

Introduction

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The idea of marking the 50th anniversary of the opening in 1926 of the Pharmacological Laboratories of the Pharmaceutical Society was stimulated by a Christmas message to me from Professor J. H. Burn in December 1974. It seemed to be an event worth marking, for over 50 years Burn and his colleagues and his successors have made a notable contribution to pharmacology by research in academic and industrial departments and by teaching. Also a number of former staff and students of the department have achieved positions of distinction and public recognition.

In consultation with Dr Frank Hartley (Dean of The School of Pharmacy and Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of London) and Mr Desmond Lewis (Secretary and Registrar of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain) we decided to hold a one day scientific meeting at The School of Pharmacy on 8th January, 1976. Time was available to hear lectures from only a few past and present members of The Square (as The School has become known since the days it was originally housed in Bloomsbury Square and more recently in Brunswick Square). After an opening talk from J. H. Burn on the origins of the Pharmacology Department at The Square, lectures were given by E. Bülbring, M. Vogt, J. R. Hodges, A. W. Cuthbert, E. Horton and myself, reflecting the diversity of research interests that have been pursued at The Square and

which continue to be pursued by the speakers in their present establishments. The scientific proceedings were well interlaced with personal reminiscences of life in the Pharmacology Department at The Square both from the speakers and the chairmen, G. Brownlee and E. Zaimis. There was talk of the need for umbrellas in the laboratories in Bloomsbury Square as protection against a leaking roof and an account from the pen of G. A. H. Buttle of how he and J. H. Gaddum acted as driver and conductor of a bus during the General Strike of 1926. The proceedings were summed up by A. M. Barrett who paid tribute to the particular contributions of J. H. Burn, G. A. H. Buttle and G. B. West in shaping research and teaching in pharmacology at The Square. At the reception given by the Pharmaceutical Society in Bloomsbury Square, further tributes were paid to J. H. Burn and his successors by Dr David Owen, Minister of State at the Department of Health and Social Security.

This special supplement of the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology* contains the lectures given at this anniversary meeting as well as some other invited contributions from former members of the Pharmacology Department at The Square. It is particularly appropriate that this Journal should carry the proceedings since it and its Editors—Hampshire, Brownlee and Fowler—have always been closely associated with The Square.