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This month we are celebrating 60 years of the National Health Service (NHS). It was at Trafford General Hospital, then called Park Hospital, in Greater Manchester, where the NHS was born. Aneurin Bevan, Secretary of State for Health, inaugurated the NHS by symbolically receiving its keys on 5 July 1948.

Last time I put out a plea for pictures of your laboratory, warts and all. Paddy Carrington rose magnificently to the challenge by sending in what has become this issue's cover. By a strange coincidence it shows the burnt-out wreck of the pathology lab at the self-same Trafford General Hospital. This disaster happened many years later of course – in 1993. Paddy's tale (page 193) about the fire and how they got their blood transfusion service back on track is an enjoyable case study in maintaining service continuity when the chips are really, really down. The microbiology lab was destroyed too, but that is another story.

Much later, in 2001, I got a job as consultant microbiologist there. To my surprise I found, even then, some documents in my filing cabinet reeking of smoke – rescued from the charred remains eight years before. In the 45th year of the NHS Trafford got a brand new pathology laboratory – 15 years on I wonder what would happen now.

Back to the present: National Pathology Week preparations are moving apace. Suzy Lishman gives us an update on page 195. In it, she gives a mini-review of the new movie *Pathology*. Not a documentary about the likes of us but a crime/horror/thriller. I tried to go and see it, but after what seemed like a week in the cinema it disappeared from view, and I didn't manage to see it. Not quite straight to DVD but the DVD is coming out soon! This got me thinking. How is pathology portrayed in the movies and on TV? About 99% of the time it is the forensic autopsy that gets the airing. TV series like *Crime Scene Investigation*, *NCIS*, *Bones* and many others portray histopathologists hard at work solving crime. I guess this is the public's perception of what a pathologist is – they can hardly be blamed for thinking that given this level of media coverage. Hopefully National Pathology Week will improve things.

But what about the rest of us? Is a microbiologist or a haematologist or a virologist or chemical pathologist or a clinical geneticist or veterinary pathologist ever the star? Or even in the film at all? To be fair, plenty of diseases are well represented. On www.spout.com I found that 193 movies involved

some sort of infectious plague. This includes such classics as *Panic in the Streets* (1950), a terrific *film noir*, and *Outbreak* (1995). Films concerning characters with leukaemia number 47 and there are 296 films with cancer in the storyline! As to the professions rather than the diseases I found one microbiologist in a starring role: Paul Muni won the Best Actor Oscar in 1936 for his portrayal of the title character in *The Story of Louis Pasteur*. But I couldn't find another, though, admittedly, Louis Pasteur is a hard act to follow. But I did find, in a disaster movie about killer bees called *The Swarm* (1978), a character called Dr Krim played by Henry Fonda. He was a clinical immunologist!

Now back to medical reality. On page 212 there is a discussion of the need for trainees in microbiology to get genuine on-call experience rather than the ersatz simulated kind – see what you think. Having spent the last 25 years being on call, what sometimes seems like all of the time, I have a somewhat jaundiced view of the whole thing. Speaking of jaundice, on page 196 you can read about sex, drugs and alcohol!

Did you know that College membership gives you discounts? For details of how to get reduced-price pathology books and journals from certain publishers, see page 231. And page 234 has the details of membership discounts for College symposia. Information is also available on the College website, of course, once you've logged in.

Finally I'd like to congratulate the College and the Health Protection Agency on winning a Gold Medal at the Royal Horticultural Society's Chelsea Flower Show in May for their exhibit "Climate change and malaria in the UK". Well done!

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