

History of ANZSOM

Queensland Branch

1968 - 1996

By Dr E.M. (Mannie) Rathus

The development of scientific societies is an inevitable consequence of the expanding interest of individuals in particular fields which overlap and bring them into contact with each other on a constant basis. There evolves a recognition of this atmosphere and the influences that reflect on the attitudes of those engaged professionally in related spheres.

In Australia the occupational health cauldron began boiling in the sixties with a contemporaneous surging of interest in all States. There were individuals in medicine who had recognised the importance of occupational health and small numbers of general practitioners in Queensland who practised in industrial areas were beginning to realise that they were faced with problems beyond those requiring first aid.

Doug Gordon had been appointed as Director of Industrial Medicine in the Queensland Department of Health in 1946 on his discharge from the armed forces. He also undertook the then available short course in industrial medicine introduced by Dr Gordon Smith at the Occupational Health Unit of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in the University of Sydney.

In 1957 Doug Gordon became the first Professor of Social and Preventive Medicine in the University of Queensland and Mannie Rathus became Director of Industrial Medicine in the Queensland Department of Health in February 1957, which post he retained until retirement in 1982. His credentials related to many years of experience with chest disease including five years with the Division of Tuberculosis in the Queensland Department of Health, preceded by similar work in South Africa with a significant background of silicosis and related conditions.

As a result he became involved in the early attempts to stimulate interest in preventive medicine as it applied to occupational exposure, not excluding physical hazards. Chemical industries existed in Queensland and provided a nidus for exposure to lead, organic mercurials, organophosphates and organochlorines and the host of other pesticides, fungicides and hormones used in agriculture. The mining industries were expanding and there was unique interest in fevers such as Q fever and Leptospirosis recognised and known to be special problems of workers exposed to infected animals.

By the very nature of things medical practitioners were drawn inexorably into spheres which in effect made them practitioners in occupational health. The vast core were general practitioners with the occasional specialist who was appointed to large corporations such as the Ethyl Corporation (organic lead). Bob Scott in Salisbury, and David Douglas and Peter Bowman in Gladstone are classic examples of the exposure which drives practitioners to expand their interest in the special problems of the health of workers, and to direct their energies towards alleviating the quite massive harmful potential of modern industry on the worker.

Bob Scott's locality in Salisbury exposed him to a multiple series of industries, ranging from heavy engineering to chemical manufacture, whereas David Douglas and Peter Bowman were exposed to the giant aluminium industry; David from its inception because of the large chemical problems at Queensland Aluminina in the late 60's and Peter Bowman from 1980

with the later development of Boyne Island Smelters with the intrusion of "pot workers asthma" in which Charles Mitchell was to play a research-orientated part.

All of these influences were at work throughout Australia, and the vis a tergo towards the formation of a coherent scientific body to fortify and centralise their interest as a group became inexorable in the 1960's.

In the 1950's there had been a section of Industrial Medicine in the Victorian Branch BMA (later AMA) and a corresponding Section of the BMA (later AMA) existed in New South Wales. In 1966, Gilbert Charles, CMO of the Snowy Mountains Hydroelectric Authority, invited the Victorian and New South Wales Section to hold a joint meeting at Cabramurra, at which the possibility of a national body was discussed. In 1968 the Victorian Section was approached by the Secretary of the N.S.W. Section, Dr D.A. Ferguson, regarding formation of an Australia-wide association and a meeting was held at the Institute of Anatomy, Canberra that same year with Dr Hugh Denehy of Victoria being co-chairman with Dr Harry McCullough. This meeting was held on Friday 25th October 1968 at the Australian Institute of Anatomy and was attended by about 32 members. These sober and enthusiastic colleagues on that day made a momentous decision and resolved to form the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine (ASOM) and all those attending became Foundation Members. The meeting also appointed a Steering Committee - W P (Bill) Nelson as Chairman, D.A. Ferguson as Secretary, and Peter Bradley as Treasurer - to report back in twelve months with the Memorandum and Articles for approval.

