

Bart Wagner
Histopathology Department
Northern General Hospital
Herries Road
Sheffield
S5 7AU
Tel: 0114 - 271 4158
Fax: 0114 - 261 1034
Email: MrBWagner@aol.com

16th August 1999

Dear Fellow Electron Microscopist,

Following last September's successful diagnostic EM conference in Sheffield, Brian Eyden, Alan Curry and I have held discussions as a first step towards developing a strategy for promoting the teaching and good practice of diagnostic electron microscopy. Most, if not all, of the participants at last year's Sheffield meeting will feel that similar meetings in the future would be helpful; but our discussions have evolved a more general idea of encompassing this and other possibilities.

One idea we feel is worthy of discussion is the possibility of our setting up an Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists, (A.C.E.M., for short). The aim of this association would be to promote the teaching and good practice of diagnostic or clinical electron microscopy in a broad sense, and it is felt that a formally organized body rather than an informal collection of individuals is more likely to provide a framework for achieving certain individual objectives. The main ones would be holding future meetings, holding specialist workshops, and continuing the grid club.

With commitment from its membership, the proposed Association might establish a profile as a responsible and serious body promoting clinical electron microscopy, and, having established a reputation, we could think about affiliation to larger bodies - for example, the Pathological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and possibly others - and perhaps hold satellite meetings in association with these societies. The credibility of a respected professional body might then form the basis for validation of a diploma in ultrastructural pathology. (The executive of the Society of Ultrastructural Pathology - based in North America - recently turned down the idea of such a diploma.)

Here are a few ideas of how the Association could work:

Membership would be open to anyone with a professional interest in electron microscopy applied to clinical i.e. human tissues, whether the work is diagnostic or research-orientated.

The association would attempt to operate without the need for a membership fee.

Membership would simply be conditional upon attendance at meetings, participation in a grid club, or running seminar/workshop, or evidence of publication in the field of clinical electron microscopy; one of the above at least once every couple of years.

It is anticipated that meetings along the lines of the Sheffield conference will be the first means of continuing an interest in clinical electron microscopy by the proposed Association. Meetings would be held at different venues around the UK, but this would require a commitment on the part of members to undertake the organization involved.(see separate questionnaire)

A new development for the association might be the establishment of workshops by individuals with specialist expertise. There could be a rolling program of workshops with the purpose of continually updating knowledge in these fields.

A meeting to discuss these issues and to air views in much greater depth has been organized in London's Charing Cross Hospital by Dr Jill Moss on Friday the 1st of October 1999 2.00pm to about 5.30pm.

Full program and map on separate sheet.

To summarize - a few of the possible benefits of the proposed Association are as follows:

1. Continuing professional development opportunities on a much more regular basis than hitherto, and of greater practical relevance to those working in the field of clinical electron microscopy.
2. Diplomas in ultrastructural pathology to provide proof of competence to practice.
3. Representation to other professional bodies and department of health, where necessary.
4. Continuity of specialist expertise made more likely.
5. Improve communication between institutions.
6. Acceleration of basic training.

Please copy this letter and distribute to all in your department who have a professional interest in clinical electron microscopy irrespective of qualification and workload.

We would like to know your answers to the following questions to give us a feel on how to conduct the discussion for this proposed London meeting. Even if you are unable to attend but would like to express your views on these matters please complete the questionnaire.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. Bart Wagner - Sheffield
Dr. Brian Eyden - Manchester
Dr. Alan Curry - Manchester

Questionnaire in advance of the proposed London meeting.

Name

Address

Telephone and Fax

Email Address

1. Will you be attending the proposed London meeting?
2. Do you agree to the idea of setting up an Association?
3. Would you be interested in attending meetings like the Sheffield one on a regular basis?
4. Would you consider organizing a meeting?
5. Would you be interested in attending workshops on specialist subjects in clinical electron microscopy?
6. Would you be interested in preparing a workshop in a specialist subject, if so what?
7. What are the main specific subjects you would like to hear lectures or attend workshops on?
8. Do you have any other ideas which might promote good practice in clinical electron microscopy?
9. Do you have any comments or preferences on the detailed format or organization of future EM meetings?
10. If you would like to attend the meeting but are unable to, please feel free to express your views on any subject likely to be discussed at the meeting, including a wish list for any future representative of the Association to take to any meeting with other professional bodies or government department.
11. Would you be prepared to pay a subscription fee for membership of the Association: if so, how much and for what (e.g. correspondence, advertising etc.)?
12. It would appear that the grid club has only been partially successful owing to pressure of work. Would you like to try, for next year, reducing the size of each club to six or less, and, for example, not staining the sections, and possibly sending the diagnosis at the same time?

