
Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I would like to take this opportunity to share with our reader community my impressions of the First World Congress on Open Heart Technology held in Brighton, United Kingdom, July 13–17, 1981. It was my privilege, as AmSECT's President to represent the American Society of Extracorporeal Technology at this meeting and to the delegates from the various countries in attendance.

The congress convened on Monday evening at 5:30 PM with an opening ceremony held in the Brighton Center, a beautiful meeting facility just across King's Road from the ocean beach. The opening ceremony included a roll call of nations to which more than forty nations responded. Welcoming speeches were given by officers of the Society of Perfusionists of Great Britain and Ireland and by the Mayor of Brighton. The opening ceremony was followed by a Civic Reception in the Center restaurant.

The conference itself got underway Tuesday morning with presentations starting at 9:30. The exhibition area opened at 8:30 each day and I would like to give a brief description of the exhibits.

There were 46 exhibit booths set up representing approximately 100 product lines. Most of the major U.S. product lines were on display, but what was most interesting to me were the displays of products not yet on the U.S. market. Gambro LTD displayed its new line of heart-lung hardware and software including a new hard-shell bubble oxygenator. Dideco S.p.A. of Mirandola, Italy showed its new disposable bubble oxygenator. This unit had several interesting innovations including the capability of increasing or decreasing the amount of bubble oxygenation so that one device will handle the full range of patient sizes from infant to adult. The venous inlet is a three position rotating turret with $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{3}{8}$ ", and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch ports. Finally, level detection is by a sonar device.

Polystan exhibited its pulsatile pump as well as its full line of software including pericardial bioprotheses. Numerous manufacturers of monitoring and pacing hardware displayed their equipment and several Eu-

ropean dialysis companies exhibited devices for ultra-filtration hemoconcentration.

A unique (to me) feature of the exhibit area was that the exhibits surrounded a large central lounge area containing snack bar, wet bar and seating area. This was an especially nice touch, as it allowed for much interaction between delegates.

Presentation of papers occupied the mornings of Tuesday–Friday and Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The scientific sessions included a great diversity of subject matter including organization of open heart teams, filtration, safety or more approximately, lack thereof in perfusion devices, perfusion devices and techniques, myocardial protection and a discussion of heart transplantation vs. prosthetic heart implantation. There were also poster sessions presented each day with time delegated for presenters to discuss their posters and answer questions.

The quality of presentation was high and most topics were followed by stimulating question and answer sessions. Again, it was fascinating for this American delegate to learn of the problems and answers to those problems that are unique to other parts of the world.

As is the case during AmSECT meetings, some of the important activities occur away from the meeting format itself. One example of such activity was a meeting of Scutter Newton, Gary Reeder, and myself with the executive committee of the Society of Perfusionists of Great Britain and Ireland and its President-Elect, Professor Dennis Melrose. This meeting was the first step in establishing an international effort to standardize education and certification of perfusionists world wide. It was agreed that a committee of individuals from all countries meet concurrently with major perfusion meetings (AmSECT and future congresses for example) to discuss problems common to all educational and certification programs.

I would also like to say a few words about attendance at the congress. The final delegate count was in excess of 350. This number may seem small when compared to an AmSECT national meeting, but I think it is necessary to consider that this was the first such effort. It was not too many years ago that 350 attendees was

the AmSECT record. There were approximately 50 delegates from the U.S. including three officers and three regional board members. This visibility of AmSECT added much support for the congress and for the future of such efforts. All of those U.S. delegates with whom I spoke had positive things to say about the congress.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not say a few words about the host organization and country. It is easy now for me to understand the Anglophilic attitude of those who visit Great Britain. The congress organizers could not have been more cordial. Mr. Richard Reeves, chairman of the Organising Committee, Mr. Fred Roberts, and Mr. Andy Pastellooulos went out of their way to show this delegate every consideration. The

conference staff was outstanding, courteously handling registration and information matters and cheerfully managing the entire program. Brighton and its people were charming, warm and friendly.

The future of the World Congress concept is not totally clear as of yet. I believe that all who attended feel it to be a worthwhile concept. Discussion centered around repeating the congress on a 3-5 year schedule, changing the site to accommodate the various nations. The closing ceremonies included a statement that we would meet again in four years on the North American continent. I heartily endorse this concept.

James P. Dearing, President
AmSECT