PROCEEDINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF INDUSTRIAL 
MEDICAL OFFICERS

The 57th (Annual General) Meeting of the Association 
was held at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical 
Medicine on October 28, 1949. The President, Dr. A. J. 
Amor, was in the chair.

The Report of the Council for the year 1948/49, 
already published in the quarterly Bulletin, was taken as 
read and signed. The Hon. Treasurer, Dr. W. G. S. 
Pepper, presented the receipts and payments account and 
the accumulated revenue account for the year ending 
June, 1949, and these were agreed.

It was announced by the President that as a result of 
the ballot for the office of President, Dr. Norman had 
been elected for 1949/51. Dr. Donald Stewart con-
gratulated Dr. Norman and thanked all his supporters. 
In reply, Dr. Norman thanked Dr. Stewart and said he 
would do everything in his power to further the interests 
of the Association.

Election of Officers

The following were elected Officers and Members of 
the Council for the year 1949/50:—

Honorary Secretary: Dr. J. A. A. Mekelburg.

Honorary Treasurer: Dr. W. G. S. Pepper.

Members of Council (Elected Members):

Dr. W. Blood; Dr. I. J. Corbett; Dr. J. Craw; 
Dr. A. A. Eagor; Dr. R. E. W. Fisher; Dr. M. W. 
Goldblatt; Dr. L. J. Haydon; Dr. G. Keatinge; 
Dr. G. Stenlake Mundy; Dr. G. E. Graves Peirce; 
Dr. A. J. Owston.

Members of Council (Representative Members):

South Wales and West of England Group, Dr. T. H. 
Jenkins.

Tees-side Group, Dr. R. I. McCallum.

Manchester Group, Dr. R. S. F. Schilling.

Liverpool Group, Dr. N. MacDonald.

London Group, Dr. M. L. Dobbie-Batemian.

Yorkshire Group, Dr. R. A. Trevethick.

Scottish Group, Dr. I. M. Richardson.

Nottingham Group, Dr. D. K. Cowan.

On October 29, Dr. D. G. Blair, Director of the x-Ray 
Department, Brompton Hospital, spoke on the “Radio-
 logical Appearances of some Non-Industrial Chest 
Conditions”, and was followed by Dr. Frank Pygott, 
radiologist to the Central Middlesex Hospital, who 
discussed the “Radiological Appearances of some 
Gastro-Intestinal Conditions”.

GROUP MEETINGS

Merseyside Group

Chairman: Dr. E. Holland, 
Mersey Docks Medical Service, 
Dock Office, Liverpool, 3

Hon Secretary: Dr. E. H. Tyrer, 
Lever Brothers, 
Port Sunlight, Cheshire.

On May 16, Dr. D. G. Freshwater, dermatologist to 
the Liverpool Regional Hospital Board, read a paper to 
the Group entitled “Furunculosi and Superficial Skin 
Sepsis”, of which a summary follows.

The speaker, having dealt with the aetiology of furuncu-
losis, said that: Insoluble cutting oils were the common-
est cause of occupational furunculosis on the extensor 
surfaces of the forearms and thighs. These oils con-
sisted of refined petroleum oils with small added amounts 
of animal or vegetable oils, sulphur, and an inhibitor to 
prevent deterioration of the fatty oil content. Occasional 
comedones were found similar to those produced by tar 
or chlorinated hydrocarbons but essentially all folliculitis 
as an inflammatory reaction. Most insoluble cutting 
oils were sterile for skin pathogens but they caused an 
irritation of the hair follicles, which were infected by 
bacteria from the patient’s nose, skin, or environment. 
Soluble cutting oils were, however, often contaminated 
by pyogenic organisms and caused folliculitis by direct 
infecion. Metallic slivers in cutting oils might cause 
wounds of the skin which commonly became infected.

Cutting oils had a marked defatting action causing 
dryness, cracking, and fissuring of the skin which might 
be followed by secondary infection.

Coal-tar, pitch, chloranaphthalenes, and other heavy 
distillates led to marked formation of comedones. The 
plugging of the follicles was usually sterile but 
infestation took place from the patient’s environment. 
Excessive heat or activity causing profuse sweating 
predisposed to superficial sepsis by macerating the skin, 
thus lowering its resistance by facilitating the spread of 
staphylococci on the skin surface, and, in susceptible 
individuals, by leading to prickly heat with secondary 
infestation of the papulo-vesicular eruption.