In September 1969 at another meeting in Canberra the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine became official and the objectives and rules of the newly formed Society were passed. Dr Nelson became the first President, D.A. Ferguson the Secretary, and Peter Bradley the Treasurer. It was decided that each President would hold office for two years and that Branches would be formed in each of the States. Original ANZSOM members who attended the Dinner in the Canberra Hotel at this meeting will never forget the vote of thanks to the two guest speakers proposed by Mannie Rathus, in which he made hilarious and outrageous love to the wife of one of them; it brought the house down, as related by David Ferguson and Bob Scott! Early in 1970 the New South Wales and Victorian Branches of the Society were formed taking on the role of the previous sections, and in 1970 the Queensland Branch was formed.

The documents available do not record the dates on which the other States formed Branches, but certainly all joined and over the years the Annual General Meeting has graced venues in every state and New Zealand which joined in 1972 (details later).

Queensland had an interesting entry into occupational medicine and its efforts to become a viable and contributing member of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine were no less epic.

A great deal of credit must go to Bob Scott for his initiative in promoting interest in occupational medicine in the domain of general practice, and for following his enthusiasm into attaining experience by visiting Dr Ferguson in New South Wales early in 1968. Bob Scott had been appraised by David Ferguson of the existence of the Section of Occupational Medicine in the N.S.W. Branch of the AMA, and in a letter to David Ferguson dated 11.3.68 Bob thanks David for informing him of the existence of the Section and enclosing his cheque for \$2.00 as annual subscription! In a letter dated 22nd June 1971 David Ferguson affirms that Bob remained a member till at least 1971, and he says in a letter to the AMA, NSW - "attached is a letter from Bob Scott, who in addition to being the Secretary of the Queensland Branch of the Society is also a member of the Section of Occupational Medicine, NSW Branch AMA". This characterises Bob Scott's attachment to occupational medicine in all its facets, at the professional, community, and administrative level, and most importantly at the

level of a colleague's exchange of the pleasantries of co-existence and friendship through the Society of Occupational Medicine. He was deservedly honoured by his colleagues by being elected as Federal President of ANZSOM (nee ASOM) 1994 -1996. Charles Mitchell held the honour 1987 -1989 and the Queensland Branch congratulates both Bob and Charles as emanating from the Queensland Branch even though Bob's destiny took him ultimately to the ACT. Parochial pride is not necessarily cabin'd, cribb'd, confined!

To continue the saga, David Ferguson mentions in a letter of 20th March 1968 to Bob Scott: "Dr Smith (Gordon Smith of the Occupational Health Unit of the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine at the University of Sydney) and I were glad of the opportunity of meeting you, and welcome your proposed move to form a Section in Queensland."

Because of Dr Rathus' presence on the Occupational Health Committee of the NH&MRC and as a delegate to ASOM, his association with the preoccupation of forming an Australian Association allied to occupational medicine was quite close, and letters began to circulate between him and David Ferguson and Bob Scott and David Ferguson all relating to the need or possibility of forming a Queensland Branch. Dr Rathus sent David Ferguson a list of practitioners known to be involved in medical supervision related to industry in a letter dated 21.3.68.

Alex Allan (Mount Isa Mines), J.B. Hickey (MIM), R.F. Ross and E.B. Spork (James Hardie), David Douglas (Qld Alumina), Noel Gutteridge (Ford Motors), Anthony St Ledger (Rheem) were mentioned as known figures. By March 1970 Bob Scott and Mannie Rathus were still trying to form a Queensland Branch. The fact was that ASOM rules required 5 or more members to form a State Branch, and in a letter of 6th May 1970 Bob Scott was able to name 5 members who had signified their interest in joining a Queensland Branch of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine. These were - Bob Scott, Mannie Rathus, David Douglas, Alex McD Allan and Professor Douglas Gordon (deceased 1993). In his reply of 21 May 1970, David Ferguson stated Bob Scott's letter was received with enthusiasm by Council. He pointed out that the intention of at least 5 members to form a Branch was sufficient, provided a committee was elected. By the rules however, Dr Rathus as Queensland delegate to the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine, was required to be a member of the committee.

