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# Historians of Anaesthesia Organized (Anesthesia History Association, The History of Anaesthesia Society and Sections of Anaesthesia History)

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## Abstract

The first steps leading to formation of History of Anaesthesia Society are described. The first International Symposium on the History of Anaesthesia (ISHA) in Rotterdam 1982 was a catalyzing event. During next 20 years series of successful meetings throughout the world took place in London, Atlanta, Hamburg and Santiago de Compostela. Two bigger societies for study of anaesthetic history – The Anesthesia History Association (AHA) in U. S. and international The History of Anaesthesia Society (HAS) in UK traced their history to 1st ISHA meeting. Several examples of national societies of anaesthesia historians are mentioned and the need for international co-ordination is underlined.

**Key words:** International Society of the History of Anaesthesia, Anesthesia History Association, History of Anaesthesia Society

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## Prelude

In the realm of knowledge past, present and future blend, there often being no sharp border between knowledge acquired in the past, presently preached beliefs, or theories, hopefully becoming facts some day. History, the re-update of human experience, connects past to the future and should serve as a reliable sieve of things really new and worth trying from those of repetition. History, after the passage of time, which is the best of all judges, reminds us to endow things we live on with due admiration which in turn enriches experience of our own existence. Rules of history apply to anaesthesia and our every day practice or developments are desperately naive when not firmly anchored in facts of the past. Professional or amateur historians of anaesthesia therefore want to put things in right perspective.

## Introduction

Interest in the history of anaesthesia is nearly as old as the fight against insult of pain. The early history of contemporary anaesthesia was fights over priority of the discovery with nearly all combatants ending in remarkably tragic circumstances [1]. However, the early textbook of anaesthesia by Lyman, New York, 1881, already contains an introductory chapter on the history of the specialty [2]. When in 1946, the centenary of successful Morton's demonstration of ether anaesthesia was celebrated; a special issue of "The Journal of the History of Medicine" was dedicated in whole to findings of the studies of anaesthetic history [3]. Further first class scholarly work was performed by Th. E. Keys who published the classic "The history of surgical anesthesia" [4] and by B. Duncum with another classic "Development of Inhalational

Anaesthesia" [5]. Historical work was published in anaesthesia but it is doubtful whether the sense of history penetrated minds and hearts of ever increasing number of professional anaesthetists, immediately following the World War II (1939–1945).

According to W. W. Mushin [6], the great wars may be seen as a stimulant for professional development, technology and affirmation of organized anaesthesia. Numbers of anaesthesiologists grew sky-high especially after the World War II in order to satisfy needs of rapidly developing and, above all, changing medicine. It comes as no surprise that in the eighties interest in the history of the specialty started to grow and became a well-established and recognized field within academic anaesthesia. Towards the end of the nineties one could say that the history of anaesthesia has become fashionable. Where did this recent wave of interest originate from?

## A catalyzing event: May 5–8, 1982, Rotterdam

The first International Symposium on the History of Anaesthesia (1<sup>st</sup> ISHA) attracted an unexpectedly great number of prominent anaesthesiologists from all continents. Background to this unique event, which was dubbed "the happiest meeting ever", is well documented and was described during the 4<sup>th</sup> ISHA at Hamburg, April 1997 [7]. Documentation pertaining to this chapter of recent anaesthesiological history has been preserved in Anaesthesia Archives at Rotterdam. Immediate impressions of the Rotterdam anaesthesia history meeting were written, among others by A. R. Hunter in an editorial of the British Journal of Anaesthesia [8] and by G. Wilson who called it "a significant step in the history of anaesthesia" [9].

The Rotterdam meeting catalyzed several processes. The interaction of enthusiasm and knowledge resulted in a series of vigorous ISHAs: London 1987, Atlanta 1992, Hamburg 1997 and Santiago de Compostela 2001. Besides, two bigger societies for the study of anaesthetic history trace their origins back to the 1<sup>st</sup> ISHA, namely "The Anesthesia History Association" (AHA) and "The History of Anaesthesia Society" (HAS). Moreover, in the wake of the Rotterdam meeting, several sections on the history of anaesthesia were formed within national societies of anaesthesiologists.

