

HENRI GASTAUT

Henri Gastaut (1915–2005) is one of the best-known epileptologists of the century. His interest in neurology was kindled in Marseilles by Henri Roger. In 1946 Gastaut went to the laboratory of Grey Walter in Bristol to learn the basics of EEG, and in 1949 for a sabbatical at the Montreal Neurological Institute with Penfield and Jasper. On his return to Marseilles, he built up a remarkable clinical and research programme and founded the Centre St Paul for epileptic children. He held the famous series of ‘Colloquia’ at Marseilles between 1950 and 1980. He was committed to the international epilepsy movement, founded the French ILAE branch, helped form the IFSECN (the International Federation of Societies of Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology), was ILAE secretary general 1961–1969 and an editor of *Epilepsia* between 1959 and 1975. He was made president–elect of the ILAE in 1953 at the age of 38, but did not actually become president until 1969, a delay perhaps due to the fact that he chose the presidency of the IFSECN before that of ILAE – which shows the relative unimportance of the ILAE in those days. He was largely responsible for resuscitating *Epilepsia* and for the produc-



tion of the international classification schemes of epileptic seizures and of the epilepsies. The latter particularly catapulted the ILAE into the centre of international affairs. He trained a whole generation of students whose collective impact has become known as the Marseilles school. He had a powerful personality and a colourful domestic life, and had many interests outside neurology including sailing, art and anthropology. His famous collection of shrunken heads is now in the Vieille Charité Museum in Marseilles.