British Society of Gastroenterology

A yearly record

The President of the British Society of Gastroenterology plays an important role in the evolution of the Society’s affairs. In this issue we include short biographies of the immediate past President, the current President, and the President elect. In future years we intend to publish a biography of the incoming President and an annual report on developments and changes in the Society from the outgoing President.

J H Baron – past President

Dr J H Baron DFM FRCP FRCS (b 1931) was at Queen’s and the Middlesex where he conceived peak acid output with an augmented histamine test and developed the threshold model for the hypersecretory situation in duodenal ulcer disease. He was also one of the St Mark’s team which undertook the classic controlled trials and observer variation studies of colitis. A year with Dreiling and Janowitz at Mount Sinai led him to peak bicarbonate output of the pancreas, before returning as lecturer and then senior registrar. In 1968 he became consultant physician in Tottenham, and joined Professor Welbourn’s department of surgery at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School, where he continued his studies of gastric and pancreatic secretion, elucidating the insulin test, experimental ulcers and acid, pepsin and mucus. In 1971 he moved his NHS sessions to St Charles’ Hospital and in 1988 to St Mary’s Hospital becoming an honorary clinical senior lecturer. He has been a devotee of BSG and as Archivist started a library, adorned the office with Regency prints and presidential photographs, and spent 1982–7 planning the Society’s Jubilee. His presidential year was beset by manpower problems and he formed a liaison committee of clinical specialist societies: overseas links were strengthened abroad, espe-

Roger Williams – President

Dr Roger Williams was elected President of the British Society of Gastroenterology at the Dublin Meeting, in recognition of his many contributions to liver disease at the national and international level and to the Society’s work over many years. He served on Council during 1981–4, was the first Chairman of the Liver Section, and was a member of the Editorial Board of Gut for many years. He gave the Sir Arthur Hurst Memorial Lecture in 1975. In addition to his appointment at King’s College Hospital and School of Medicine, he is honorary consultant in medicine to the army and is on a number of advisory committees at the Department of Health. Early honours included the Goulstonian Lecture of the Royal College of Physicians (1970); the Philip Bushell Lecture of the Australian Society of Gastroenterology (1975), of which he is an honorary member, and the Searle Lecture of the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases. He was president of the Harveian Society of London (1974–5), president of the European Association for Study of the Liver (1983), and president of the British Association for the Study of the Liver (1983–5). In 1988 he was awarded the FRCS by election for his contribution to the development of liver transplantation in this country.

His magnum opus was Clinical Test of Gastric Secretion (1978). He co-edited Foregut (1981) and Vagotomy in Modern Surgical Practice (1982). He has published three books on drugs, Carbenoxolone Sodium (1970), Pirenzepine (1980), and Cimetidine in the Eighties (1981); two historical publications, Gastric Acid and Digestive Diseases (1982) and History of the BSG (1987); and two others celebrating Thomas Hunt (1982) and Avery Jones (1984). He founded and co-edits Theoretical Surgery. His non-biomedical energies are devoted to beautifying hospitals, setting up and chairing hospital arts committees, and the British Health Care Centre.
Sir Robert shields – President elect

Professor Sir Robert Shields graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1953. After house jobs he served as regimental medical officer with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders for two years.

He returned to the department of surgery at the Glasgow Western Infirmary and was subsequently registrar in surgery and then lecturer. In 1959 he worked at the Mayo Clinic as research associate in surgery, studying intestinal absorption and the problems of portal hypertension with Dr Jesse Bollam and Charles Code. He was appointed lecturer in surgery in Glasgow to Sir Charles Illingworth, and in 1963 moved to the then Welsh National School of Medicine with Professor A P M (now Sir Patrick) Forest, as senior lecturer and then reader in surgery. His research interests centered on intestinal absorption of water and electrolytes, which was the subject of his thesis – awarded with honours and the Bellahouston Medal. Research work on the problems of intestinal obstruction and absorption of water and electrolytes was awarded the Moynihan Prize and Medal of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland in 1966.

In 1966 he was appointed professor of surgery in the University of Liverpool and an honorary consultant at the Royal Infirmary (now Royal Liverpool Hospital) and at Broadgreen Hospital. In addition to interest in inflammatory bowel disease, he has developed clinical and research interests in hepatobiliary problems, particularly bleeding oesophageal varices and portal hypertension, which have become a major research theme in the department of surgery.

Professor Sir Robert Shields was dean of the faculty of medicine from 1982–5 and a member of the Mersey Regional Health Authority which he served as vice-chairman for two years before returning to clinical practice and research in 1985. Other honours include president of the Surgical Research Society and president of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland. He is a member of the Medical Research Council and its education committee. In June 1990 the honour of Knight Bachelor was conferred on Professor Shields. During 1990 he receives an honorary degree of Doctor of Science in the University of Wales and Honorary Fellowship of the American College of Surgeons.