### **An early attempt to form an International Society of the History of Anaesthesia**

Judging from the enthusiastic support for the 1<sup>st</sup> ISHA at Rotterdam, it seemed opportune and timely to discuss formation of a society dedicated to the study of the history of anaesthesia. Such a proposal was not printed in "Abstracts" of the May 5–8, 1982 meeting [10]. Already during the meeting, according to Selma Calmes it was at the banquet, dr. Mainzer said, "we ought to organize". The next day, a very short meeting was arranged by J. Ruprecht for Americans to discuss some form of organization. Among those present were S. Calmes, R. Calverley, J. Mainzer, B. Bamforth and the author. No notes were taken.

During the farewell coffee at the airport of Rotterdam, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1982, dr. J. A. Lee and J. Ruprecht decided to found the Society of Anaesthetic History. They intended to distribute a leaflet at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Congress in London (September, 1982). Those who were interested in the idea were to get in touch with them [11]. This news was sent to dr. R. Calverley of San Diego on 24 June 1982. Letters with request to work on an anaesthesia history society were sent to several Americans and J. Mainzer answered that R. Calverley would be the best person to help with the "Foundation for the History of Anaesthesia", but many others would like to contribute [12].

An announcement was written and distributed at the 6<sup>th</sup> European Congress, London, September 1982.

In the meanwhile, S. Calmes wrote to American anaesthesiologists interested in the history of anaesthesia with the intent to hold a meeting at the October 1982 ASA meeting at Las Vegas. The aim was to get organized. Acclaiming to this activity I wrote to several colleagues with the hope of convincing them to form one anaesthesia history society. In a letter to dr. Mainzer [13], reporting about developments at London, I wrote: "several colleagues expressed their view that it would be necessary to found (a worldwide) Association of the History of Anaesthesia. Although the interest in history is increasing, it would be prudent to gather all interested in one organization. After all, ethical, cultural and scientific implications of historical studies are universal; their importance is elevated above strictly local conditions; histo-

ry gathers individual achievements for universal use".

A similar letter was sent to dr. R. Maltby of Calgary, mentioning that the next history of anaesthesia meeting should be held in about four years [14].

Response to the promotion of an anaesthesia history society was good. Dr. R. S. Atkinson of Southend-on-Sea wrote: "as regards the formation of a society, I wonder if you have had many enquiries? Please add my name to the list" [15]. Discussion was lively as can be deduced from dr. D. Soban's letter from Ljubljana: "I agree with those who do not want a future society of the history of anaesthesia to be only a section of the British anaesthesia. This is something for the World Market" [16]. Answering dr. I. McLellan's letter, I wrote: "Things are running their own course and, surprisingly, many anaesthetists from most different countries have written and indicated the wish to become a member of the Society for the History of Anaesthesia" [17].

Dr. J. A. Lee, answering my letter of October 28, 1982, with a report of the Las Vegas preliminary meeting, resulting in the "Anesthesia History Association", and of my visit to professor Th. E. Keys, wrote: "Your news of the formation of a society for the study of the history of anaesthesia is encouraging. I look forward with pleasure to hearing how the scheme progresses" [18]. Interest in a society of anaesthetic history spread as far afield as it was conceivable in those days when no place was more remote than Tashkent in Central Asia. From there professor A. S. Zarzar wrote a letter of intent to become a member [19]. In America note was taken of my Las Vegas plea to form a world association for the history of anaesthesia [20], but little more happened in this respect. By that time, choice had been made that North America would form its own anaesthesia history group.

For some time, however, letters with inquiry about an international society continued to arrive. The South-African anaesthesia historian N. P. Parbhoo [21] was a typical representative of worldwide-scattered anaesthetists who wished one society of history of anaesthesia. Much later, already in 1984, professor J. L. Couper inquired about such a society. The situation was that "a (world) association of history of anaesthesia be formed in London in 1987 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on the History of Anaesthesia" [22].

Then there was silence about one international group dedicated to the study of anaesthesia history. In contrast, interest in anaesthesia history continued to grow resulting in two major and active societies and regular international symposia. It will be seen that the idea to join all anaesthesia historians in one group has not died. During the 10<sup>th</sup> world congress of anaesthesiologists at the Hague (1992) and during the 4<sup>th</sup> ISHA in Hamburg (1997) discussions took place whether an international federation is needed to efficiently bring together all anaesthesia historians.

## Anesthesia History Association (AHA): early history

That some American delegates to the 1st ISHA got together in Rotterdam (on 7 May 1982) to discuss how to organize is mentioned above. Efficiently, and Americans can do so, they continued to work on the idea and on 25 October 1982, the organizational meeting took place during the ASA meeting at Las Vegas. Some of the work, mainly performed by S. Calmes and R. Calverley will be mentioned below.

