

# Glasgow and the development of geriatrics in Hong Kong

I read with interest, the article, "Unsung heroes - Glasgow and the origins of geriatrics", by Prof John Brocklehurst, published in the March issue of the BGS Newsletter.

I was told this story in Professor Brocklehurst's home when I visited him last August. He told me a professor once remarked that one should not give a lecture beyond the age of 72, and yet Prof B. was going to lecture, at the age of 80, on this historical subject. I used to think that the mother and father of geriatrics were Marjory Warren and Ignatz Nascher respectively, but Professor Brocklehurst's article reminded me there are many unsung heroes in geriatrics. These historical figures behind the origins of geriatrics had in common, an insight and compassion for the needs of our elders, and the developmental pathways of the specialty were by no means smooth. This cradle of geriatrics in Glasgow has influenced the development of geriatrics beyond the United Kingdom, in particular, Hong Kong.

## Glaswegian mentors

Prof Brocklehurst pointed out that five past presidents of the BGS have been Glasgow graduates and that

Stobhill Hospital of the Glasgow University has generated three of the first Professorial Chairs of Geriatric Medicine in the UK (Ferguson Anderson, John Brocklehurst, Bernard Isaacs). Of the five presidents of the Hong Kong Geriatrics Society (HKGS), three of them have Glasgow graduates as their mentors: Dr Sick Chan under Professor Ferguson Anderson in 1973/74, Dr Ngai-Sing Ng under



Dr Y Y Ng and Sir Prof Ferguson Anderson

Professor Bernard Isaacs in 1985, and Dr Tak-Kwan Kong under Professor John Brocklehurst in 1988/89.

To plan for the new establishment of geriatric services in Hong Kong, Dr Sik Chan was sent by the Hong Kong Government to the UK from late 1973 to early 1974 to see how British geriatric services were organised. He stayed mainly at Stobhill with Ferguson Anderson and returned to become the first consultant geriatrician in the first geriatric unit in Hong Kong at Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) in 1975. Dr Chan, together with his followers, founded the HKGS in 1981, and was elected the first President of HKGS. Dr Yau-Yung Ng, the second consultant geriatrician of

PMH, visited Professor Francis Caird and Dr Brian Williams at Stobhill in 1982, to pave the way for future specialist training in geriatric medicine for medical staff of the new geriatric unit. Dr Y Y Ng became the first honorary clinical lecturer in geriatric medicine for the University of Hong Kong in 1979, and succeeded Dr Chan as the second president of HKGS in 1984.



Dr Tak-Kwan K Kong with Prof John Brocklehurst

Dr Y Y Ng was invited as the visiting expert in 1987 to Singapore to advise on the formation of a new geriatric department at Tan Tok Seng Hospital, which was established in

December 1987. Over the years, a steady stream of medical staff from Hong Kong has received higher training in geriatrics from geriatric departments in the UK, and Glasgow has been a favourite centre. The number of specialists in geriatric medicine has grown from one in 1975 to 124 in 2004. Overseas geriatricians have been invited to lecture in the Annual Scientific Meetings of the HKGS, and prominent geriatricians from the UK, in particular Glasgow, predominate in the list of visiting professors. The Glasgow linkage

## Visiting lecturers to HKGS from Glasgow

**Dr B O Williams** - 1984, 1994, and 2001 (pictured right)

**Sir Prof Ferguson Anderson** - 1985

**Dr R D Kennedy** - 1985

**Prof F Caird** - 1986

**Dr J Dall** - 1990

**Dr I Lennox** - 2004



Surgeons (Glasgow) to prepare for the establishment of the first overseas centre for DGM (Glasgow) in Hong Kong in June this year. We were happy to have Professor David Stott as our keynote speaker in our Annual Scientific Meeting on 18 June 2005. The HKGS welcomes the BGS's initiative to maintain closer ties with overseas members.

with Hong Kong continues to grow. In 2000, the HKGS and the Hong Kong University started the Postgraduate Diploma in Community Geriatrics for general practitioners, and Dr Brian Williams was invited to be the honorary advisor and external examiner, and recently Dr Iain Lennox. Last November, Drs T K Kong and S Y Au of HKGS visited the Royal College of Physicians and

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## DaneAge

visits Leeds

In May, members of DaneAge visited Leeds on a study trip. Denmark has a population of 5 million people.

Remarkably, 466,000 Danes belong to DaneAge, a truly multi-disciplinary organisation which enjoys the royal patronage of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II, its Protector.

The organisation acts on behalf of older people and influences decision-makers (at both local and national levels) who can improve the quality of life for older people. The main aims of DaneAge are to promote equal citizenship of older people,

autonomy, independence and dignified care. The nine members of the association who came to Leeds included pharmacists, physiotherapists, doctors, a social worker, a health economist, a researcher and an administrator.

### Why they came

Our visitors wanted to gain an overview of elderly care in the UK. They wished to learn about patient pathways, recent changes in services, and see examples of good practice and patient involvement. The Danish Prime Minister is a fan of Tony Blair's, so the visitors were keen to see what might be in store for them!

### What we did

We organised a programme of formal presentations and informal meetings and discussions. Our chief executive began with a talk on the UK government's policy on ageing.