

## THE ISL: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

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### PAST

In early 1960, burgeoning advances in lymphatic research, particularly the growing importance of lymphography, stimulated the need for a meeting of lymphologists worldwide to discuss ongoing studies and comparison of results. Recognizing this necessity, A. Rüttiman motivated many colleagues to congregate in Zurich in 1966. The group included enthusiastic and skilled scientists from a variety of medical disciplines in a number of countries. The par-

ticipants were distinguished celebrities who had for a long time observed, discovered, searched, recognized, and brought their message and knowledge to young trainees as well as to experienced colleagues and investigators. What a challenge—this lymphatic system that encompasses the whole body! The event was historical, and the results achieved were beyond expectation. It thus became obvious that a society was required to coordinate the scattered activities worldwide—the International Society of Lymphology (ISL) was born!



Fig. 1. Photograph of the founders of the ISL (Zurich, 1966). The author is in the foreground on the extreme right.

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A. Rüttiman was the driving force. The pioneers who *founded* the Society were: A. Baert, A. Belan, J.R. Casley-Smith, C. Chavez, J. Collette, A.E. Dumont, A. Engeset, H. Fischer, M. Földi, W.A. Fuchs, W. Gerteis, S. Godart, J.A. Gruwez, F. Heinzl, O. Ishida, J. Kinmonth, P.R. Koehler, S. Kubik, P. Malek, H. Mislin, L. Popovic, B. Shaffer, S.A. Threefoot, M. Schamaun, B. Tjernberg, M. Viamonte, M. Wiljasalo, W. Wirth (see Fig. 1).

The majority of participants at the Symposium joined the new Society. The brilliant achievement required great courage and hard work, but the efforts were eminently rewarding.

The aims of the ISL were far-reaching. According to its Constitution, the ISL was to:

- further and assist in the activities which propose to advance and disseminate knowledge in the field of lymphology and allied subjects;
- encourage and assist in experimental lymphology and clinical research;
- establish and promote relations between basic researchers and clinicians;
- foster personal contacts and exchange of ideas between interested participants.

After the Zurich Symposium in 1966, regular biennial Congresses were organized:

Miami, Fla., USA,	'68	M. Viamonte
Brussels Belgium,	'70	J.A. Gruwez
Tucson, Ariz., USA,	'73	M.H. & C.L. Witte/P.R. Koehler
Buenos Aires, Argentina and		C.M. Grandval
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,	'75	R.C. Mayall
Prague, Czech.,	'77	A. Belan/P. Malek
Florence, Italy,	'79	E. Cariati
Montreal, Canada,	'81	R. Belanger/J. Davidson
Tel Aviv, Israel,	'83	Z. Braf
Adelaide, Australia,	'85	J.R. Casley-Smith

The following Congress Proceedings were published:

*Progress in Lymphology*, 1st Congress, A. Rüttiman et al (Eds.), 1967

*Progress in Lymphology II*, 2nd Congress, M. Viamonte et al (Eds.), 1969

*Progress in Lymphology*, 4th & 5th Congresses, R.C. Mayall, M.H. Witte (Eds.), 1977

*Lymphology*, 6th Congress, P. Malek, V. Bartos, et al (Eds.), 1979

*Progress in Lymphology*, 7th Congress, H. Weissleder, V. Bartos, et al (Eds.), 1981

*Advances in Lymphology*, 8th Congress, V. Bartos, J.W. Davidson (Eds.), 1982

*Progress in Lymphology*, 9th Congress, L. Heim (Ed.), 1983

*Progress in Lymphology X*, 10th Congress, J.R. Casley-Smith, N.B. Piller (Eds.), 1985

Simultaneously, General Assemblies and Board meetings were held and new officers elected. The following members have served as President: A. Rüttiman, M. Viamonte, J. Gruwez, P.R. Koehler, L. Clodius, A.E. Dumont, J.R. Casley-Smith, M.H. Witte.

A Rüttiman acted as first Secretary-General; consequently, the headquarters were located in Zurich.

