

Editorial

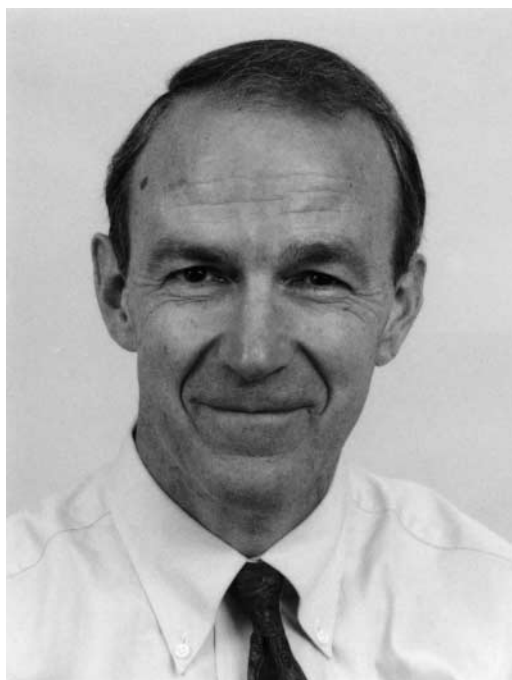
Part of this volume of the *Journal of Helminthology* contains a number of keynote papers, which were presented at a Symposium on *Immunity to intestinal parasitic infections* held at the School of Life and Environmental Sciences University of Nottingham in July 2002, to mark the retirement of Professor Derek Wakelin. A large number of friends, colleagues and students attended, emphasizing the high esteem in which he is held. Derek has of course been a most valued member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Helminthology* and I am pleased to announce that he is prepared to remain a member of the Board at least until 2004.

Professors Jerzy Behnke, University of Nottingham, Paul Hagan, University of Glasgow and Richard Grensis, University of Manchester have kindly written a bibliographic account of Derek Wakelin and this forms an appropriate introduction to my Editorial. Professors Behnke, Hagan and Grensis write:

‘Professor Derek Wakelin retired from the University of Nottingham on the 31st of August 2002, bringing to an end his 45 year long career in academia, that began in Zoology at King’s College London in 1957. To mark the occasion a Symposium entitled ‘Immunity to Intestinal Parasitic Infections’ was held in the School of Life and Environmental Sciences at the University of Nottingham on the 12th of July 2002. This was attended by many of his past and present PhD students and colleagues and proved to be a fitting tribute to a distinguished career in research and teaching. The speakers and chairpersons were his past PhD students and colleagues with whom he had collaborated over recent years. This special issue of the *Journal of Helminthology* contains a number of papers presented during the meeting.

Derek’s interests in parasitology began at King’s College where he studied under Ben Dawes (1957–1960) but, as will be apparent, he devoted his research career to parasites other than digenean flukes that were the focus of Dawes’ own research interests. After graduating with First Class Honours in Zoology, Derek moved to Houghton Poultry Research Station, Huntingdon where as a British Egg Marketing Board Fellow (there is still much speculation about a tattoo of a lion) he worked on the capillarids of British birds under the supervision of Clifford Horton-Smith and Peter Long. His first appointment as a lecturer was to Bedford College where he stayed from 1963 to 1971. He was then drawn to Glasgow University to work in the Wellcome Laboratories for Experimental Parasitology, headed at the time by the incomparable Adrian Hopkins (Hoppy). He was soon promoted to Senior Lecturer and then Reader in Zoology. Those who passed through WLEP during the Wakelin–Hopkins era, know they have been blessed with an experience that will never be repeated. All good things come to an end and having exhausted his financial credibility by repeatedly borrowing money from his research students to pay for the lunches of visitors to WLEP, he was obliged to leave sunny Glasgow and seek gainful employment elsewhere. So it was that in 1981, he moved to a chair at the Department of Zoology at Nottingham University headed by Peter Usherwood. There, the Experimental Parasitology Research Group and later the Infection and Immunity Research Group prospered under his leadership and gained national and international recognition.

Derek was first and foremost a zoologist, but his research work was primarily with helminths and particularly in the genetics of the immune responses to nematodes. It was at Bedford College that he began his experimental studies on *Trichuris muris*, a little known parasite of limited interest at the time. In those days, the field was dominated by devotees of *Nippostrongylus brasiliensis* and *Trichinella spiralis*. (How things have changed. Thanks largely to his own efforts and those of his former PhD students, *T. muris* is now in use at the cutting edge of work on Th1/Th2 responses to gastrointestinal nematodes.) Derek soon demonstrated that the variation in the success of *T. muris* in mice was primarily determined by variation in the immune response of the host. He was the first to establish that the ability to respond to gastrointestinal nematodes was heritable (see Behnke *et al.*, this issue). This sparked a life-long interest in genetics of immune responses to parasites. In Glasgow, Derek not so much abandoned *T. muris* as adopted a second ‘partner’, *Trichinella spiralis*. With work on *T. spiralis* came greater funding opportunities, greater competition from the giants in the field including Ogilvie, Love, Miller, Jarrett, Dineen, Wagland, Castro and Lee and wider international scientific interest in worms, partly generated by the quality of Derek’s own work. Again, genetic aspects dominated his research and ably supported by highly competent



Professor Derek Wakelin

research assistants and technicians he made rapid progress. Derek was quickly alert to the potential of exploiting H-2 congenic mice and H-2 recombinant strains to address key questions on immune responses to helminths. Any student with an interest in experimental parasitology would be well advised to consult his seminal work in this area. As his work prospered, he widened his interests and published on the genetics of responses to protozoa and cestodes (but never on the Digenea!). In the last two decades, he also branched into the genetics of parasites, and particularly genetic variation in *T. spiralis* and its consequences for immunity in rodent hosts (see Bolas-Fernandez in this issue).

