List

Calendar of forthcoming meetings	12
----------------------------------	----

Articles

Pathologists as knowledge managers	
– Muir Gray	13
Clinical pathologists as medical professionals	
– Ceridwen Coulson	14
Are medical educationalists the enemies of medical education?	
– Julian Burton	16
Appraisal and the rule of fear	
– Steven Wilkinson	17
Joseph Merrick: "The Elephant Man"	
– Hannah Hardisty	19
Confidentiality and data protection: just what is our problem?	
– Katie Holmes	20
Decomposition of human bodies and insect activity at the Anthropological Research Facility, Tennessee	
– Andrew Hart	24
Profits of Doom: the final episode	
– Dorothy Dixon	26
View from a hospital window	
– Reg Britt	27

Letters to the Editor

Gerard Slavin	29
Caroline Gannon	29

Photomontage Prague 2006

Prague 2006 Images	30
--------------------	----

Trainees

To Band or not to Band – that is the question	
– Rick Panigrahi	32
A year in the life of an SHO	
– Louisa Dunk	33
Twenty(ish) top tips for surviving the MRCP part two autopsy examination	
– Eleanor Jaynes	34

Front cover photo: Get Carter by the editor - see Cover Story on page 5

In the land of the DNA chip, tree bark extract is still king

– Ian Chandler 36

Pathology Record

New Council Members	38
---------------------	----

Twomey's Teasers

Solutions to Teaser 17	40
Teaser 18	40

Book Reviews

New books and recent editions	41
-------------------------------	----

Meetings Reports

International Scientific Meeting, 22 nd - 3 rd June 2006, Prague	
– Mike Harris	46
In the Maltese Islands with the Gods, the Guru and the Ghost of Mr Stott	
– Carl Gray	47
Diagnostic Surgical Pathology Meeting, Florence, 6 th -10 th June 2006	
– Mathew Hickling	49
Will you manage to keep pathology on an even keele? A review of the June 2006 University of Keele Clinical Management Course for Specialist Registrars in Pathology	
– Julian Burton	50

Columnists

Dennis Writes - Are we being fair to the fair sex?	
– Dennis Wright	51
Ask Dame Dorothy	
– Dorothy Dixon	51
Doors	
– David Bareford	52
Mangotarian	
– Emyr Benbow	53
NHS sports report	
– Pat Twomey	54
Difficult to stomach?	
– The unmasked pathologist	53
A Yuletide ditty	
– Simon Knowles	56

Curetings

No need to panic	57
Fire lectures	57
Funeral	57
Sign of the Times	57
Police criminal profile	57
Best heckle (but only possibly true)	57
Shepherd (sent in by Josie Shrimankar)	57
And a few men jokes, again from Josie	57
This is good!	58
Tim Reynolds's email disclaimer	58
Buffalo (from Emyr)	58
Sign of the times	58
The bathtub test	58
The Senility Prayer	58

PhotoCuretings

Underwood	59
Poly	59
Boom	59
Non-stop	59
Nuts	59
Terminator 3	59

What's On

Clinical Excellence Awards	29
ACP Liaison and Branch officers meeting	37

Editorial

Review of NHS Pathology Services in England

Lord Carter has finally spoken! This issue has two articles on his review of pathology services in England: one by Adrian Newland, the College president, and the other by Tim Stephenson, a former editor of *acp News* and now editor of the *Bulletin of the Royal College of Pathologists*. It will be no surprise that you will also find a few other references to the review in this issue and I was going to throw in some editorial comments of my own here, but on reflection there would be little I could contribute over and above Adrian's and Tim's views. Readers are reminded that there is a letters section if they wish to comment!

The editor's holiday

Convention, I believe, dictates that the editor of *acp News* normally writes about his summer holiday. Ironically, the timing of copy submission and publication means that this now falls into the winter issue, but never mind. As the readership may have gathered, I am not one for following tradition for its own sake; however, a week in Cyprus this summer got me thinking about the current state of the holiday industry.



Has the sun finally set on the continental holiday industry in Western Europe?

Now, apologies to anyone who knows different, but this was my second time there and, as before, I reached the conclusion that the place is a dump! In fact, I would say the same about many of the places I have been to on holiday in Europe. Oh, sure, they have the weather and there are some nice beaches, as well as some not-so-nice ones, but take away the sunshine and you are left with a bleak, dry, dusty landscape that is liberally dotted about with reinforced concrete and half-finished building work. Portugal is the same, as are the Canaries and many other places. The main cities may be better, but those of us who need an annual recharge of our batteries by lazing around just don't want to go there.

We stayed in a good hotel, with excellent food and service (although the usual crap entertainment), and admittedly I have grown fussy with age and no longer go to anywhere hot without ensuring that there is air-conditioning. But that aside, and even away from the hotels, there is one word that sums up the whole experience – expensive! Gone are the days when, some 20 or 30 years ago, you could eat and drink well on holiday for next to nothing. These places are now no cheaper than in the UK.

