Obituary

K. PATRICIA CARPENTER

1920-1971

It is with sadness that I report the untimely death on 4 July 1971 of K. Patricia Carpenter at the age of 51 years.

Pat, as she was known to all her friends and colleagues, was secretary to the *Enterobacteriaceae* Subcommittee of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology from 1958 to 1970. This position she resigned at the meeting at Mexico City, and it is probable that it was increasing ill health which led her to take this decision. Her work for the Subcommittee was arduous and time-consuming: the vagaries of its members, postal troubles, and other difficulties meant increasingly long delays before she received adequate replies to her pertinent questions. Nevertheless, she was able to draft proposals on taxonomy and classification which reflected the general opinion of the Subcommittee up to the time that she retired.

In 1962 she was appointed liaison member of the ad hoc committee for the study of *Bacterium anitratum* and allied organisms. Later a change was made; this became a Subcommittee of the International Committee on the Nomenclature of Bacteria, and its terms of reference were the taxonomy and classification of *Moraxella* and allied organisms. She remained a member of this Subcommittee until she died.

Pat was an expert on the shigellae, and her laboratory, together with that of Dr. W. E. Ewing at Atlanta, Ga., became the joint International Dysentery Laboratories. Taxonomy and classification had always been among her major interests, and her careful work on the technical problems was of great value to others working in similar fields. She investigated many of the less common members of the gram-negative, aerobic bacilli and gave freely of her experience to assist many colleagues working in bacteriology applied to medicine and other disciplines. A number of microbiologists from other countries worked in her department and learned her methods. This led to much useful collaboration and a number of publications.

The importance of the bacteria isolated from animals in the gardens of the Zoological Society of London was an especial interest of hers on which she was often consulted. This led to her interest in zoos, and on her many trips abroad she made a point of visiting zoos in other countries. She was a keen gardener and loved her flowers and her home.

Pat was a most courageous woman. She was first taken ill about 1952, and over the years she suffered much inconvenience and pain, but she never complained. About two years ago she was found to suffer from a malabsorption syndrome, and it was this which finally led to her death.

The following facts have been taken from the British Medical Journal, 24 July 1971.

Kamala Patricia Carpenter was born in Edinburgh and educated at the Harris Academy, Dundee. She had a distinguished career as a medical student at St. Andrews University, graduating with commendation in 1942. Within a year she was commissioned in the Indian Medical Service. After spending some time in south India, first on general duties and later as a hygiene officer, she was posted to Italy but later returned to India for training as a pathologist and worked in a district laboratory. She joined the Public Health Laboratory Service in 1947 when it was immediately clear that her wartime experience had given her a strong interest in the serological identification of enteric pathogens. After a brief period in the Newcastle laboratory, she took the course for the Diploma in Bacteriology and was then chosen to assist the late Lieutenant-Colonel R. F. Bridges in the Dysentery Reference Laboratory at Oxford. After his retirement, she took charge of the laboratory and in 1951 brought it to Colindale to become a part of the recently formed Central Public Health Laboratory.

Joan Taylor

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