Freshly-produced sweat from the eccrine sweat glands 
was acid and aided in the autogenous disinfection of the 
skin, but gradually became alkaline if allowed to stagnate.
The apocrine sweat glands secreted an alkaline sweat which facilitated infection, hence the tendency to furunculosis at the flexures, the inguinal and glutal regions, under the female breasts, and between the scrotum and thighs. Scabies predisposed to furunculosis. Boils on the wrist, elbows, and on the lower parts of the buttocks were pointers to this predisposing cause. Pediculosis corporis and capitis were less frequent predisposing causes of furunculosis of the body and head respectively. In furunculosis confined to the perianal region the many causes of pruritis had to be excluded. Superficial skin sepsis was liable to occur whenever the epidermal surface was damaged as in eczematous dermatitis, exfoliative dermatitis, or erythroderma.

Dr. Freshwater did not find foci of sepsis in the teeth, tonsils, or prostate to be a common cause of furunculosis. All dusty or dirty occupations were liable to cause furunculosis.

Ointments might cause infection of the hair follicles especially when used on the hairy parts of the body.

Cold weather might contribute to the incidence of boils by making certain people less inclined to change their linen and to wash their bodies. Washing however could increase the liability to furunculosis, for the constant use of hot water renders the skin vulnerable to the defatting action of alkaline soaps.

In treatment rest was important and meddlesome activity to be deprecated. The natural healing powers of the skin were high, while many antiseptics, the sulphonamides, and penicillin, readily converted a furunculosis into an area of eczematous dermatitis. Penicillin should not be applied locally unless other topical medicaments had failed. Intramuscular injection of penicillin should be reserved for cases of furunculosis with marked constitutional effects. Penicillin, however, injected locally and directly into a furuncle did not seem to produce sensitization and it was thus possible to obtain a concentration of the drug at the desired site which could not be achieved by other means. The furuncle usually started to regress in 24 hours, and the process was usually completed in 72 hours. If the cap of the lesion failed to rupture spontaneously it should be nicked with a tenotome.

The use of the sulphonamide group of drugs as a local application could not be too highly condemned. In the case of multiple boils it was essential to assess the numbers of virulent pyogenic organisms on the skin and in the patient’s nose. Swabbing of the whole of the patient’s skin two or three times a day with 1% hydrarg. perchorl 1/1000 was effective and was sufficiently non-irritating and non-sensitizing. A soap and water bath once a day followed by a 15 to 20-minute zinc sulphate bath was also recommended. No soap should be used in the zinc sulphate bath. The underclothing should be changed daily.

The treatment of the patient’s nose by tyrothricin solution, 0.02%, instilled into the nose two or three times daily was an effective remedy.

Although good reports had been published on the use of staphylococcal toxoids and non-specific protein sensitization in the treatment of generalized furunculosis, the majority of English dermatologists were not impressed with these methods, nor were vaccines considered to be of much value.

Heat was only indicated for the relief of pain, and dry heat only should be used.

When the infection became localized the surrounding skin should be smeared with Lassar’s paste with hydrarg. ammon. 1% which mechanically prevented infection of the surrounding hair follicles. On hairy skins liq. hydrarg. perchlor, 1/2000, or potassium permanganate solution, 1/2000, should be used instead of the paste.

The glycerin magnesium sulphate dressing had no place in the treatment of furunculosis and surgery was contraindicated except in occasional special circumstances. Bier’s cup and removal of the central core were helpful measures when discharge had begun to take place. A mild antiseptic lotion should be used over the surrounding infected area for about a week to guard against possible recurrence. Intramuscular injections of manganese in antimony and the like did not appear to be impressive. X-ray therapy in furunculosis with repeated lapses in a circumscribed area sometimes did good, when unfiltered x rays of 75 R at 70 KV at weekly intervals for four weeks was the regime.

Scottish Group

Chairman: Dr. A. F. Campbell,
Albion Motors, Ltd.,
South Street, Glasgow, W.4.

Hon. Secretary: Dr. I. M. Richardson,
Stewarts & Lloyds, Ltd.,
Tollcross, Glasgow, E.2.

The annual business meeting was held on September 14, when 12 members attended. The new office-bearers having been elected, the retiring Secretary gave his report; this showed that the Scottish membership had increased to a total of 55. The average attendance at meetings was 15, the main reasons for such a low figure being times of meetings and distance. Members discussed the most convenient times and it was decided to vary these in an attempt to increase attendances.

The meeting on October 19 was addressed by Dr. Ian D. Grant, a member of the British Medical Association Occupational Health Committee. Dr. Grant chose as his subject “B.M.A. Policy on Occupational Health”. The Chairman introduced Dr. Grant as one who had for many years played a prominent part in the Scottish activities of the B.M.A.; he had successfully combined this work with general practice and with his duties as a part-time medical officer in industry, and it could therefore be said that he had a breadth of experience second to none.

In a notably clear address Dr. Grant welcomed the opportunity to discuss the future of industrial health services. He gave a résumé of the work of the B.M.A. Committee on Occupational Health, mentioning some of the reports which it had issued and its views on various problems. He emphasized the importance of choosing medical personnel for work in industrial health and the necessity for promoting good relations between the preventive and the personal health services. Dr. Grant
raised many controversial points which were vigorously debated in the subsequent discussion. Sixteen members attended.