But it's not just that, it's the attitude of the locals. I once had a girlfriend who came from Devon and she told me how the people there would refer to the tourists as "grockles" or "emmies" (haemorrhoids). Well, the attitude abroad often seems to be the same – particularly in Spain. Now, I am sorry, but if you are a shop owner, a restaurateur or a bar owner in one of these places, then tourism is your livelihood and it



Dr M D Harris is Editor of *acp News* and a Consultant Histopathologist/Cytopathologist in Peterborough

is what puts food on the plates of your children ... so be nice to me!

I think that these traditional holiday destinations are going to get a bit of a shock in the next few years and the reason is simple – Eastern Europe. You want beaches? If so, there are the Adriatic, Baltic and Black Sea coasts. There are mountain regions providing for walking and skiing, and fantastic cities like Prague, as anyone who attended this year's scientific meeting will know. What is more, they are cheap, the food and the booze (particularly the beer) are first class, and access is simple from any UK airport. In some ways I feel there is a "buzz" in Eastern Europe – a sense of rejoining the rest of the world and of possibilities to be explored.

Yes, there are some obstacles to be overcome, not least of which is improving the state of their hotels, from the old functional Eastern Bloc style, to somewhere that Western tourists, particularly the spoilt Americans, will want to stay. But they

are doing that and, very soon, I predict that tourists, from the middle-aged right down to the student backpackers and party seekers, will turn their backs on Cyprus, Spain and the like and head east. And the countries losing out will only have themselves to blame.

Lost in translation: more holiday ranting

George Bernard Shaw said of the English and the Americans that they are "two countries separated by a common language". Well, quite what he would have made of the present day holiday entertainment industry, I shudder to think. Particularly as he also said, "Hell is full of musical amateurs".

Now, don't get me wrong, as someone who can only speak enough of any foreign language to order a round of drinks, I am really in no position to criticise other nationalities' use of English; however, it is not use of English by those who are trying to speak it that bothers me so much, rather it is English as used by those who are not. Let me explain why.

Both on my most recent holiday (see above) and on previous occasions, I have found that a number of hotels had evening entertainment, and didn't seem to be too bothered about who sat and watched, as long as they were buying their drinks. As there was really bugger all else to do in the evenings, we became like local groupies for the week. Some of the entertainers were of the "tribute band" variety, although more commonly comprising one singer and a rather dubious, and probably mass-produced, backing tape. In one case, a guy and two girls managed to do each song in a different "tribute" persona, although if the songs had not been easily recognisable, and had they not told us who they were, I am not sure we would ever have guessed. At least, in their favour, the guy did play the guitar (over the backing tape). What is more, he could clearly play quite well and was probably silently fuming and cursing the cruel industry that had thrown out his bid for rock stardom, leaving him to scratch out a living playing stuff he could do standing on his head – actually, why didn't he think of doing that? Some of the other acts were like more traditional pub-style entertainment, although a little heavy on the keyboards, but again with quite good musicians, including in one case a saxophone or two.

But what really got to me was the fact that they were singing the English lyrics in a kind of phonetic fashion, making something like the original sound, but just different enough that, had you not known what it was, you would never have been able to work out what they were singing. You know the sort of thing – that Neil Diamond classic "Sonsunbloo", "Akybrakyhar" by some American bloke in a check shirt whose name for the moment escapes me and, best of all, one that nearly had me on the floor in stitches, Tom Jones's "It's not in-you-you-sal" – I swear, I'm not making this up! To be fair, it is not really any different to an English band doing "La Bamba", but then they should be shot, too.

The point is that these countries often have their own great traditional music, apart from Germany, that is. The sound of flamenco guitar on a warm evening, accompanied by a plate of paella with all the antennae and wiggly bits, and a glass or two of smooth Rioja, is a wonderful experience, made better still if there are a few dark-eyed Spanish beauties beating out the rhythm with tap shoes and castanets. Any singing that is done should be done in Spanish, and the fact that it could be their shopping list set to music is irrelevant. Contrast this with the pseudo-pop/rock cabaret, or a couple of elderly ladies in flamenco skirts tapping out the rhythm of a portable tape machine, and you will get my point.

I am not one who believes that the EU is necessarily an altogether bad thing, or that for Britain to adopt the Euro would be the end of civilisation as we know it. I can well see that a United States of Europe is an inevitable consequence of modern travel and communication. I even quite like Belgian beer. But, if we are to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and ensure that there can never again be another war on the scale of those of the last century, please stop these entertainers singing in a language they can't speak. Otherwise, I am likely to go over there and start the next one myself.