It is of interest to record that Dr J B Hickey (Mt Isa Mines) and Dr Brian Hirschfeld (Southern Electric Authority) were already in fact members of the Sections of Occupational Medicine of the New South Wales Branch of the BMA (later AMA), and Dr Murray Williams (Director, University Health Services, Queensland) had made enquiries. The practitioners named were of course immediately contacted about the intention to form a Queensland Branch of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine. These vignettes illustrate the fact that there was an awareness amongst Queensland practitioners who were engaged part-time in the supervision of workers in special industries, that Sections of occupational medicine existed in the AMA, albeit in other States.

By 16th September 1970 Bob Scott was able to inform David Ferguson that the first Committee of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine had been approved after many complicated letters and consisted of: Chairman - Dr M Rathus; Secretary/ Treasurer - Dr R J Scott; Committee Members: Dr A McD Allan, Professor D Gordon, Dr M Williams.

It is quite appropriate to record the penultimate paragraph of this letter from Bob Scott to David Ferguson "This all gives me a great deal of personal satisfaction. It is also a reflection of the enthusiasm you instilled in me some two years ago". This mood was reflected by Sister Joyce Aird who was in charge of Dr Bob Scott's unit at General Motors, as when the author had reason to visit, she had made a sign of welcome reading "El Presidente"!

The Branch then received congratulatory letters from Dr W P Nelson as President of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine and from David Ferguson as Secretary both dated 24th September 1970 and on Monday 28th September 1970 the Queensland Branch held its first Committee Meeting. The full text of the minutes follow to maintain historical perspective and to fill in the background:

"Minutes of First Meeting of the Committee of the Queensland Branch of the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine - held at the United Service Club on 28/9/70.

Present: Dr E M Rathus (Chairman); Dr R J Scott (Secretary-Treasurer); All three Committee Members - Dr A McD Allan, Professor D Gordon, Dr M Williams.

Dr Rathus, as our Foundation Chairman, entertained the Committee to lunch.

Matters discussed: It was agreed that our Branch should co-operate and collaborate with the AMA (Queensland Branch) and other affiliated bodies.

Meetings to be held as required.

A suggestion was put forward to consider the possibility of an Annual Meeting of the Branch in the form of a Dinner.

Scientific Meetings to be held as required and contact to be made with the Postgraduate Committee - in particular if an overseas visitor were present who was recognised as a leader in any facet of Occupational Medicine.

Consideration to be given to the possibility of combined meetings with such groups as the Thoracic Society, Dermatologists, etc. Members should let the Secretary know of any practitioners who could be considered as prospective members. R J SCOTT"

Bob Scott, Mannie Rathus and Brian Hirschfeld then attended a business and annual meeting of ASOM held the very next weekend (Oct 2-4) in Canberra at which they were able to present the credentials of the Queensland Branch and to join in the burgeoning activities of the Society of Occupational Medicine.

Dr Rathus was asked by David Ferguson at the last minute to reply to the guest speaker. Though he accepted this request with some trepidation he felt it was a privilege for Queensland and faced the assembled colleagues and partners with fortitude and light allusion. The Queensland Branch then persisted with routine matters and by 6th May 1971 the Secretary was able to report that the membership had attained the grand total of 11 (eleven). In 1979 there were 30 members when Queensland hosted the Annual General Meeting for the first time, and an available list of September 1986 shows a total of 45 members. The figure for 1996 is 35 members, and the Branch has managed to maintain an active presence to the date of this review (Jan/Feb 1996).

Between 1970 and 1972 New Zealand physicians had shown great interest in the Australian Society of Occupational Medicine, and at the Scientific Meeting held in Melbourne in 1972 the name of the Society was changed and became The Australian and New Zealand Society of Occupational Medicine and thus was ANZSOM born.

