

SPECIAL SECTION

ARMAUER HANSEN JUBILEE SYMPOSIUM

October 1991

Bergen, Norway

The 150th birthday of Dr. Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen (1841–1912) was commemorated last October in Bergen, Norway.

The Faculty of Medicine, University of Bergen, gathered a large audience to its Armauer Hansen Jubilee Symposium on 4 October, chaired by its Dean, Professor Dagfinn Aarskog and dealing with mycobacterioses as well as a more recent challenge—AIDS. After a presentation by Professor Lorentz M. Irgens, Bergen, of Armauer Hansen's contemporary scientific context and his achievements, Professor Wayne M. Meyers, Washington, D.C., U.S.A., President of the International Leprosy Association, lectured on nonhuman sources of human leprosy infection. Professor Morten Harboe, Oslo, focused on a nosological neighbor, accounting for antigenic properties of proteins actively secreted by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. The rest of the program related to AIDS and Professor Claus Ola Solberg, Bergen, informed about the epidemiologic development in industrialized countries while Associate Professor Bernt Lindtjørn, Bergen, focused on the situation in Africa. Biological aspects were addressed by Professor William A. Hassetline, Harvard University, who dealt with molecular biology of human retroviruses and by Associate Professor Karl-Henning Kalland, Bergen, accounting for experimental approaches to HIV and the host cell.

After a luncheon at Haukeland Hospital, all invited guests were taken on a guided tour to St. George's Hospital with its leprosy museum. The program for the rest of the day was arranged by the Bergen Medical

Society, comprising the annual "Armauer Hansen Lecture" in Bryggen Museum, this year given by Dr. Tore Godal, Director of WHO's Tropical Disease Research Program. Afterward, all the audience walked a few hundred meters, led by drummers of the local boys' batallion (a unique Bergen phenomenon) to the house where Armauer Hansen was born, where his granddaughter, Mrs. Johanne Margrethe Patrix, unveiled a commemorative plaque. The walk continued another hundred meters, in rain and storm, making the occasion even more memorable, to the medieval King Haakons Hall for a gala dinner. Here, all guests were welcomed by Dr. Kåre John Bakke, Chairman of the Bergen Medical Society, and by Professor Ole Didrik Lærum, Rector of the University of Bergen. According to good Bergen traditions, shorter speeches were given by most of the invited guests, here led by Mrs. Patrix.

The day after, the Bergen Collections on the History of Medicine, comprising the Leprosy Museum and the Armauer Hansen Commemorative Rooms, were open to the public, hosted by the Bergen Society for the History of Medicine. The film "Armauer Hansen, the Discoverer of the Leprosy Bacillus" was shown to large audiences.

The following papers by Drs. Irgens, Harboe and Meyers were presented at the Jubilee, and we are pleased to reproduce them here.