

## Meetings Report

The seventeenth meeting of the European Histamine Research Society (EHRS) was held in Copenhagen, Denmark in May 1988, at the kind invitation of Dr Svend Norn. It was attended by over 120 members and guests. Sixteen countries of Europe were represented. The weather was superb and every day had blue skies and unbroken sunshine.

After a speech of welcome, there were four Conference Lectures. The first by G.B. West described the history of the society and how it has managed its affairs over the last 16 years. The second by A.M. Edwards traced the clinical side of asthma and its latest treatments. M.K. Church gave the third on mast cells, neuropeptides and inflammation, carefully comparing the chemical and biological properties of connective tissue mast cells and mucosal mast cells in man and animals. Finally, O. Thastrup covered the interaction between inositol phosphates and calcium ions in signal-transduction mechanisms. All were greatly appreciated. Following the coffee break, the 47 posters were viewed and discussed. They were arranged under the headings – histamine release and cellular events, histamine receptors and antihistamines, histamine and the central nervous system and cardiovascular system, histamine and the gastrointestinal and renal systems, and finally allergy, immunology and cancer. After lunch, there were sessions on histamine release for the rest of the day. Sayings on the hour included – ‘Ions do not like to pass mast cells membranes, but do so when there are no anaesthetics’, ‘In our work, we used the human rat when comparing humans and rats’, ‘When more MOF is present, there are more patient deaths’, ‘If I knew the answer, I would not do the experiment or would I?’ After dinner, the posters were discussed well into the night. In fact some members stayed on until 10.50 pm. The ladies meanwhile had had an excursion to the National Museum, followed by lunch at Charlottenborg and a visit to Rosenborg Castle to view the Crown Treasures.

On the Friday, the chief topic was histamine and the gastrointestinal tract. This fine section contained an interesting presentation by a British member who finished his talk with a summary slide which was the wrong one for the present meeting. In fact, it turned out to be the one he is to use at next year's meeting in the Netherlands! He said so, anyway, and we all believed him!

After lunch, the buses took us through the beautiful forests to Frederiksborg Castle where we spent several hours. This Castle was built in Renaissance style by King Christian IV in 1625. We were given an organ concert in the Chapel by Per Kynne Frandsen, mostly of Seventeenth century music played on an old 17<sup>th</sup> century organ and a relative new electric organ. Later we returned to Copenhagen for dinner at the Tivoli, with plenty of time afterwards to browse around this fantastic Pleasure Garden.

On the Saturday, Allergology and Immunology were discussed before coffee and later one Chairman was heard to say ‘And now this patient is open for discussion’. Actually, one presenter of a paper listed as by 3 authors opened his talk with ‘One of the 3 authors today is from Ghana but he is on his way home so there are only 2 authors after all.’ This presentation used the word significant for  $p$  greater than 0.00001. The involvement of histamine in cancer was the topic for the afternoon, before the General Meeting of Members.

In the evening, we held the usual banquet in the Old Hall of the University in downtown Copenhagen. It was a super occasion – the food, the company, and the organisation were all first-class. We even had a Danish Folk Dance team to show their paces. Prizes for the posters were

decided by the Jury after much difficulty – they were won by local members from Aarhus and Copenhagen and by Czechoslovakian members, but the First Prize went (as last year) to our one contact from Japan. We sang 3 verses of a song about Copenhagen specially compiled by Anita Sydbom, and the evening finished with the singing of the International Anthem of the EHRS, followed by dancing. Our sincere thanks go to Dr Norn and his wife Kirsten for arranging such a fine meeting. The next meeting will be held in Breda, The Netherlands in May 1989.

G.B.West (London)