



# Serotonin Club Newsletter

## IUPHAR Membership

Another mark of the increasing importance of the Club in international biomedical science has been our acceptance as an associate member of IUPHAR – the International Union of Pharmacology. We will, in future, have representation on the General Assembly of IUPHAR thereby influencing the future of international pharmacology and you will soon also be able to find a link to our website on the IUPHAR website. See their website <http://www.iuphar.org/>

## Acapulco Meeting

The final accounts have now been submitted by Carlos Villalón, the chief organiser for the meeting, and I am delighted to say that the meeting covered all its expenses including the costs of student bursaries. This is a remarkable achievement by Carlos as the meeting was smaller than some (due to the low attendance at the IUPHAR meeting rather than the scientific content of our meeting which was very high). Furthermore, a full social programme and meals were also included in the registration cost. So on behalf of all members I would like to thank Carlos for organising such a good meeting and the Councillors and symposium organisers for ensuring the science was up to our usual high standard.



## New Council:

### President:

Daniel Hoyer (Switzerland)

### Immediate Past President:

David Nelson (USA)

### Vice Presidents:

*Europe:* Charles Marsden

*USA:* Mark Geyer

### Secretary/Treasurer:

Richard Green (UK)

### Councillors:

#### *Europe:*

Francesc Artigas (Spain)

Kevin Fone (UK)

Umberto Spampinato (France)

Stephan Hjorth (Sweden)

#### *USA:*

Sheryl Beck

Theresa Branchek

Lynda Uphouse

Luke Van de Kar

#### *Rest of the world:*

David Jackson (New Zealand)

Carlos Villalón (Mexico)

### Chair Nomenclature Committee:

Graeme Martin (USA)

## Obituaries

### Gary Price

Gary Price, one of the nicest guys that we had the honour to know, has died at the age of 42. He was an individual who was everyone's friend and was much respected for his intellect, sporting prowess and his enthusiastic personality. His ambassadorial qualities were well known and could be seen in action on many occasions, not least on the rugby pitch and on the squash court.

His academic career began in earnest in 1976 when he became a student at Atlantic College in Wales where he not only had the opportunity to excel in all forms of sport but also was able to capitalise on his academic ability and was accepted on to the honours degree course in Physiology at the University of Wales. This was to have a major effect on his lifestyle because it was here where he met his future bride, Smita. Smita also was taking the same degree course and when they both completed their finals in the summer of 1982 it suddenly occurred to them that they would have to go to separate establishments for their further academic training. Smita went to Manchester whilst Gary went to St Thomas's in London in order that they both could obtain a PhD degree. Gary joined the group of Norman Bowery, David Hill and Alan Hudson in what must have been the smallest laboratory in London! There was barely space for all four to be present at the same time but what wonderful camaraderie arose from that time. The research output was also very high and much of this arose from Gary's efforts. His PhD thesis was focussed on locating GABA<sub>B</sub> receptors on nerve terminals within the mammalian spinal cord as well as in higher centres. Of course, the lab did not have an image analyser in those days and so individual grain counting was done by hand. A table that was published in Nature in 1984 took Gary about 2-3 months to prepare and so it was often thought appropriate to name the automated

image analyser that was subsequently purchased, 'Gary', in memory of his dedication to the manual version of this task. Part of his time as a PhD student was spent at the ICI laboratories in Alderley Park where he worked with Tom Blackburn on lesions of the habenula-interpeduncular nucleus system in rat brain. Gary quickly established unequivocal evidence for an abundance of GABA<sub>B</sub> sites on nerve terminals in this system. These data provided information, which is, still much quoted and which, in the spinal cord, forms the basis for the site of action of baclofen, the receptor agonist.

Following the successful completion of his PhD Gary took up a postdoctoral position at Roche in Basel, Switzerland where he worked in close collaboration with Grayson Richards. This brought two rugby loving, beer drinking Welshmen together but, perhaps not surprisingly, there seemed to be little or no residual Swiss influence on Gary after completion of this period. But it did make another lasting friendship.

Gary then returned to the UK in 1987 where he joined the MRC Cyclotron Unit at the Hammersmith. Here he worked on animal models of human CNS disorders including stroke, epilepsy and Parkinsons Disease and collaborated with the Merck Neuroscience Research Centre at Harlow on in vivo labelling of the NMDA receptor complex.

In 1991, he joined Tom Blackburn and Brian Jones at recently-merged SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals in Harlow, where he was a founder member of a new Antidepressants Project Team. Gary's personality was to prove vitally important in building up a wonderful team spirit in the group and although the team members are now dispersed, these days are remembered with deep affection. Gary's team investigated the 5-HT terminal autoreceptor, which in those days had to be studied functionally using [<sup>3</sup>H]5-HT release. Later, when cloned 5-HT<sub>1B</sub> receptors became available, he developed a high-throughput radioligand

binding assay. His team was to go through the thrills and disappointments of finding promising compounds that subsequently failed in development, but in his unique style, Gary focussed on the positives and was able to maintain the high level of motivation in his team. They were to publish several important papers on 5-HT<sub>1B</sub> receptor pharmacology.