S. Calmes sent a questionnaire in July 1982 to those Americans and Canadians who had attended the Rotterdam meeting, to the Wood-Library Board of Trustees and some ASA members. From 79 mailed questionnaires 51 were returned. Majority was inclined to organize, to include all North America but not international [23]. These figures played prominently during the 25 October 1982, Las Vegas meeting and J. Ruprecht, the only non-American participant, could do but little to advocate successfully the idea for one international society.

The organizational meeting at Las Vegas led to several decisions:

1. Organize within North America and become international later,
2. Organization committee to write bylaws of the organization,
3. Temporary name of the organization. The Anesthesia History Association (AHA),
4. R. Calverley and S. Calmes to be co-chairmen.

There were several proposals for the name of the organization. "History of Anesthesia Club" sounded too boyish, "Anesthesia History Study Group" too dry. Dr. J. Ruprecht said that "The History of Anaesthesia Society" would be the worldwide one and that the name had been promoted as such during the 6<sup>th</sup> European congress and through correspondence. The temporary name AHA, officially with a definite article was there and was to stay. The main objection towards becoming an international society was fear of too diffuse a group and increased mailing costs.

It was decided in Las Vegas that official inauguration of the AHA would be a year later. During the Atlanta 1983 ASA-meeting "Anesthesiology News" [24] announced to wider public that the second AHA-meeting would be held at the Atlanta Hilton, October 9, 1983. Meeting consisted of scientific and social part. Organizing committee and chair were: S. Calmes, R. Calverley, J. Mainzer, E. Frost, M. Brommle, Dunbar and Petty. First honorary member of the AHA was made during the inaugural meeting: the famed historian of anaesthesia, Th. E. Keys.

By 1984, the AHA kept growing rapidly, numbering about 200 members. The association produced regularly the "AHA Newsletter" and remained independent of other professional groups. S. Calmes edited Newsletter for several years.

**Table 1.** Membership growth of the AHA ((information from the AHA directories)

Year	Members
1982	70
1983	175
1984	200
1989	300
1992	450

A useful summary of the evolution of the AHA was printed in the AHA directory 1984 [25]. Since the early days the scientific production of the AHA had grown slowly but steadily. In 1993 the first spring scientific meeting was held in addition to the traditional dinner during early ASA meetings. There is no doubt that the greatest achievement of the AHA has been the successful and memorable 3<sup>rd</sup> ISHA, Atlanta, March 27–31, 1992. This great success was crowned by dr. B. R. Fink's ably and expediently edited proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ISHA [26]. AHA holds 1 vote in the international venue committee for ISHA. In this way AHA members influence the venue choice of the most important event in the circles of anaesthetic history.

## The History of Anaesthesia Society (HAS)

British anaesthetists, like their American colleagues, returned from the 1<sup>st</sup> ISHA at Rotterdam with the sense of need to organize those interested in the history of the specialty. They followed the early attempts from Rotterdam, to form an international society, with interest. During the 6<sup>th</sup> European congress, London, September 1982, more discussion took place. Drs. L. McLellan and J. Horton were particularly energetic towards finding support from the Association to stimulate interest in the history of anaesthesia. It was not always clear whether one worked along one or two lines: towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> ISHA or towards forming of a society.

Being the only European who had attended the 1<sup>st</sup> organization meeting of the AHA at Las Vegas, dr. J. Ruprecht of Rotterdam reported afterwards about this event to several colleagues in the United Kingdom. In a letter to dr. I. McLellan [27] he wrote that the Wood-Library Museum gave initial support to the AHA and that the AHA was to remain limited to the North America. It was mentioned that they might go international later. The main concern from Rotterdam was that study of anaesthesia might become patchy and uncoordinated, reflecting too much local events and not providing a universal picture.

In the following period the British worked at the base, promoting interest in anaesthetic history within the Association and decided in 1983 to organize the 2<sup>nd</sup> ISHA (London, 1987). Members of the organizing committee also worked towards "a society for the study of the history of anaesthesia". The need for such a society may never have been very urgent in UK because anaesthesia history could conveniently, though occasionally be placed on programmes of the history of medicine within the Royal Society of Medicine.