Dr D R O'Donnell (Victoria) was President at the time and he presented an emblem for the Society designed by artists at what was then Trans Australia Airlines (TAA). It consisted of the map of Australia with serpent surrounded by a ring. Hugh Denehy suggested that the ring be converted to a cog as present in the current emblem, and of course New Zealand had to be added to the map. Thus are forged enigmatic logos which we all wear and admire so assiduously!

During 1972 the Branch held a joint dinner meeting with the Thoracic Society at which Dr Rathus described his impression of the IVth International Conference on Pneumoconiosis (I.L.O.) held in Bucharest in September/ October 1971. Dr John Trewin was invited to speak on "The Role of the Medical Practitioner in the Meat Industry", and the Branch continued its role of supplying speakers at Safety Conventions when requested, and was enjoying cordial relations with the AMA (Qld Branch). Interested members continued to give lectures on Occupational Health at undergraduate level to Medical and Engineering Students.

Dr David Douglas was noted to be in London in 1970 studying for his M.Sc. in Occupational Health. After reaching senior status in the UK Employment Medical Advisory Service, David eventually returned to Australia in the late 1970's and became, and remains, a vital force in occupational health, having occupied most positions of prominence as he was Foundation President of the Australian College of Occupational Medicine (ACOM) in 1982 and Chairman of the NSW/ACT Branch of ANZSOM in 1987.

Bob Scott and Alex Allan added to the prestige of the Queensland Branch as Alex was Founding Vice-President of ACOM and Censor for ACOM in Queensland while Bob was a Foundation Member of Council of ACOM and its Board of Censors. Alex eventually severed his contact with ANZSOM as his letter of resignation was tabled at the February 1988 Meeting.

In March 1978 the Queensland Branch held a joint meeting with the Thoracic Society at which papers were presented by Dr Peter Elmes, Director, Pneumoconiosis Research Unit, Llandough Hospital, Penarth, Wales, and Henry Walton, Institute of Occupational Medicine, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Dr Elmes was renowned for his work on pneumconiosis and occupational exposure to asbestos fibre, while Henry Walton, a physicist, was a well-recognised international expert in dust particle dispersion in the respiratory tract. Both of these important speakers had been hijacked by the combined persuasion of ANZSOM and the Thoracic Society after presenting major papers at the Second Australian Pneumoconiosis Conference held in Sydney 20-23 February 1978, and a sense of maturity pervaded ANZSOM's achievements at last as far as the Queensland Branch was concerned.

By 1979 the Queensland Branch had sufficient confidence and members (30 being registered at the time) to volunteer to host the Annual General Meeting which was held in May 1979 at the Park Royal in Brisbane with Alex Allan as Chairman at the time. Dr Ian Corness, who was Secretary/ Treasurer, performed miracles of organization for the conference with the help of friendly experts that only he could conjure up! The only relic of the 1979 Annual General Meeting that remains is a "Convention Planning Report" held on Tuesday 5th December 1978 in Dr P Doughty's rooms. In it reference is made to the proposed donation of \$3000 by Mt Isa Mines (cf. below), and the usual discussion on costs, exhibitors, printing, programme design, nomination of speakers, and of course Budget forecast!

Pat Doughty who had joined in 1975, and destined to become one of the Branch stalwarts, arranged bookings and travel arrangements through his office, a selfless and sacrificial task! The Guest Speaker was Dr Geoffrey Ryan, Professor of Community Medicine, and Mannie Rathus was the after-dinner speaker, a privilege which he relished. The President was Dr Keith Wilson (SA) and a prominent overseas visitor was Dr Julian Chisholm of Baltimore, an internationally recognised expert in Childhood Lead Poisoning. The Conference was a great success and the Branch attained financial stability as Mount Isa Mines donated \$5000 for the Conference, on which the Branch made \$2000. Mount Isa Mines then very generously instructed the Branch to the effect that the moneys given by them should be used for the benefit of Occupational Medicine in Queensland in the future.

It was decided to offer an Occupational Health prize for students to the value of \$200.00 to a student who in the opinion of the invited selection committee, submitted the best student project on a topic related to Occupational Health.