Programme for London Meeting, Friday 1st October 1999

- 1.45 - 2.00 Arrive.
- 2.00 - 2.10 Introductions.
- 2.10 - 2.45 Guest Lecture - Immunogold EM of surgical specimens.
Jill Moss Ph.D. MRCPPath - Senior Lecturer - Charing Cross Hospital -
London.
- 2.45 - 3.15 EM Black Box. - Bring your own interesting/difficult cases, or
individual micrographs, for general discussion.
- 3.15 - 3.30 Tea/Coffee break. (To be paid for at the time.)
- 3.30 - 5.30 Business meeting. - Discussion relating to setting up an Association
of Clinical Electron Microscopy. (Agenda presented at meeting, broadly following
attached questionnaire).

Venue

London meeting Friday 1st October 1999
Seminar room in Glenister Building behind Charing Cross Hospital
on Margravine Road.

Route on foot from nearest tube station.

Right out of Barons Court Tube Station.
Immediately right along Margravine Gardens.
Cross road and go through Cemetery.
Walk towards Charing Cross Hospital (tall building).
Turn left out of cemetery into Glenister Building.
Seminar room on ground floor.

Any venue queries please contact Dr. Jill Moss, Tel. 0181- 846 7147

Appropriate portion of London A-Z sent, if required, on receipt of completed
questionnaire - by post or email.

Programme for Charing Cross Hospital Meeting – Friday 1st October 1999
Association of Clinical Electron Microscopy

- 2.00 – 2.10 Introduction
- 2.10 – 2.45 Immunogold EM of Surgical Specimens
Dr Jill Moss – Senior Lecturer – Charing Cross Hospital
- 2.45 – 3.15 EM Black Box – Interesting or difficult cases for general discussion
- 3.15 – 3.30 Coffee Break
- 3.30 – 5.30 Business Meeting

Business Meeting 1st October 1999 Agenda –
Chaired by Bart Wagner

1. **Any volunteers here to write a report for:**
The RCPATH Bulletin,
The IBMS Gazette,
Any other professional bodies?
2. **Which Association committee posts do we want?**
President, Treasurer and Membership Registrar, Web Master, Diploma Supervisor and Workshop coordinator, Grid Club Organiser, Technical EQA organiser. Any other?
3. **How do we want to elect individuals for positions in the ACEM?**
4. **Next meeting.**
When?
Where?
Format?
Independent or satellite?
5. **Grid Club.**
Groups of six?
Interesting case list on web site, or managed library.
One group synchronously?
Diagnosis included in an enclosed envelope.
Can an EQA scheme be incorporated some how.
6. **Diploma in Ultrastructural Pathology.**
Core subjects and optional subjects.
Should be of very high standard, sufficient to attract interest of newly appointed consultants.
Designatory letters: Dip. Ult. Path. 1, 11, 111, etc.
Workshop organisers to draw up question papers, validated by Diploma Supervisor and ?RCPATH, ?University.
Technical diploma, ? in association with RMS.

7. Laboratory accreditation (CPA) –

All laboratories should be participants in a technical EQA scheme.
In order to be able to examine biopsies of a certain type a diploma in the relevant subject should be held. (Pathologists are exempt)

8. Issues to be raised with the Department of Health:

1. Payment for on line access to full version of the journal 'Ultrastructural Pathology'.
2. Grading conformity across UK for EM professionals, with well-defined guidelines, which will fit in with proposed NHS single pay spine.
3. Guidelines for EM telepathology within UK and internationally.
4. Possibility for top grade clinical scientists or equivalent to issue EM reports without countersigning by consultant pathologist.
5. Laboratory accreditation to be compulsory. (To guarantee funding for attendance at workshops and conferences)
6. Funding for clinical electron microscopist in specialist areas not currently covered in UK.
7. Funding for supernumerary post one year prior to retirement of specialist to guarantee continuity of expertise.
8. Extra funding to allow time for teaching of clinical electron microscopy to trainee pathologists, physicians, clinical electron microscopists and academic surgeons within hospital. i.e. technical and secretarial support etc.
9. Any other suggestions?

9. Membership fee.

How much and for what?

Who pays (individual, department or government)?

Sponsorship for meetings only?

Limit on funds accumulated?

10. Affiliation with other professional bodies?

11. Collaboration with non-clinical electron microscopists?

12. Do we want to be an international organisation?

13. Web site and news letter/email.

14. Sharing and developing SOPs and proforma reports.

15. Virologist electron microscopists.

16. Advertising of meetings – in what?

17. Visits to centres of excellence.

18. AOB.

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S5 7AU
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Report of Charing Cross Hospital Meeting

1st December 1999

Dear Fellow Electron Microscopist,

The meeting at The Charing Cross Hospital on the 1st of October 1999 went very well with 20 plus delegates present.

Jill Moss presented an excellent talk on immuno gold of surgical specimens, which was both interesting and informative, with some additional practical points brought out by those present during the question time.

The business meeting that followed resulted in an amicable discussion on a number of issues, which I will attempt to convey to you.

All agreed to set ourselves up as a formal body, with a membership register and regular AGMs.