The music may have been crap, but at least the sea life was friendly

The editor vanishes

The more observant amongst you may have noticed from my picture, which I like to change each issue (I have no idea why, but a psychologist might be able to explain it), that I appear to be shrinking. From the decidedly "cuddly" gentleman of a few issues back, to the now much "leaner and meaner" model. The reason, apart from general healthy principles

and a bit of vanity, was a raised fasting blood glucose level, found during a life insurance medical. Six months later and two and a half stone lighter, an oral glucose tolerance test (thanks Steven Martin) puts me in the non-diabetic "impaired fasting glucose" range. I guess that is where I need to stay.

It did cross my mind that, given the sales of "The Atkins Diet" and other similar weight-loss programmes, that I might try marketing "The Harris Diet", but it would be a rather slim volume. Eat fewer calories – er ... that's about it. Now, where did I put that lettuce?



Well, the sign says "Syfiliticke" ...

Skull

Readers may recall the spot diagnosis in the last issue, which was a skull seen in the museum in Prague (see picture). Well, a few have emailed me, but no one has come up with the diagnosis on the display. The sign says "Syfiliticke", although a few have suggested myeloma. You may be right and they may be wrong, but no one wins the mouse mat!

In this issue

Firstly, as covered above, the *Carter Review* gets its due mention, as well as a brief nod from Dorothy Dixon in her final episode of "Profits of Doom", and others. I have very much enjoyed Dorothy's off-beat story of the encroachment of the private sector into NHS working – be warned, it may be fiction, but the message is loud and clear, and may well be coming to a lab near you. I am, however, delighted that Dorothy has agreed to stay on as a regular "agony aunt" columnist for *acp News* and I would encourage the readership to send

her their problems, no matter how personal and embarrassing. Don't be shy, she is an emu of wide experience and is virtually unshockable. The rest of us may not be so, but we could all use a good laugh.

Returning to the *Carter Review*, both Adrian Newland and Tim Stephenson give their views on the recommendations. I can only say that, from a personal point of view, I found these articles extremely helpful in understanding the document. These are recommended reading for all pathologists, and particularly those facing job interviews, as I doubt any interview panel will not include at least one question on it.

And talking of reviews, ACP president Ceridwen Coulson considers the Royal College of Physicians report *Doctors in Society: Medical Professionalism in a Changing World*, how it relates to clinical pathologists, and what the ACP could do to strengthen and sustain pathologists' professionalism. Again, recommended reading.

Sir Muir Gray, who is, amongst other things, director of clinical knowledge, process and safety at the University of Oxford, gave the Dyke Foundation Lecture at this year's scientific meeting in Prague, entitled "Knowledge is the Enemy of Disease". In this issue, he gives his views on pathologists as knowledge managers. Sir Muir is a regular reader of *acp News* and tells me he enjoys it very much, so he is OK by me!

Earlier this year I attended an in-house training day for consultant appraisers – yes, it almost makes me feel like a grown-up! The sessions were run by our HR director, alongside Steven Wilkinson from the University of East Anglia, who so impressed me that I nabbed him to write for *acp News*. His article "Appraisal and the Rule of Fear" gives a very interesting and fresh perspective on appraisal. Enjoy ...

And finally

The editor has "boobed". After promising to acknowledge the photo when used, I completely forgot! I could blame a frantic edit before going off on my hols, or I could just be honest and say it slipped my mind. Anyway, the rather splendid sundial image on page 15 of the autumn issue was taken by Les Culank, a retired chemical pathologist in Cambridge. There, now I feel better!



Dr J L Burton is Assistant Editor of *acp News* and Lecturer in Histopathology at the University of Sheffield

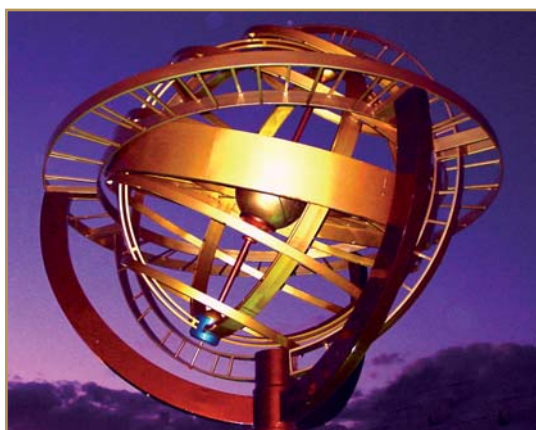


Prof K G Kerr is Assistant Editor of *acp News* and Consultant Microbiologist at Harrogate District Hospital



Dr P J Twomey is Assistant Editor of *acp News* and Consultant Chemical Pathologist at Ipswich Hospital

Cover Story



Get Carter

A strange one this time! It appears that *acp News* has never had a microscope on the cover before. A fact only slightly less bizarre than that the Royal College of Pathologists does not actually possess a microscope – unless they have invested in one since the Brompton Slide Exchange (BSE) slide club tried to hold a meeting there a few years back.