Prizes were gained on several occasions but the last mention of the ANZSOM prize found by the author is in the Annual Report of the Qld Branch to the AGM on 27th September 1987. The prize was awarded to Messrs R M Walker and Andrew J Johnson for their project "Safety in biological laboratories with respect to disposal of sharps". It appears that these students had been invited to present their project to the June 1987 meeting of the Qld Branch. Somehow the system has collapsed through what may be a lack of liaison between ANZSOM and University Departments of Medicine. Perhaps this should be resurrected, as ANZSOM is the only organisation to promote a consciousness of work exposure and health effects in the student/ graduate mind. As far as the author is aware it is the only prize offered for a Student project related to occupational medicine in any State in Australia, and exploratory overtures for its revival would be a positive step.

In October 1971 Dr Rathus had been elected "Miembro De Honor" of the "Asociacion Latinoamericana De Toxicologia" most likely stimulated by articles on pesticides which had been translated into Spanish and which he had discussed with the President, Professor Emilio Astolfi, at International Committee Meetings of WHO. Professor Douglas Gordon was elected to Honorary Life Membership of ANZSOM in late 1977 and a letter expressing his pleasure at this gesture was minuted at a meeting of the Queensland Branch on 16th February 1978. In February 1983 Dr Rathus was elected an Emeritus Member and Fellow of ANZSOM as were David Ferguson (NSW) and Allen Christophers (VIC).

In September 1988 Fred Heyworth (WA), Jim McNulty (WA), "Bunty" L Rhodes (NZ), and Keith Wilson (SA), were granted Fellowship of ANZSOM. These privileges are very acceptable as the rules allow for 10 Fellows at any one time. (Bunty Rhodes was New Zealand's first life member, Chairman 1982-84, deceased 1989). Other Fellows listed are: Myer Glick (NSW), Gersh Major (Hon) (NSW), Darrel O'Donnell (Vic) (deceased), Gordon Smith (NSW), Hugh Denehy (Vic), and Jim Milne (Vic).

Regretfully Gordon Smith & Hugh Denehy both died in 1996, as did David Ferguson in 2002 after this history had been completed leaving a legacy of positive achievements in Occupational Medicine for ANZSOM to honour.
Ed.

Many members of ANZSOM have been Guest Speakers at the AGMs, amongst them being David Ferguson (NSW), Terry McCullagh (NSW), Nick Ormonde (WA) and Mannie Rathus (Qld).

The Queensland Branch had established itself to the degree that it hosted the 1985 AGM in Brisbane with Dr Keith Brown (Vic) as the President, and again in 1991 at the Gold Coast with Dr George Hanna (NSW) at the helm.

The Queensland Branch has not shirked when faced with a philosophical problem. In August 1990 Pat Doughty as Chairman composed a letter to the Hon K V McElligott MLA in which he set out the views of the Qld Branch of ANZSOM in relation to the transfer of the Department of Health's Occupational Health and Hygiene services to the Division of Accident Prevention, Department of Industrial Relations. In a very clearly constructed letter, as Chairman, Dr Doughty set out the advantages of retaining occupational health and environment hazards within the aegis of the Department of Health. Suffice to state the inevitable occurred, and the Division of Workplace Health and Safety was established in 1991 as a Division of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations. The first and continuing Principal Medical Officer is one of the long-term members of the Queensland

Branch of ANZSOM, Dr David Smith, who received his baptism of exposure to occupational health hazards in the twilight of Dr Rathus' term of office, having been appointed in 1980 to the Division of Industrial Medicine.

David Smith has with him as Senior Principal Adviser, Dr David Grantham Ph.D, a scientific officer of superb capability who had worked for many years on the problem of exposure to dust, chemicals, and physical hazards of the workplace, and was of invaluable support to the Division of Occupational Health. In this regard Dr Grantham on 3 April 1990 received a grant of \$5000 from the Australian Occupational Health and Safety Trust in order to produce a book on "Occupational Health and Hygiene Guidebook for the WHSO" (Workplace Health & Safety Officer). This was published in 1992 and has been accepted very well. David Grantham has also addressed the Queensland Branch on recent developments in occupational health at the July meeting 1989.

