



Editorial

Memorium – Professor Ian Henderson

We regret to report the death of Professor Ian Henderson an internationally recognised scientist who contributed enormously to the field of comparative endocrinology. He made major scientific discoveries and was also a tremendous servant to the scientific community through his international collaborations, organisation of international conferences, and in more recent years as Co-editor in-Chief of the journal of General and Comparative Endocrinology. Professor Ian Henderson joined Aubrey Gorbman as an editor-in-chief of GCE in 1990 and retired from the journal in 2012. Over his 21 years as the EiC he worked alongside Frank Moore (editor-in-chief, 1992–2000), and Bob Dores (2000–2016). Ian Henderson steered the journal with a firm hand through the turbulent passage from the traditional typewritten manuscript and “snail mail” postal delivery to the electronic manuscript and then the on-line web platform – no mean feat! He worked diligently to raise the impact factor of the journal and his intellect, rigorous approach and tireless efforts have ensured that the journal remains a scientific reference in the field today.

Professor Ian Henderson had a career in endocrinology for over 50 years. He completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Sheffield in 1962 and then went on to do a PhD on “Water and electrolyte flux in the European eel, *Anguilla anguilla* L.” This study launched a very long and successful research career that focused on various aspects of the hormonal regulation of osmoregulation in vertebrates. In addition, to notable scientific discoveries reported in a series of articles he also edited three book volumes entitled General, Comparative and Clinical Endocrinology of the Adrenal Cortex (vol 1 1976; vol 2, 1978; vol 3, 1980) with the renowned comparative endocrinologist, Professor Chester Jones (Sheffield University, UK). He was appointed as an assistant lecturer by the University of Sheffield in 1965 and was subsequently appointed as Professor of vertebrate endocrinology in the Institute of Endocrinology, Sheffield University, where he served as codirector for many years. In 2001, the University of Sheffield honoured Ian by appointing him as professor emeritus in vertebrate endocrinology.

His research work exemplified the importance of Comparative Studies, which allow the separation of general from specialist features and the development of phyletic and potential evolutionary perspectives of physiological systems (Fig. 1). While based at Sheffield University Ian’s quest for new techniques and access to novel animal models took him to the United States and later an important and very productive period at Ville Franche near Nice. It might have been in the States where he developed his interest in horses, which much later became a significant focus of his work – particularly in the study of laminitis. Ian was firmly committed to the view put forward by the Knobel laureate August Krogh that there are particular animals of choice to most effectively

research specific physiological processes. Like Krogh he was also very aware that among human/mammalian-centric researchers there was massive ignorance of the diversity of species available to provide a more tractable basis for their studies. Through his active role in the European Comparative Endocrine society and the Society for Endocrinology (UK), where he served as the chair of the society from 1990 to 1993, he did much to turn this situation around (Fig. 2).

As well as his contributions for the benefit of the scientific community Ian also transformed the lives of many through his sage supervision and scientific research. He made major contributions through the inspiration and guidance given to the many young scientists who passed through his laboratory in Sheffield. He made very clear what were the tests of worthwhile research – guiding principles that stand the test of time! Ian stressed that there was a need for a clearly defined research question, the generation of interpretable data, the recognition that serendipity plays a large part in research outcomes and a need not to over interpret the results obtained. The underpinning concept for all studies at Sheffield was the belief that the body worked to defend physiological set points providing the optimum conditions for survival. An additional concept that only more recently has been accepted, was that these were set early in life and ultimately were defended by the integrated actions of endocrine, neural and local regulatory pathways. His work in the Sheffield laboratory and that of his protégés demonstrated that these homeostatic mechanisms were already established in early vertebrates, including fish, and have been highly conserved. Accordingly, their comparative study continues to provide valuable insights into what often appears to be intractable and complex processes in mammals, including man.

Bob Dores and I (DMP) had the honour and privilege of chairing a session dedicated to Ian’s achievements at the 26th European Comparative Endocrinology meeting organised by Elizabeth Eppler in Zurich, Switzerland on the 21st–25th August 2012. Esteemed speakers gave insight into the scope of Ian’s influence and included Professor Richard Balmont, who was a PhD student of Ian, and talked about “*Integrated and comparative approaches to endocrine research – from gene to function*” and an undergraduate student inspired by Ian, Dr. John Wingfield, who talked about “*Global climate change and range expansions: a possible role for glucocorticoids*”. This was a session filled to capacity with senior and very young scientists alike who were privileged to hear Ian proffer “*Some thoughts on endocrinology – past, present and future*”. It was exciting to see Ian talk and captivate the audience with his enthusiastic, challenging and thought-provoking ideas mixed in with Wagner playing in the background. Our discipline is grateful to Ian for all his contributions and for his willingness to champion comparative endocrinology from emerging research groups around the world.

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Fig. 1. The Sheffield Laboratory circa 1970's. Professor Ian Henderson is in the foreground in a red jumper holding his pipe. Dr Pat Ingleton is on his left-hand side next to Dr David Kime.



Fig. 2. Professor Ian Henderson in "full flow" during the session dedicated to his achievements at the 26th European Comparative Endocrinology meeting in Zurich, Switzerland on the 21st–25th August 2012.

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