On November 16 a joint meeting was held with the Industrial Nurses Discussion Group. Dr. Richardson opened the discussion with some observations on "The Scope of Industrial Health". The speaker's remarks ranged over a number of aspects, including the definition of health, the individual's own responsibilities for his health, the value of joint consultation, economics and health, and health education. Both medical officers and nurses took part in the subsequent discussion, and many interesting points were raised. In winding up the meeting, the Chairman expressed the view that such joint meetings were of value in focusing attention on problems of mutual interest and suggested that they should become a regular feature.

The annual social meeting was held on December 17, 1949. A party of 24 members and their guests attended a theatre matinee followed by a private dinner at which the Chairman presided.

London Group
Chairman: Dr. M. L. Dobbie-Bateman,
Messrs. Harrods Ltd.,
Hon. Secretary: Dr. R. E. W. Fisher,
Metropolitan Division,
South Eastern Gas Board,
589, Old Kent Road,
London, S.E.15.

The annual business meeting of the Group was held at the London School of Hygiene on July 21, at 5 p.m.

Dr. Dobbie-Bateman was elected Chairman of the Group for the ensuing year, and Dr. R. E. W. Fisher Hon. Secretary. The following were elected members of the Committee: Drs. G. E. Graves Peirce, H. F. Chard, P. Pringle, M. P. Fitzsimons, W. G. S. Pepper, A. A. Eagger, G. H. Gange, I. J. Corbett, J. M. Faulkner, L. J. Haydon.

Dr. Dobbie-Bateman was elected representative of the Group on the Council of the Association.

The Secretary read the letter received from the secretary of the Association asking the Group to submit a draft of evidence to be put before the Council for submission to the Government Committee appointed to examine Industrial Medical Services under the chairmanship of Mr. Justice Dale. A preliminary draft prepared by the Committee was put before the meeting. After a great deal of keen discussion in which Drs. Norman, Graves, Peirce, Corbett, Killick, Cressall, Blood, Ling, Mekelburg, Eagger, Wrathall-Rowe, and several others took part, it was eventually decided that a Drafting Committee should be appointed to prepare a statement for submission to the Council. The following members were elected to the Drafting Committee: Drs. M. L. Dobbie-Bateman (Chairman), L. Norman, C. L. Sutherland, J. B. Wrathall-Rowe, A. A. Eagger, J. M. Rogan, G. E. Graves Peirce, R. E. W. Fisher (Secretary).

The Chairman asked members to send to the Secretary any comments in writing they wished to make for the consideration of the Drafting Committee.

Yorkshire Group
Chairman: Dr. C. Cresdee,
I.C.I. (Dyestuffs Division),
Dalton Works, Huddersfield.
Hon. Secretary: Dr. B. P. R. Hartley,
Samuel Fox & Co., Ltd.,
Stocksbridge Works, near Sheffield.

A meeting was held in Leeds on July 30, 1949. Dr. Trevethick was elected as Group Representative on the Council.

After much discussion on the Dale Committee, which included some points raised by Dr. Trevethick with particular reference to the overlapping of the medical services in the nationalized industries, and his fear that the present Ministry of Health was anxious to control all medical services, including those in industry, and with them the control of certification, it was unanimously agreed that Dr. Trevethick should represent the Yorkshire Group. Dr. Buchanan agreed that there was a tendency to much overlapping of the medical services in the nationalized industries, and thought that all Groups of the Association should be called upon to give evidence before the Dale Committee, particularly as the London Group had already been approached. The representatives of the Yorkshire Group, if called upon to give evidence, would put before the Dale Committee the views of the majority of the Group members in connexion with that part of the Dale Committee's terms of reference relating to recommendations. These views would, in the main, coincide with those expressed by the Occupational Health Sub-Committee of the Yorkshire Branch of the B.M.A. (on which several members of the Yorkshire Group of the A.I.M.O. served) on the planning of a future occupational health service for industry.

Birmingham Group
Chairman: Dr. W. Jeffersosn Lloyd,
Guest, Keen & Nettlefold,
Birmingham.
Hon. Secretary: Dr. J. G. Lawson,
Messrs. Joseph Lucas Ltd.,
Gt. King Street, Birmingham.

The annual business meeting was held on September 27, 1949, at the Birmingham Accident Hospital.

Dr. W. Jeffersosn Lloyd was re-elected as Chairman of the Group for 1949-50. Dr. Lloyd in acknowledging with appreciation his re-election, said that he had three pleasant duties to perform, to thank the retiring Hon. Secretary for his good work for the Group, to thank the Accident Hospital for their continued hospitality for the group meetings, and finally to thank the stalwarts amongst the members who so loyally supported the Group activities. He hoped that more members would
attend regularly and so strengthen the Group. He felt that the A.I.M.O. should keep out of politics as much as possible, and he insisted that the discussion to take place later, would deal with the subject on a high professional level.