In 1973, when H. Weissleder took over as Secretary-General, the Central Office moved to Weisbaden and later on to Freiburg, Germany. A new era began. H. Weissleder was a dedicated Secretary who "managed the sometimes complicated affairs of the Society with an unusual blend of tact and understanding. Apart from his management skills, his counsel and guidance have been pivotal factors." (A.E. Dumont) He initiated the *Bulletin*, a biannual newsletter offering concise information on trends, developments, activities, and Society business. It was an ingratiating, comprehensive pamphlet which covered a wide field of interests; a truly remarkable accomplishment! In 1981, M. Földi became Secretary-General. For the third time the Central Office moved to other premises, but this time at least remained in the same city.

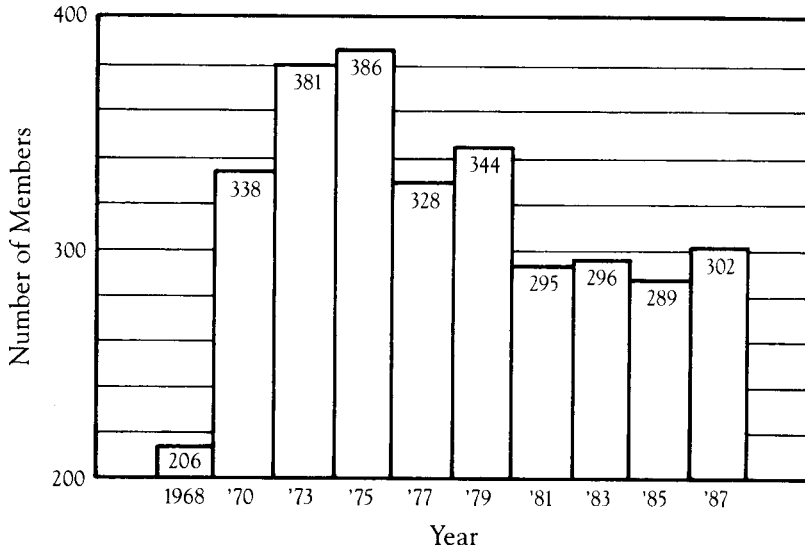


Fig. 2. Number of ISL members worldwide (1968-1987).

## PRESENT

Many changes have occurred since Zurich. Whereas the interest in lymphography has waned with development of newer imaging techniques like computed tomography, wider concern has shifted toward basic research. As a discipline, lymphology continues to encompass a wide range of activities and specific topics involving nearly every aspect of clinical medicine. Along with a shift in scientific ambitions and intentions, there has been a growing international response, and investigators throughout the world have been willing to try to overcome great distances and language barriers. Lymphology societies and congresses are proliferating with a trend to formation of more national and regional societies and "working groups." Particularly notable is the tremendous development of lymphology in Japan with a national society of 670 members.

Currently the following groups are affiliated or linked with the ISL:

Japanese Society of Lymphology  
 North American Society of Lymphology  
 Association Française de Lymphologie  
 Gesellschaft Deutschsprachiger Lymphologen

Groupement Européen de Lymphology  
 Club de Linfologia, Spain  
 Sociedad de Linfologia Argentina  
 Latin American Chapter of Lymphology

## FUTURE

The ISL must continue to be on the forefront of international knowledge and must pursue and support research and investigators dedicated to elucidating the inner workings of lymphatics, lymph nodes, lymph fluid, lymphocytes, and its disease counterparts. In this regard it should enhance activities and encourage working local and national groups. While the ISL must be faithful to its sound traditions, it must also adapt policies to changing circumstances. Its mouthpiece is still the biennial international congresses and publications such as *Lymphology* and the Congress Proceedings. Each Congress is a milestone in the development and history of the Society and remains vitally important. These meetings "enhance personal contacts between members, stimulate attendants for membership, promote the exchange of ideas and provide the opportunity for discussing the important work of the various agencies and committees, which guarantee the con-

tinuity, function, and further development of our organization." (J.A. Gruwez)

Other worthwhile elements are the local chapters and national societies, with interim meetings and official reports of regional activities during International Congresses. The journal *Lymphology* should serve as their official organ.

The ISL should continue to be a global community of lymphologic scholars, a

worldwide circle of colleagues and friends with common interests. It can only be as good as its members and therefore depends on active collaboration and interplay of ideas. Through the humanitarian nature of science, the ISL should stimulate its members to act as ambassadors and to spread the spirit of cooperation and coexistence—a never-ending, gratifying, and most noble mission.