### Exploratory meeting at Leicester, 1985, leading to HAS

During the annual scientific meeting of the association, at Leicester, on 12 September 1985, dr. T. B. Boulton successfully gathered anaesthetists interested in the history of anaesthesia. Time was limited and it must have been thanks to dr. Boulton's chairing dexterity to get society started. A "pink paper" had been distributed to delegates of the annual meeting upon arrival, with information about the proposed "Society for the Study of the History of Anaesthesia". A steering committee was elected charged with organizing the first annual general meeting and symposium, to be held at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading, on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June 1986. Members of the steering committee were: A. M. Barr, I. McLellan, A. Padfield, J. A. W. Wildsmith, D. J. Wilkinson and T. B. Boulton as chairman. Dr. J. A. Lee was elected the first president of the society [28].

The exploratory meeting gave much thought to the renowned anaesthesia historian, W. D. A. Smith who wondered about who may study the history and hoped no passive members would be accepted. He thought that the proposed society was a delicate plant [29]. In his response [30] dr. Boulton explained the whole philosophy leading towards a society for the study of anaesthesia history. He explained that in such a society there would be a range of people from listening amateurs to near professionals. Anyone interested in the subject to be eligible to join. The society should not be limited to medically qualified individuals. Interest and guarantee of respectability was all that was required.

Concerning the name for the society, dr. Boulton foresaw proposals to be submitted to the inaugural annual general meeting (June 7, 1986) to be discussed and voted upon. Personally, he was against the use of a national title as the society would be the first one to the east of the Atlantic. By this attitude, the HAS is the only one enjoying regular global membership and has profited from the non-British input. It fits well into the British tradition of travel-clubs, taking members of a society to destinations abroad. The first honorary memberships of the society were discussed in the early 1986 [31].

Nearly three years after the AHA Las Vegas meeting, the inaugural general and academic meeting was definitely announced for June 7 to be held at Reading [32]. Dr. T. B. Boulton was the host organizer and chaired the afternoon session. The president dr. J. A. Lee welcomed the delegates and chaired the morning session. The historical papers were read and there was exhibit of apparatus and of books. There were about 100 delegates, most of them fairly senior [33]. The next meeting was planned for London, February 8, 1987. The name "the History of Anaesthesia Society" was adopted and dr. Boulton became Vice-president.

One of the first acts of the inaugural general meeting of the HAS has been to elect its first three hon-

orary members: Sir Robert Macintosh, dr. Barbara Duncum and professor Thomas E. Keys.

It is of importance to note that the HAS was not designed as a British society. Its membership is open to all those, from everywhere, who are interested in the history of anaesthesia [30]. However, even before the definite name the History of Anaesthesia Society (HAS) was adopted in Reading, misnomers were used. On behalf of the Wood Library-Museum, E. V. Miller congratulated "the British Society for the Study of the History of Anaesthesia" [34]. The president of the AHA also used a misnomer when congratulations from dr. M. Albin went to dr. J. A. Lee and the new society [35]. Regrettably, the misnomer has been regularly repeated, its early publication dating back to R. Calverley's report in AHA -Newsletter [36]. It is true that most HAS members are British but the society has always prided itself by being the only really international one enjoying active membership from all parts of the world. The HAS held in 1991 a scientific meeting in Rotterdam.

**Table 2.** Membership growth of the HAS: (data are from HAS-membership lists)

Year	Number
1985	75
1986	179
1987	295
1990	335
1991	384
1996	450

Achievements of the HAS are many. Two yearly scientific meetings followed by a regular flow of published HAS-proceedings and occasional joint meetings within the RSM are some of them. The HAS co-sponsored the spectacular 2<sup>nd</sup> ISHA (London, 1987) and was instrumental in re-printing B. Duncum's classic on the inhalational anaesthesia. Recently, selected papers from HAS-proceedings were edited and published [37]. The HAS has one vote in the ISHA-venue committee.

The foregoing story about the events leading to the HAS is based on rather scant readily available documents. Another effort will be required to collect written facts and personal recollections in regard to diversity of opinion which obviously existed before the HAS took the form in now has.

### Anaesthesia historians organized at national level

Dr. Marian Kus of Krakow organized a symposium on the history of anaesthesia at Krakow on February 21, 1968. At this meeting a historical section of the Polish society was formed. The Czech society now also has a section on anaesthetic history. A similar group reportedly exists also in Italy and Hungary. One is active in Spain. Information about Japan is lacking. The German society knows its Arbeitskreis Geschichte der Anaesthesie but the most productive



national section of anaesthesia history is within the Australian Society of Anaesthetists. All the sections are rather loose groups; no membership figures are available.