Throughout this period ANZSOM had been faced with the mounting desire of some influential and senior members of ACOM to amalgamate ANZSOM and ACOM so as to produce a single body to represent Australian Occupational Health objectives. ACOM had been established in 1982 and had busied itself with intense planning for the future of training schedules and to attain specialist status under NSQAC acceptance. (National Specialist Qualification Advisory Committee).

From 1984 discussions had been going on regarding the ANZSOM/ACOM relationship and by 1987 the viewpoints presented had been discussed at many branch meetings throughout Australia with submissions at ANZSOM AGMs and carefully worded submissions by Chairmen to the Federal Committee on the feeling of State branches. David Ferguson had submitted a very detailed "Proposal of Rationalisation", dated 6 February 1987, which he later deeply regretted as rash and ill-advised (personal communication, 1996).

The centrepiece of his presentation was that ACOM was sponsored by the Society and carried on the negotiations initiated by the Society with NSQAC, and that the interests of Occupational Health would only be served by a merger of the two bodies with the parent body, that is, ANZSOM, becoming absorbed into ACOM. The lobbying was quite intense with much persuasive argument about it and about. The Minutes of the General Council Meeting of 28 May 1987 reflect Branch opinion very clearly.

WA Essentially does not support the proposal to merge

QLD Did not support amalgamation

SA Marginally in agreement if affiliation offered to ANZSOM members

VIC Equivocal

NSW Not clearcut

NZ Hoped to see an independent ANZSOM continue in Australia and New Zealand and that if amalgamation occurred NZ would continue as a separate Society.

The most dramatic statement in the Minutes of 28 May in the author's view is: "Federal Council of ANZSOM now recommends the dissolution of ANZSOM and will be working to effect this by 31 December 1987".

A considerable amount of horse-trading went on in an endeavour to entice entrenched ANZSOM members, but the viewpoint of the Qld Branch was successfully expressed by Pat Doughty at a General Council Meeting on 28 August 1987 where he stated that most Queensland members were against dissolution, feared a loss of State autonomy, distrusted ACOM and were seriously concerned at the possible appropriation of their very healthy local Branch funds, as the original donation by Mount Isa Mines in 1979 remained ear-marked for

the benefit of Occupational Medicine Education in Queensland as pointed out earlier in this review.

A decision to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) prior to 3 December 1987 was passed and eventually it was decided to hold the EGM on Friday, December 4th, 1987. On the 11th December 1987 Associate Professor Charles Mitchell (Qld), who was the President of ANZSOM, had the unenviable task of declaring the result of the vote, and writing an explanatory note for the advice of all members. This he did with aplomb, and an immediate call to arms for continuing co-operation between the Society and the College (ANZSOM and ACOM). The fact is that only 49% of the membership voted and the necessary 2/3rds (two-thirds) of voters for dissolution was not attained. The result was that the Society was to continue, and very early in the piece it became apparent that a mood existed for friendly co-operation between the Society and the College. The Queensland Branch has every reason to congratulate Charles Mitchell and Pat Doughty for their calm appraisal of circumstances during the period of determination of the ultimate direction of ANZSOM/ACOM, both Chairmen fielding dispute and contention at both Branch and Federal level on numerous occasions.

Expectations for the future were well expressed in the NZ Branch report of ANZSOM in September 1988 by the Chairman Michael Burley. The following paragraph is quoted from the text:

"When I attended the ANZSOM Federal Council Meeting in March (1988) I found the "hatchet had been buried" so to speak, and that most Australian States are now holding joint ANZSOM/ACOM Meetings, and our Branch agreed last month to do the same thing in New Zealand. A friendly relationship such as this can only be of future benefit, both to the Society and to ACOM".