The title, 'Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists', was chosen because it fits in with a number of other 'Association of Clinical' bodies, although we all agreed that in no way did we want to convey the impression that those working on non-human tissues were anything but very welcome. The other suggested names were Association of Biomedical Electron Microscopists, but we didn't want to give the impression that we were exclusively 'Biomedical Scientists'.

The other name suggested was Association of Ultrastructural Pathologists, but that sounded too much like the 'Society for Ultrastructural Pathology' which is based in North America.

We felt we ought to have a mission statement so after brief discussion it was decided that it would be simply that we exist to promote the good practice of clinical electron microscopy.

It was decided, regarding the levying of a membership fee, that our financial requirements would, as far as possible, be met through company sponsorship.

In order to avoid any inevitable administrative problems, instead of an annual fee, a joining fee of £5.00 would be levied.

The three account signatories would be Alan Curry as treasurer, myself as secretary and Brian Eyden as chairman. Alan volunteered to be the treasurer, it was decided I would be the secretary because it was said that 'they do all the work' and Brian accepted the invitation to be the chairman.

It was also mentioned that in order to keep postage costs down, and to keep letter-posting chores to a minimum, wherever possible communication would be by email. In order to register as a member please post a cheque to Alan Curry for £5.00 payable to 'Association of Clinical Electron Microscopists'.

You will find his address on the address list I sent out to one and all a year ago. Those on email will receive an updated list periodically. Those not on email but would still like to receive one please contact me.

Just in case you can't lay your hand on your copy, here is his address anyway: Dr. Alan Curry, EM Unit, Public Health Laboratory, Withington Hospital, Manchester, M20 2LR.

Trevor Gray (Queen's Medical Centre - Nottingham) agreed to be the Association web master. He is currently seeking sponsorship to cover the cost of a high quality web site concordant with the professional image we would wish to present. Those on email will be informed as soon as it is up and running.

It was felt that we would like to have annual meetings, to be held around the country, with a mixture of lectures, members forum and an AGM. It was agreed that if we could hold satellite meetings with 'Path. Society' this would fulfil the travelling venue requirement and would provide an opportunity for pathologists to come to occasional talks where they might not be prepared to attend a whole meeting. By coincidence the next summer one is in Nottingham which Trevor Gray again kindly offered to arrange. The proposed day of attendance might be Thursday the 13th of July 2000. Permission yet to be given by Path. Society.

The grid clubs consisting of approximately 12 members, whilst considered to be valuable, is unfortunately too much work for most of us. A number of other options were considered.

1. Reduce the clubs to 6 members.
 2. Everyone send one grid out simultaneously and one week later pass it on to the next one down the list.
 3. Make a list of rare cases on the web site from which members could request the loan of a grid.
- Option 1. Please contact me if you want to be included into a new smaller group, starting January 2000. You can always team up with someone from a different group and exchange grids so as to see more cases.
- Option 2. I will send out a couple of grids sometime with instructions and we will see how successful that turns out to be.
- Option 3. When the web site is up and running we will see how successful that turns out to be.
- The success or otherwise of grid clubs can be reviewed at the AGMs.

Regarding the question of a formal technical EQA scheme, it was unanimously agreed that it would be far too much work. The grid clubs do give an opportunity to bench mark your work with that of others. The other possibility mentioned was that at the next meeting we could bring prints and negatives along for others to see and again bench mark our own work against.

If anyone wants to take responsibility for this please contact me.

The EM black box session whilst potentially useful, in practice was difficult because it took too long for the sets of prints to be passed round the table, some method of projecting the prints would have been useful. Alternatively, the Association web site might be a better forum for hard to interpret electron micrographs.

The coffee break provided us with a very welcome opportunity to network with colleagues, I for one found it very useful to find out I wasn't the only person with electron microscopists RSI, in other words, back ache from leaning over an EM and leaning towards the binocular microscope on the ultramicrotome, and thumb ache from rotating the EM stage controls.

Finally, it looks like we can look forward to making many new friends at the same time as improving our professional lives.

See you in Nottingham, hopefully.

Kind regards,

Bart

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Bart', with a stylized, sweeping underline.

P.S. Sorry for the delay in sending this out.

I have been waiting for some firm news on the Nottingham meeting and the web site, but... I decided that I had better get on with it.

Delegate List

1.10.1999

Bart Wagner - Sheffield
Brian Eyden - Manchester
Alan Curry - Manchester
Trevor Gray - Nottingham
Keith Miller - Nottingham
Wyn Williams - Rhyl
David Nuttal - Rhyl
Liz Curtis - Birmingham
Jill Sparke - Birmingham
Mike Pope - Cardiff
Valerie James - Cardiff
Padmini Sarathchandra - Northwick Park
Ann Dewar - Brompton
Alan Phillips - Royal Free
Susan Brown - Hammersmith
Patricia Lovell - Marsden
Tim Ryder - Queen Charlotte's
Jill Moss - Charing Cross
Ian Shaw - Charing Cross
..... - Charing Cross
Glenn Anderson - Great Ormond Street
Catherine Sarraf - Hammersmith