

Report of History of Radiology session Liverpool 10 June 2019

by Dr Arpan K Banerjee Past Chair Brit Soc History of Radiology

This year's annual radiology imaging and oncology congress was again held in the ACC, Liverpool. The radiology history session organised by the BSHR was held on the Monday 10 June and consisted of four talks.

Professor Duck opened with a talk 'The Marie Curie Hospital Hampstead 1929-1967'.

Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium in 1898 and in 1925 a UK trial using radium was commenced in uterine cancer patients. In 1929 the hospital opened to treat women with cancer with radiotherapy. The hospital had high voltage radiotherapy equipment, a diagnostic radiology and a pathology department. Funding was obtained from several charitable sources. Over 13000 cases were seen during the time the hospital was open and patients with cancer of the cervix, uterus and breast were treated along with other cancers. It is interesting to note that menorrhagia was also treated with radiation in this era. Sadly the hospital was bombed in 1944 and facilities eventually moved to the Mount Vernon in 1967.

The next talk was delivered by Dr Arpan K Banerjee titled 'Some common eponymous signs in gastrointestinal radiology-who were the eponymists?' Gastrointestinal radiology is full of eponymous signs ranging from Chilaiditi's sign, Rigler's sign and triad, Carman's sign in barium radiology and eponymous disease like Crohn's disease to name a few. A brief biographical vignette of these pioneers were presented along with the original descriptions of the signs and examples were shown.

The next talk was given by Prof Adrian Thomas titled 'Tuberculosis and radiotherapy: a historical perspective'. The talk covered the different approaches and models of treatment throughout the ages with particular reference to TB treatment. Radiotherapy started in Vienna with Leopold Freund. Finsen had experimented with light therapy which fell out of fashion. Lupus vulgaris was treated successfully with radiotherapy. Eventually with rapid pharmacological progress in the latter half of the last century physical forms of treatment were abandoned in favour of pharmacotherapy.

The final talk was delivered by Elizabeth Beckman 'Godfrey Hounsfield -the centenary of his birth.' The audience was given an overview of his ancestry and early unpromising start as evidenced by his school reports. It is often the case that people who go on to achieve great things often have undistinguished school careers.

Hounsfield the bachelor was a shy unassuming modest character and what

came across was how humble he remained in spite of his great discovery of the CT scan which was to revolutionise medical practice, the 1979 Nobel Prize (shared with Cormack) and other accolades that were showered on him.

The stand in the exhibition was a tribute to Hounsfield and thanks should be given to Dr Thomas for this and also mention must be made of Dr Thomas's poster exhibit on 'Graves Disease and radiotherapy: the work of Florence Stoney.'