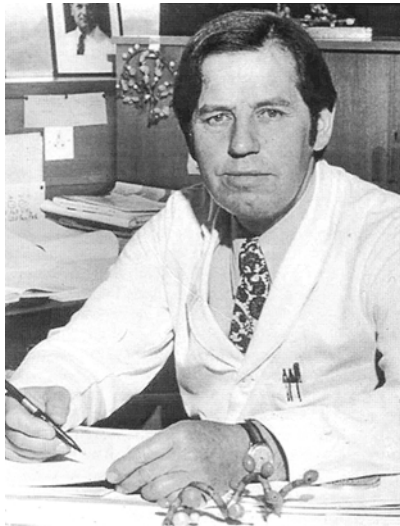


In memoriam of Professor A. G. E. Pearse (1916–2003)

Professor Anthony Guy Everson Pearse passed away at the age of 87 years, in 2003. He was an exceptional histochemist and teacher whose work inspired new thinking and research in microscopically cell biology and the neuroendocrine system.

He is, of course, best known for his book “Histochemistry – theoretical and applied” published in 1953, which has been the “Bible” of aspiring histochemists. The first volume of the fourth edition was published in 1980, the second one in 1985 and the third in 1991.



Tony Pearse was born in Kent on the 9th of August 1916, the son of an army officer. He was educated at Trinity College Cambridge and St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, London.

He was qualified as a pathologist and served in the Royal Navy as a surgeon-lieutenant during the Second World War. He began his scientific career in the Department of Morbid Anatomy at the Hammersmith Hospital which was attached to the Royal Postgraduate Medical School of London, where he stayed until his retirement in 1981.

Inspired by earlier workers, such as Lison, he investigated, tested and improved published methods for demonstrating cell constituents *in situ*, particularly enzymes.

Phosphatases, esterases, proteins, carbohydrates, lipids, nucleic acids were studied in normal tissues compared to those in pathologically or physiologically altered states. He wrote numerous papers with enviable clarity, served as Editor or on the editorial board of many journals and was President of the Royal Microscopical Society from 1972 to 1974.

Apparatuses for cutting sections from the necessary frozen samples were cumbersome and unreliable, so Pearse in collaboration with the excellent workshops on site built a prototype cryostat, later commercialized as the Pearse–Slee cryostat.

He later designed a freeze-dryer for vacuum drying frozen tissue. Freeze dried tissue was essential for methods pertinent to one of Pearse’s most important contributions, the APUD (Amine Precursor Uptake and Decarboxylation) concept, first proposed in 1966.

Pearse noticed many similarities between cells of the nervous system and cells producing peptide hormones and suggested that cells (and tumors) showing APUD properties were all engaged in the production of biogenic amines and/or polypeptide hormones. The hypothesis inspired an enormous amount of work in histology and histopathology by Pearse’s group and very many others.

In Romania, prof. Ioan Radu finished in 1977 his thesis for doctor in medicine with the title “Histochemical aspects of human neuroendocrine diffuse system in ontogenesis and pathology” under the direction of prof. I. Diculescu, from the Faculty of Medicine, Bucharest.

Pearse visited Romania (Bucharest) in 1976 as participant in the International Congress of Histochemistry and Citochemistry where he received Doctor Honoris Causa.

Over the years, in 1992, prof. Ioan Radu obtained a TEMPUS fellowship and worked in the Department of Histochemistry of Royal Postgraduate Medical School from London, under the direction of prof. Julia Polak at the recommendation of prof. Pearse. We all owe him a lot.

Tony Pearse was a stimulating and generous teacher, always open to suggestion and ever ready to provide a hypothesis and explanations with good will and humor.

He was a kind and modest man. In addition to his overwhelming passion for science, Pearse was an enthusiastic gardener, greatly loved by his family (wife and four children). Pearse will be remembered for his major contributions to histochemical research.

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