

**Thomas Copland Muir PhD DSc MPS FRPSGB (24/08/1933-10/08/2019)**

Tom was born in 1933 in Newmains, Wishaw in Lanarkshire and attended Wishaw High School. He graduated in Pharmacy with Pharmacology at Glasgow University, training partly at the Royal College of Science and Technology (now the University of Strathclyde), then after qualifying MPS he completed National Service in Cyprus in the "Enosis" period.

His scientific career started in 1958 at Glasgow University in the Division of Pharmacology headed by JJ Lewis, his research on muscle relaxants leading to a PhD. On Lewis's sudden and premature death in 1962 Tom successfully steered the Division as Acting Head while Pharmacy went off to the fledgling University of Strathclyde and its Materia Medica and Therapeutics landlord to Stobhill Hospital, until a Department of Pharmacology was formed under JS Gillespie in 1968. This was a great pressure for a young scientist to work under.

He stayed in what was essentially the Glasgow University Pharmacology Department for the remainder of his career till retiring as Reader in Pharmacology, though the department underwent several administrative migrations from 1994, ending up in the meaningless Division of Neuroscience and Biomedical Systems (!), which was really Anatomy, Pharmacology and Physiology. Tom was particularly upset when Gillespie did not return as Head of the Pharmacology Department in 1988 after a period as Vice Principal and this precipitated his early retreat to concentrate on Research.

Tom undertook two sabbaticals in the late 60s and mid 70s. First to Monash in Melbourne, Australia, to work with Molly Holman and learn about the electrophysiology of smooth muscle and its innervation, then secondly to The Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, USA to work with Joe Szurszewski (whom he met at Monash) to continue his interest in intracellular recording from nerves and muscle in the gastro-intestinal tract.

Tom was a keen editor of the English language, an interest he caught from a distinguished English Teacher at Secondary School, Alfred Dubber. He was particularly proud of being on the editorial boards of British Journal of Pharmacology (1978-84) and The Journal of Physiology (1992-99) (as well as the British Journal of Anaesthesia), where he was an excellent editor in the old style, assisting the author even when the science and the language was beyond hope.

His research career began with neuromuscular blocking agents alongside JJ Lewis and Mike Martin-Smith and when that topic moved off to Bill Bowman's newly formed Dept. at University of Strathclyde, Tom moved on to smooth muscle and its autonomic innervation with John Gillespie and David Pollock. He then introduced new skills for intracellular electrophysiology, acquired on sabbatical at Monash, and applied and developed this for the next thirty years. He supervised many PhD students including future BJP editors Sandy Clanachan and Brian King, and collaborated with many colleagues in Glasgow including Simon Guild, Kate Creed, Tom Cunnane, Hugh McKirdy and many others. In the final part of his career Tom had a very productive collaboration on patch-clamped smooth muscle with John McCarron, who, in a neat completion of the circle, then took up Bill Bowman's Chair in Strathclyde.

Tom was an assiduous teacher, with high standards for accuracy and clarity of expression, and taught Pharmacology to many generations of Glasgow pharmacy, science, dental and medical students. He was easily dismayed by sloppy laboratory technique as well as written language.

He was a life-long supporter of the Labour Party and a keen Munro bagger. He was proud of his achievements despite, as he was fond of saying, "not being born with a silver spoon in my mouth".

He is survived by his wife Moira and daughters Eleanor and Marjorie.

Ian McGrath 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019.

### **From David Wyllie**

I first met Tom Muir (“TC”) in October 1986 when I entered the Junior Honours Pharmacology class at the University of Glasgow – in these days Honours classes were small (there were 16 in my year) and for the next two years we studied as a group and got to know all the staff in the, then, Department of Pharmacology. Perhaps it was because I too was from Lanarkshire that Tom took me under his wing and acted as an advisor and mentor to me throughout these two years. Tom’s attention to detail was legendary and he was a stickler for smartness in all things, whether it be experimental design, writing, use of language or dress code. Tom was a wonderful teacher and instructor always conveying his own passion for his subject when delivering lectures; even now, when I teach the pharmacology of the autonomic nervous system, I recall his emphasized pronunciation of “atropa belladonna”. I did my final year project in Tom’s lab and remember how he would burst into the lab eagerly wanting to know what new data had been obtained that day. As I approached the end of my studies Tom offered me a place in his lab to study for a PhD quickly adding that I should turn his offer down and go to UCL – as ever, I followed his advice. I owe “TC” my deepest gratitude for all his support and advice, and for being so influential in setting me off in my research career.

David J A Wyllie  
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