

Paper

Frank Pantridge's Legacy: A Symposium

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The Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, The Queen's University of Belfast, held a two day international conference from 10-12th June 2009, in Frank Pantridge's honour. It began with a review of the Department's cardiovascular disease research programme which was initiated when Frank Pantridge established Mobile Coronary Care in Belfast in 1966. It was Frank Pantridge's development of the portable defibrillator which had made Mobile Coronary Care feasible. Soon afterwards, a year-long study of all fatal heart attacks in Belfast was mounted by the Department. The study showed that heart attack patients admitted to hospital represented "...the survivors of a storm which has already taken its main toll."¹ The study was repeated in the early 1980s, and simultaneously, the Omagh / Ballymena Study was conducted which compared heart attack survival in two areas of the Province, only one of which was provided with Mobile Coronary Care². This Department's interest in community studies of cardiovascular disease made it a natural centre for the WHO MONICA Project which began in Belfast in 1983³. From this collaboration numerous other studies evolved, focusing on genetics, nutrition, alcohol and antioxidants, through, most notably, the ECTIM and PRIME Studies⁴, and more recently, the MORGAM Project⁵.

The latter part of Thursday 11th June was devoted to Frank Pantridge's memory. Frank was one of the 'Faces of Queen's' in the event to mark the Millennium. Queen's bestowed an honorary degree on him in 2001 and this was highlighted in the '2008' document 'Celebrating 100 Years as a Leading University.' The University did not possess a portrait of one of its most illustrious graduates who has become known as 'The Father of Emergency Medicine,' so in December 2008 a Committee, chaired by Professor John Morison, was established in the University to raise money, in conjunction with the Pantridge Trust, for commissioning an oil painting of Frank to hang in The Great Hall. The portrait, by the local artist Martin Wedge (figure 1), was unveiled by Jack Kyle, whose mother was treated by Frank. The portrait was accepted on behalf of the University by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Peter Gregson⁶. This was followed by Memorial Lectures: Professor Richard Crampton of Charlottesville, Virginia, USA, who was the first to adopt the 'Pantridge Plan' in the USA, reviewed Frank's legacy from a North American perspective⁷; and Professor Desmond Julian of London, who had undertaken a WHO consultancy with Frank in the early 1970s, reviewed it from a European one⁸. The Lectures were chaired by Professor David Wood of Imperial College, London. These were followed by a Banquet held in Frank Pantridge's honour in The Great Hall.

REFERENCES

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Fig 1. Martin Wedge: Portrait of Professor J Frank Pantridge, MC, CBE, MD, FRCP, FACC (1916-2004). Oil on canvas, 2009, The Queens University of Belfast.

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