

The ILAE Meeting in London 1913 and the Advent of War in 1914



Royal Albert Hall, London

The fourth meeting of the ILAE was held in London on 13th August 1913, in conjunction with the 17th International Medical Congress (which had 7,000 delegates). The main congress was a fantastic and mammoth affair that lasted 5 days and was the swan song of Edwardian Europe – soon to be engulfed in the First World War. At the opening in Royal Albert Hall, Prince Arthur of Connaught received a long stream of delegates while suffragettes, refused entry, picketed outside. Numerous social events included a ‘magnificent conversazione’ at the Guildhall. 2,000 delegates enjoyed a garden party at Windsor Castle and others took excursions to Cambridge. F.H. Albee performed an operation for his surgical colleagues in which he plated a short section of a tubercular child’s spinal vertebrae using a sliver of shin bone. William Bateson of Yale University deplored the American enthusiasm for eugenics. The French delegation presented Sir Patrick Manson with a gold medallion for his efforts on malaria. The work of the congress was divided into 22 sections and, as the *New York Times* wrote on 6 August, dealt with subjects ranging from ‘disinfection of eyeglasses to the resuscitation of the dead’. ILAE members among the speakers included Muskens who gave a talk on the posterior longitudinal fasciculus, and Donáth. A clinical and pathological meeting took place at the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, at which patients illustrating family and hereditary nervous diseases were presented. On the 13th a visit was arranged to London County Council epileptic colony in Epsom, and on the 14th to the David Lewis Colony in Alderley Edge near Manchester. The meeting of the ILAE at this congress was rather meagre compared to this bonanza. It was held in the new building of the Royal Society of Medicine, occupied a single afternoon and comprised 4 talks, mainly relating to statistics on epilepsy.

In 1914, an ILAE meeting was planned for Berne, but was cancelled at short notice with the onset of war. The ILAE then went into ‘hibernation’ to re-emerge only in 1935.