

*LYMPHSPARATION***A RETURN AND RESONANCE OF TWO
LYMPHOLOGISTS AT OXFORD IN 2022****T. Ryan**

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ABSTRACT:

An “incurable” lymphologist reflects on his life, unanswered questions, patients who became friends, and lessons learned during a brief encounter with a lymphatic soul-mate.

Keywords: lymphology, ignorance, elastin, endothelium

It was a surprise and a pleasure to find you [Dr. Marlys Witte] had been invited to Oxford last week as a recognized authority on the topic of ignorance. It gave me a chance to introduce you to the home of Sir William Osler of which I am Curator and for us to discuss our common interest of areas of ignorance in the field of lymphology.

When discussing the therapeutic power of Osler, which some believe is based on friendship, I recalled recent advances in the study of talk between the brain's cortex and the amygdala. I expressed my fascination with how stimuli such as toys, pets, spirits, ancestors, and landscape can result in the brain releasing endorphins, and many hormones (1-3). The contemporary finding that the brain has a lymphatic system raises the question whether the lymphatic and not just its blood supply can act as a conduit for such hormones.

While speaking of conduits, you remembered that I have written about the elastin



Fig. Left to right: Marlys Witte, Terence Ryan and Grace Wagner. Dining after a visit to the home of Sir William Osler, Regius Professor of Medicine.

fiber coated with vitronectin, decay accelerating factor and plasminogen activator inhibitor, as a guide rail in the skin. I wrote with De Berker (4) about other's descriptions of elastin's role in the mesentery or as a conduit for lipid or the preferred route along which a melanocyte can travel. I have been encouraged by those who believe that in the lymph node elastin acts as a conduit important for its immune function (5,6). I note not so much ignorance but blindness to the significance of the destruction of elastin especially by neutrophil elastases to skin function in lymphedema.

We also returned to a previously discussed topic when endothelium expressing blood vascular identity decides to adopt lymphatic identity to play a role in bulk lymphatic

transport of fluid as well as the lymphocyte or dendritic cells. We spoke of high endothelium (6), the arachnoid villi (7), and the canal of Schlemm (8). Amazing that our concern for these dates back more than fifty years and still there is ignorance.

I am pleased that your emphasis on ignorance as opposed to knowledge has an audience here in Oxford.

***CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND
DISCLOSURE***

The author declares no competing financial interests exist.

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