This virtually brings the story of ANZSOM, Queensland Branch into the present day and there would appear to be constant activity and interest with input from both the Society and now the Faculty. ANZSOM sponsored ACOM and ACOM with RACP spawned AFOM. The spirit of the Queensland Branch of ANZSOM is illustrated by the fact that through all this turmoil the Branch managed to attend to its objectives, and became a founding member of the Queensland Forum of Occupational Health and Safety Professionals which had become established in July 1987.

In the early years from 1970 to about 1982 with the formation of ACOM, meetings were organised about talks by individual members on cases, interesting problems in their particular ambit of occupational health/ medical problems, and a constant search for available overseas guest speakers or local and interstate speakers who had occupational medicine interests and happened to be guests of other medical societies or were guests of the Branch for one reason or another.

The author remembers Bob Scott presenting a case of Mediterranean thalassaemia in a young worker employed in a lead industry, a confusing picture to be unravelled. The Branch was able to entertain Dr Robert Murray of the U.K. who had some distinction in advising both industry and the unions in matters of occupational medicine, and particularly as a consultant in the lead industry. Other colleagues of international prominence in the field of occupational medicine were Professor Richard Schilling, Director of the Occupational Health Unit in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine who was a guest of the Branch in 1975; Dr Muriel (Molly) Newhouse, well-known to all specialists in occupational medicine and thoracic medicine for her pioneer work on asbestos related lung disease especially mesothelioma, who was a guest of the Branch in October 1979, and Professor Malcolm Harrington, Professor of Occupational Health University of Birmingham, who was a guest speaker at the October 1985 Annual Scientific Meeting of ANZSOM, held in Brisbane.

The picture today is possibly more complex but retains its character of interest and enthusiasm. Trainee sessions have had to be arranged because of the involvement with ACOM and subsequently AFOM, and the general programme maintained for the interest of non-specialist members. The Branch has on many occasions replied to questions on occupational health submitted by the AMA (Qld Branch) with a curious flurry of activity during 1976-78 with correspondence signed by the Hon. Secretary of the AMA (Qld Branch), Dr David Weedon, who was eventually to be elected Federal President of the AMA in May 1995.

There has been a myriad of guest speakers, all of them providing interest and stimulation. The subjects covered range from radon to rehabilitation, dermatology, chronic pain syndromes, back injury at work, underwater medicine, aerospace medicine, chemical hazards in Queensland, occupational infections and burns! In the early years many speakers were themselves members of the Queensland Branch and shared their enthusiasm for one or other facet of occupational medicine. Other speakers were local experts and an examination of the subjects presented provides a kaleidoscope of esoteric topics and indepth exploration of even the hum-drum. A random selection over the period 1977 to 1992 reveals addresses on occupational lung carcinogens, occupational bronchitis, chemical hypersensitivities, cardiac rehabilitation and employment, and cluster buster confusion and conflict in toxicology. These varied topics have been analysed and dissected by Queensland ANZSOM personalities such as Charles Mitchell, Bob Edwards and Gerry Neville, and by invited local experts including Bob Goodwin, Alan Seawright, Pat Hogan and Stuart Pegg, with a spread of disciplines over respiratory medicine, toxicology, cardiology and surgery.

The speakers have been prominent in their fields of interest, and have given members an insight into unfamiliar territory. The timbre of these addresses is invariably superb and there is no doubt that all presentations follow this trend, for which the Branch records its gratitude to all participants of the past and for the future.

These last few years have shown that the two organisations can co-exist. The camaraderie of ANZSOM and its non-specialist pattern serves the needs of the many General Practitioner members and must inevitably attract Trainees and Fellows. The icy pinnacles of the erstwhile College have produced its Specialists, who are all by definition well-versed in the minutiae of their speciality, viz: occupational medicine, and are respected Fellows of The Australasian Faculty of Occupational Medicine of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, as from July 1993.

The headings for correspondence now reads: QLD Branch ANZSOM/AFOM and effectively seals this saga of the birth, growth and development of a Society devoted to occupational medicine in the broadest of terms embracing all the nuances from clinical and diagnostic to preventive medicine as it relates to work.

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