Dr. Lloyd announced the impending departure of Dr. J. B. Sherman and paid tribute to his long experience of industrial medicine. Dr. Sherman thanked the Group for their good wishes and said that he was going to a sisal plantation in Tanganyika with 400 employees and a 40-bed hospital. He felt he ought not to say too much of his "paradise" in case members might get depressed. He hoped to be able to retain his membership interest in the A.I.M.O.

He introduced his successor, Dr. R. L. Ferguson. Dr. Billington reported that the Birmingham Group had offered to hold the A.I.M.O. provincial meeting in Birmingham in the summer of 1950. This offer had been gratefully accepted by the A.I.M.O. Council and the dates June 5-9 suggested. The main considerations were that the meetings should not clash with the B.M.A. Annual Meeting and that accommodation should be available.

Dr. Downs pleaded for more informality in Group meetings, and more chance to meet and get to know other members. He suggested an informal dinner, and the Hon. Secretary was asked to explore this possibility. Dr. Stewart agreed and suggested that members should visit each other more in their factories. It was also suggested that one experimental meeting at 5.30 p.m. or 6.0 p.m. should take place. It was recalled that the Group met during the afternoons during the war years, but moved to 8.0 p.m. so that both full-time and part-time members could attend.

Drs. Marr and Billington reported on a letter that had been received from Miss M. Preece, S.R.N., Hon Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing Industrial Nursing Discussion Group for Birmingham, suggesting that the A.I.M.O. meet the Nursing Group for discussion on matters of common interest, especially in view of the major issues ahead of both professions. The meeting agreed to an informal discussion.

Dr. Billington was elected a member of the B.M.A. Occupational Health Committee as a representative of the A.I.M.O. Dr. Donald Stewart, Dr. Billington, and Dr. Wand were elected members of the Industrial Health Services Committee set up by the B.M.A. to prepare evidence for the Dale Committee.

Dr. W. J. Lloyd and Dr. Neil Marr continued to act as lecturers in occupational health to the University of Birmingham. Very useful field work in selected factories was again carried out for fifth year students.

On November 9, 1948, Mr. Colin Johnston spoke on the work that he had done in his three years in the otological clinics held in Birmingham factories. Invitations had been sent to otologists, and Mr. A. J. Moffett and Mr. N. L. Crabtree attended, the latter with two registrars. Industrial nurses working in factories where these clinics were held were also invited, and all sections of the audience united in thanking Mr. Johnston for all his thorough work in running the clinics and setting up such an effective diagnostic and treatment service. All persons who had worked with him were agreed that Mr. Johnston's personal care and thought for both nurses and patients was of the greatest possible benefit to industrial morale. The opportunity was taken to send good wishes to Mr. Johnston in his new work at Swindon.

On February 15, 1949, Mr. W. E. Awde spoke on "The Aims and Activities of the Council of Industrial Design". Designers and others from our factories were present and all present expressed their appreciation of a most stimulating talk and discussion. It is hoped to make use of the Educational Section of the Council's work.

On March 19, 1949, a half-day conference (organized by the Royal College of Nursing and Dr. Billington) for industrial nurses was held at G.E.C. Ltd., Witton, and medical officers were invited. Several members attended and heard Dr. Cruickshank speak on "Industrial Dermatitis" and other talks on the prevention and treatment of electrical accidents and burns and scalds.

On May 31, 1949, a visit was paid to the Corporation Salvage Department, Montague Street, where the party was shown round by Mr. W. Weaver, the chief chemist.

On July 8, 1949, Mr. W. Sayle-Creer visited the Group and showed his colour film on "Some Foot Faults Related to Form and Function". This was an "explanation of the connexion between some foot troubles and certain anatomical and physiological abnormalities". Mr. Sayle-Creer delivered a commentary on the film, which was a model of the good teaching film, and answered many questions from the large audience which included many industrial nurses, physiotherapists, and chiropodists. It was suggested afterwards that a similar joint meeting might be held next year to see some similar films made by Mr. Sayle-Creer.

On July 15, 1949, through the good offices of Dr. Donald Stewart and the management, a visit was paid to Triplex Safety Glass Co., Ltd., Kings Norton. After a carefully conducted tour of this interesting modern factory, there was an informative discussion on industrial health problems with the Director, Mr. A. Cochrane, who entertained the members to tea.

On July 19, 1949, the Group was invited by the Accident Hospital to see a new colour film on "Industrial First Aid" prepared by Dr. R. A. Trevethick, who gave a commentary. This film, made in the Medical Department of Messrs. T. J. Smith and Nephew Ltd., is available for all who wish to use it in teaching.