It may be expected that more national sections of anaesthesia history will be formed. Hopefully, this may contribute favourably to greater awareness of the professional history among practising anaesthetists.

### Need for international coordination of anaesthesia historians

From the days before formation of the two big organizations of anaesthesia history (AHA and HAS) survives a way of thinking that one organization would be preferable. In addition, several national groups have come to being, some of doubtful power to survive. There is thus need for coordination, especially in regard to the choice of the ISHA venue and on occasions like important anniversaries of anaesthetic events.

The early discussion about these matters took place during the Hague 1992 – 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Anaesthesiologists. Agreement was reached about the ISHA 1997 venue. The idea of an "international federation of anaesthesia history" was tabled as premature [38]. At Hamburg, April 1997, the discussion got no further. However, ISHA-venue committee has been approved and will oversee and secure the future of this meeting. It consists of one representative from each previous ISHA, one representative of HAS and AHA each, presided by an independent chairman. It is not clear which role the national groups can play in the ISHA-venue committee. With regard to major projects related to history of anaesthesia, an international federation might be useful.

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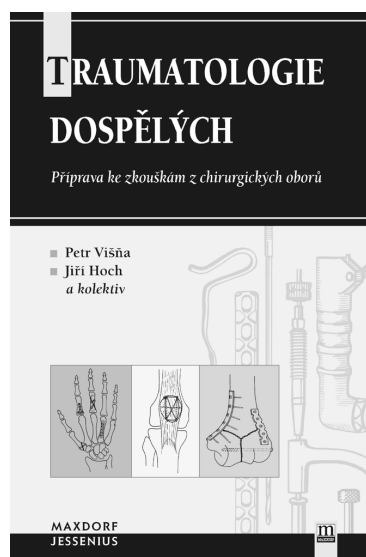
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## TRAUMATOLOGIE DOSPĚLÝCH

*Petr Višňa, Jiří Hoch a kolektiv*

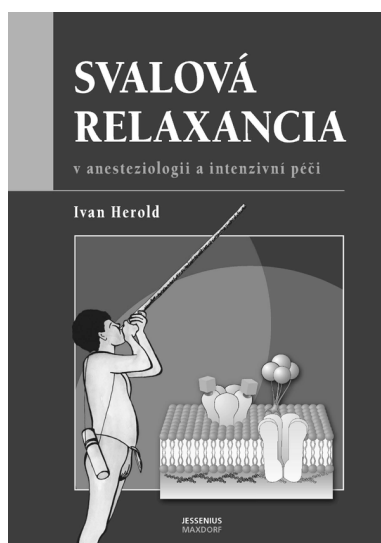
Traumatologie jako lékařský obor prochází v posledních letech dynamickým rozvojem. Narůstající počet dopravních a sportovních úrazů vede k rozvoji nových postupů a léčebných metod. Cílem publikace je shrnout současné moderní trendy v traumatologii dospělých. Kniha obsahuje kapitoly z chirurgie-traumatologie, z neurochirurgie a kapitoly o poraněních stavech. Celkem je problematika členěna do 24 kapitol, které odpovídají anatomickému uspořádání těla. Jednotlivé kapitoly dodržují didaktické členění na anatomii, etiologii, klasifikaci, symptomy, diagnostiku, terapii, rehabilitaci a prognózu.

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## SVALOVÁ RELAXANCIA

**v anesteziologii a intenzivní péči**

*Ivan Herold*

Kniha je určena pro lékaře používající myorelaxancia v každodenní praxi. Podává přehled současných poznatků o použití myorelaxancií v rutinní praxi anesteziologů a lékařů pracujících na JIP. Zahrnuje fyziologii nervosvalového přenosu a možnosti jeho ovlivnění, se zvláštním důrazem na acetylcholinový receptor. Je podán přehled farmakologie depolarizujících a nedepolarizujících myorelaxancií a jejich indikací v anesteziologii a intenzivní péči. Zvláště jsou uvedena specifika použití v dětské praxi a v intenzivní péči. Samostatná kapitola je věnována problematice monitorování nervosvalového přenosu a antagonistů blokád.

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