The image is a composite of an old microscope found in the editor's department, Photoshopped over a background "object" taken in Discoveryland at Disneyland Paris. The exact purpose of said artefact is not entirely clear, but it sure looks good in the early twilight!

Invitation to Contributors

In addition to the constant flow of material from ACP Council, ACP committees and ACP branches, *acp News* needs new material from you, the members of the ACP.

Pathology news items (1200-1500 words): Any items related to the ACP or the College, pathologists in general, or medical and management matters that may have an impact on pathologists.

Articles (1500-2000 words): These can be papers, reviews, essays, commentaries, critiques or polemics. Submitted articles are always very welcome, as well as suggestions for articles and/or details of people whom the editor may approach.

Reports (1000 words): These may be personal views and reports on interesting meetings, travel or anything else of interest to the readership. Travel reports are specifically for holders of ACP travel fellowships, however, other reports from abroad are welcomed.

Columns (600 words): Regular and irregular columnists exercise their thoughts. Please feel free to rant.

Pathological creative writing: All literary forms, including short stories, serials, surrealism and even poetry.

Appreciations (1000-1500 words): We prefer appreciations on retirement, rather than obituaries. Please discuss these with the editor before submission.

Photo-journalism: Favoured subjects include pathologists doing something interesting, or College and ACP officers doing anything at all. Interesting or artistic photographs are welcomed.

Cartoons: Suggestions are welcomed.

Curettings: Jokes and humorous titbits are always needed.

Debate: Letters to the editor are welcomed, but may be shortened for publication, or even converted into articles. Please try to refrain from writing unless you are prepared to be published. All criticisms of organisations or named individuals will entitle the parties to a right of reply. Please bear in mind the UK libel laws!

Trainees: Trainees are especially encouraged to submit material in any and all of the above categories. These will normally be placed in the trainees' section. Appointments committees in particular value publications in *acp News*.

Editorial Policy: The editor would particularly encourage overseas contributors, material from trainees, material from non-histopathologists, commentary on current affairs in pathology, occasional columnists, innovations in pathology, humorous writing on pathology-related topics, and anything downright cantankerous.

Format: The *acp News* style guide was published in the autumn 2005 issue, pages 11-12, and copies can be obtained from the editor. The publication is a magazine, not an academic journal, and long lists of references are generally considered unnecessary. Where given, references should be in the Vancouver style and should be kept to a maximum of around six per article, unless absolutely necessary. Alternatively, authors may prefer to give a recommended reading list, or a list of relevant internet links. The editor prefers these as they take up less space.

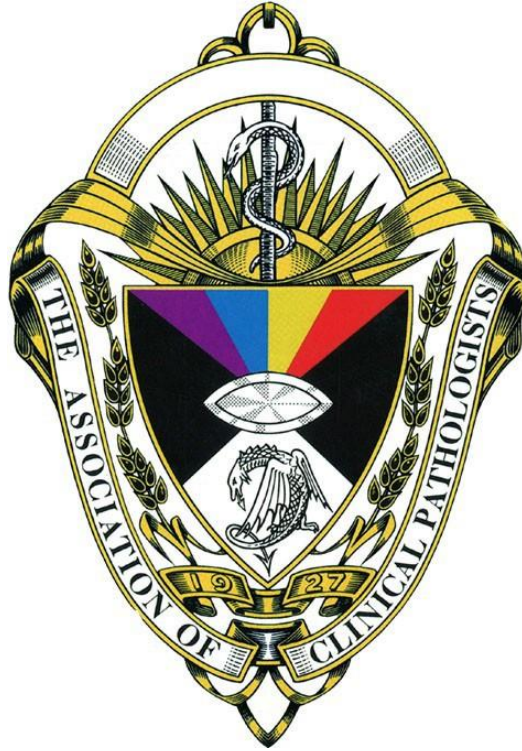
All suggestions are welcome; however, the editor's decision is final.

AcP News is published quarterly. Regular publication dates are:

Issue	Publication month	Copy date
SPRING	February	5th December
SUMMER	May	5th March
AUTUMN	August	5th June
WINTER	November	5th September

Copy is best submitted by email, or on disc if the file size is large, in any version of Microsoft Word, although it should be possible to accommodate other formats. Submissions on paper by snail mail will also be accepted. Illustrations can be sent as transparencies or prints, but high-quality digital images (TIFF or JPEG) are preferred.

Please send email submissions direct to the editor at mdharris@doctors.org.uk.



If you would like to view the full version of the *ACP news* please login to your account. If you are not a member you can join by contacting the Association's central office or email info@pathologists.org.uk