With the merger between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKlineBeecham, forming the monolithic GSK, Gary's career took a dramatic change in direction. First of all he acquired a sporty BMW but rarely got to drive it since he was usually to be found in a bar in either Verona or Stansted airport, optimistically waiting for a Ryanair flight to take off. Secondly, he had to use his social skills in a foreign land (Italy) and develop new collaborations with colleagues in the Verona Psychiatry group. He took to his new role like a duck to water, learnt to say ciao like a native and enthusiastically pursued the holy grail of a selective antagonist for each and all of the 5-HT receptors! His last few days were spent arguing about the strategic direction of the GSK Psychiatry Biology group and being excited by the prospect of new scientific data, new technologies and, of course, the dress sense of Italian women.

He leaves his wife, Smita and two children, James and Serena.

*Norman Bowery, Tom Blackburn, Brian J Jones, Derek N Middlemiss*

### Mike Rand

Most of our members will by now be aware that Professor Mike Rand, Australia's first truly international pharmacologist, died on 9 May 2002, at the age of 74. Many members, however, may not be aware that Mike was a member of the Serotonin Club from its beginnings in 1985. Mike's best known contributions to pharmacology covered outstanding achievements in the understanding of autonomic neuro-effector function, from the Burn-Rand hypothesis (1959) of a cholinergic

link in sympathetic post-ganglionic neurotransmission, through the development of the concept of auto-inhibition in noradrenergic transmission in the 1970s and its general extension into modulation of neurotransmission, to the role of nitric oxide in peripheral neurotransmission in the 1990s, right up until his final days. His very first ventures into pharmacology, however, were with serotonin, in the heady days of its isolation by Rapport, Green and Page in 1948 and the ensuing investigations into its many actions, when he commenced work on his MSc research project in the Department of Physiology, University of Melbourne, under the supervision of Dr George Reid. The first comprehensive accounts of the pharmacology of partially purified serotonin, and synthetic 5-hydroxytryptamine, were published by Reid and Rand (Australian Journal of Experimental Biology and Medical Science, 29, 401-415, 1951; Nature, 169, 801-802, 1952). Mike always kept a special interest in serotonin; in fact it was Mike who steered me into it. My formative years were in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Melbourne, where Mike was Professor of Pharmacology (1965–1992), and where I completed my PhD on  $\alpha$ -adrenoceptor antagonists under Dr Colin Raper's supervision. Mike decided that I should then move to Sydney to work with James Lance and his colleagues, who had established the importance of serotonin in the pathogenesis of migraine by the early 1970s, but needed a pharmacologist to help sort out how drugs like ergotamine and methysergide worked. It was a privilege to learn from Mike, to be encouraged and inspired by him, and to be his colleague and friend for the rest of his life. He likewise influenced generations of enthusiastic young Australian pharmacologists, and launched us into the world of pharmacology, while keeping us as part of his extended pharmacological family. He will be indelibly remembered by us.

*Ewan Mylecharane*

## Congratulations to our new Vice-President!

Having known and sometimes worked with Charles Marsden for about 30 years it gives me particular pleasure to congratulate him on behalf of all our members of being the first person to be awarded the prestigious new JR Vane Medal by the British Pharmacological Society. He will give his lecture entitled:

*“Serotonin Receptors — early environmental factors and mental disease”*

at the Winter meeting of the Society in Brighton on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

## New Members

Welcome to the following new members of the Club who have joined since our last Newsletter:

**UK:** José Arellano; J.F. William (Bill) Deakin,  
**USA:** Vincent Aloyo, Junji Ichikawa.

## Subscriptions

Members worldwide whose subscription becomes due during 2003 will be notified early in the New Year. Please send your payment as soon as possible as this avoids the time and costs incurred in sending out further reminders. Members whose subscriptions are two or more years overdue will be terminated!!

## Address change?

If you have changed your address send it to us now while you are thinking about it – send to:  
[rosemary.allen@astrazeneca.com](mailto:rosemary.allen@astrazeneca.com)

## The Club Website

Remember to check on the website for Club matters! The address is:

<http://serotoninclub.org>

## The Next Club Meeting

As was reported in the last Newsletter the Councillors unanimously agreed that we should accept the very kind offer of Professor Manfred Göthert to organise the next Serotonin Club sponsored meeting. This will be held in *Porto, Portugal* in *July 2004* and will follow the meeting of the European Pharmacological Societies (EPHAR) that takes place between July 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004. We expect our meeting to follow EPHAR so that USA delegates can celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> July with their families before making the trip.

Even this far ahead it is worth members starting to think about what they would like to hear about or plan sessions they wish to organise themselves. You can always drop a line to me or Professor Göthert about your ideas. By late next Spring we should be involved in serious planning for the meeting so it is not too soon to be thinking about it now.

## BAP Certificate in preclinical psychopharmacology

Club members may be interested in attending (or sending their students to) training modules on psychopharmacology organised by the British Association for Psychopharmacology.

For details of the course and BAP certificate see:

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

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