Derek had many fruitful collaborations throughout his research career, too many to list in detail. Perhaps the one that gave him the greatest satisfaction was his work with Donald Wassom in the USA (the Laurel and Hardy of the Wormy World). It was wonderful to see Donald at the Symposium and hear his thoughts on 'Mice, Men, Worms and Protozoa: Inferences from 30 years in the lab'.

Derek's excellence in research was recognized by continuous funding from a variety of sources including the MRC, Wellcome Trust, and BBSRC. He tutored 22 research students, and nourished the careers of many postdocs. Derek never attempted to establish a dynasty, but he has left an indelible mark on all of his postgraduate students and postdocs. Many now occupy senior academic positions around the world and strive to convey to a new generation what they have learned from Derek about how to do good science.

Good research is all about asking the right questions and designing elegant experiments to answer them. It is a simple truism that Derek has consistently done this throughout his career. When re-reading his original papers one can feel a certain sense of embarrassment about the depth of his insight and at how little more we have added since leaving his laboratory and immediate influence. Moreover, for those of us that trained under him, even in these times of the genome, the proteome and the metabolome, it is good to know that a well designed *in vivo* experiment will ultimately give us the answer that we seek. It is a sobering thought that a good experiment is just as likely to confirm the conclusions that Derek reached some quarter of a century ago!

Derek was an efficient, thorough and fair-minded administrator and his duties in Nottingham included a spell as Head of the Department of Zoology (1985–1988), Dean of the Faculty of Science (1992–1995) and many other prominent roles on university committees. He has played a significant role in shaping British parasitology through his contributions to many national funding bodies (SERC 1984–1987; MRC 1986–1990 and 1994–1998; AFRC 1990–1993; Wellcome Trust 1990–1993) and his role as Hon. Treasurer of the British Society for Parasitology (1970–1973) and then as President of the Society (1999–2000). In addition, he has always been in great demand for reviewing panels. These have included those of the Division of Parasitology at the National Institute of Medical Research; the Medical Research Council Laboratory, Bo, Sierra Leone; the Moredun Research Institute, Edinburgh; the AFRC Babraham Institute; the AFRC Veterinary Fellowship Panel and the MRC Fellowship and Studentship panels. He served as a member of the Governing Body of the Moredun Research Institute and as Deputy Chairman of the Board of Governors of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He was a long-standing editor of *Parasite Immunology* and *Parasitology International* and has served on the Editorial Boards of *Parasitology*, *Experimental Parasitology*, *Helminthologia*, *Research and Reviews in Parasitology*, *Folia Parasitologica*, *Journal of Helminthology* and *Immunology*.

Derek published extensively. Those who have worked with him will acknowledge that his writing was second to none. Even after years of tuition and attempts at imitation, our draft manuscripts would be returned with more red than black on white. Without exception he found better, more succinct and certainly more lucid ways to express original concepts. Despite his many heavy commitments he always had time for us. We never waited long for his advice.

Derek was one of the outstanding teachers of his generation. Perhaps his most important contribution to teaching was his book *Immunity to parasites. How parasitic infections are controlled* which facilitated our efforts to interest new generations of students in the field of immunoparasitology. Until the end of his career in Nottingham he lectured not only in immunology and parasitology, but also enthused first year students about form and function in invertebrates and ran practical classes on the evolution of skeletal support in flight in birds and mammals. He was an all-round, classical scholar of zoology and could teach any aspect of the subject. Throughout his career, even when his administrative duties took considerable toll of his time, he never abandoned teaching undergraduate students and his contribution to our undergraduate courses in Nottingham will be sadly missed. He was a popular and much respected teacher.

Derek was author or editor of six books, twenty six chapters and 246 refereed primary and review papers. Many of these were significant, landmark "firsts" and will be cited for decades to come. His scientific contribution is reviewed in the publications in this special issue of the journal. There can be no doubt that his record is one of which he can be justifiably proud.

Throughout his career Derek has had strong, loving support at home. When you met Derek at home with Philippa, Emma and Matthew, you realized how important the family has been to Derek and what a happy unit they are. Derek brought a piece of that to the lab, he made us all feel part of the family.

And what of the future? For those he mentored, things will never be the same again. For Derek and Philippa there is a chance to realize a few dreams and to see more of Emma and Matthew. They have longed for the beautiful countryside of the Cotswolds and that is where they have made their base for retirement. His first act after retirement was to sail his canal boat through the maze of canals from Nottingham to 'somewhere' in Gloucestershire, where he is currently renovating a cottage for the years ahead. So Derek, as you glide over the rolling snow capped hills of Gloucestershire in winter, over flower meadows in the summer, whether it be to the local pub or to experience the peace and tranquility of the countryside, on behalf of all your research students, postdocs, research assistants and collaborators we thank you. Words cannot express our gratitude nor the debt we owe you for guiding our careers. To you and Philippa, we wish a long, happy, and justly deserved retirement.'

The publishers, CAB International and I extend our sincere and best wishes to Derek and Philippa Wakelin in their retirement. We are delighted to have the opportunity of publishing selected papers from the Symposium held at the University of Nottingham, together with contributions from colleagues who were unable to attend. I also wish to extend my grateful thanks to Professor Jerzy Behnke for assistance in editing these papers. In addition, the organizers of the Symposium wish to thank The Wellcome Trust for providing a grant to enable some of the presenters from overseas to attend. The remainder of this issue contains research papers submitted to the *Journal of Helminthology* in the usual way.

Professor John Lewis
Editor