

to be discouraged by such an obstacle as this which they found was to be removed with soap and warm water. This they called the Ceremony of Purification, and were themselves the officiators at it. And it must be mentioned in their praise that they performed it with much piety and devotion, taking as much pleasure in cleaning the naked young ladies of all impurity in the tub of warm water as the young confessor would to absolve a beautiful virgin who was about to sacrifice that name to himself. . . . It must be confessed, we sometimes found some jewels that rewarded our trouble, namely, two sparkling black eyes, accompanied with a beautiful face, and when such was our fortune, we never regretted the time and trouble it had cost us in digging through loads of red ochre, soot and other dirt to get at them."²

This might well be construed as one profession taking advantage of another, or even as unprofessional conduct, but hardly as rape. As to pillage, the record shows that not only were the Indians prone to misappropriate everything, from Cook's gold watch up to a thirty-pound anchor hook, but that, setting a solid precedent for local tourist industry, they even made him pay for the grass on which his goats grazed.³ There can, of course, be no denying that Captain Cook did not know where he was. Why should he? So far as he was concerned, he had just discovered the place.

But now that he has become a posthumous political football we can expect his statue, which stands in front of the Empress Hotel, overlooking Victoria's inner harbour, to be the focus of more demonstrations and his memory and magnificent achievements to be generally obscured by a miasma of inaccurate

innuendo. The American missionary, the Rev Sheldon Dibble, serving his own narrow ends, succeeded in doing just that in Hawaii, from 1850 until recent scholars revealed him as a sanctimonious liar.

As an ardent admirer, earlier this year I visited Kealakekua Bay on the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) to pay my respects to Cook's memorial. This is a simple obelisk, set in the beautiful bay on a small plot of land, a few feet from where he was killed. This land is British property, as it was deeded by King Kamehameha in perpetuity. It can be approached only by sea on a ship suitably named the *Captain Cook VII*. Visitors are regaled by a graphic description of the historical events that led up to the tragedy by a delightful Polynesian commentator. Nevertheless, the fact that Captain Cook was himself cooked and eaten with some relish, to judge from the small amount of leftovers returned to the British, was completely omitted. When I pointed out that this was an implied aspersion on the quality of British beef, the dark handsome face of my informant was lit by the briefest twinkle as he said, "we don't mention that part because we think it is un-American."

References

- ¹ *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, ed J C Beaglehole, vol III, p 1326. Cambridge, Hakluyt Society, 1967.
- ² *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, ed J C Beaglehole, vol III, pp 1094 and 1100. Cambridge, Hakluyt Society, 1967. Quoted by G P V Akrigg and Helen B Akrigg, *British Columbia Chronicle, 1778-1846*, p 24.
- ³ *The Journals of Captain James Cook*, ed J C Beaglehole, vol III, p 306. Cambridge, Hakluyt Society, 1967.

How to do it

Organise an international medical meeting

VI: The social programme

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The social programme and the arrangements for entertaining the ladies are subordinate to those of the main meeting, but their importance should not be underestimated. Get the registration right and get the ladies' programme right, and the conference will succeed. From the outset one member of the organising committee should be charged with this as his sole duty, and the committee must decide early on the general form of the entertainment and how much they wish to spend on it. The form is largely determined by the length of the meeting, the custom of previous occasions, and the requirements of protocol. The aim is at entertaining the delegates and their families and, while you should not rely too heavily on inspired improvisation or the

natural generosity of the hosts, there is room for imagination and the light touch.

The main events of the social programme normally form a pattern. There is an opening ceremony, receptions, a show or stage performance, a free evening, and a dinner. Closing the conference is usually a modest affair at the end of the business programme. The social programme should not be a major item in the budget. Comparison with previous meetings may help you to decide the level of entertainment. Receptions are usually provided by the civic authorities, university, or local professional bodies. Such potential hosts should be contacted as soon as possible and tentative dates and maximum numbers established. Large formal dinners are much more expensive than they were a few years ago, and individual attitudes to them vary so much, that the dinner, which is usually the last formal social event, is costed separately and paid for by ticket. The main expense of the social programme lies in the opening ceremony. Whatever else fails, the opening ceremony must succeed—so that the available money should be concentrated on this. The possibility of arranging an opera, concert, or theatre performance will, of course, vary from place to place, but in general it is much cheaper to arrange block bookings for scheduled performances than to stage something special. The latter is really possible only if the state or civic authorities will meet the cost.

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Some general points

Most of the social programme is in the evening. The timing of events will depend on that of the conference programme but must allow for delegates returning to their hotels to change and dine. A firm decision should be taken about dress at the various functions, and advice about this included in the printed conference programme. Availability of transport at night must be borne in mind. If there is an official conference photographer, he should be expected to attend the main evening events, but freelance photographers should be discouraged.

Besides the main events, the committee must think of the facilities available on the conference site. Registration for a large international meeting is a lengthy business, and delegates tend to loiter in the reception area in the hope of meeting friends or making sure that their arrangements are complete. Some lounge accommodation with coffee, and a desk dealing with social events, ease the handling of large numbers. The questions of lunch for delegates, bar facilities, and hospitality rooms are matters for the main committee, and are best considered with the arrangements for the business part of the meeting.

The opening ceremony

This is attended by most of the delegates and their wives. It is an opportunity to invite local dignitaries and those who have helped with the organisation. It is an occasion for the press. The numbers are large, and may demand a hall larger than anything on the conference site. Think big. Spare seats may be filled by enlarging the circle of friends, or by judicious advertisement. If the opening is to be a large affair, it is probably most conveniently held in the evening of the day of registration, before the start of the conference proper. The time will depend on local custom and the hour of dinner in local hotels. Since the ceremony is a form of entertainment, it will last two hours or so, and speeches should be kept short.

Start the evening with a short display or concert lasting 40 minutes. Allow 20 minutes to assemble the platform party and reset the stage. The formal speeches need take no longer than an hour. Their number and order will be decided by the main committee according to protocol. The necessary mood of relaxed anticipation may be prolonged if a wine buffet is in prospect at the end of the evening. Arrangements include signposting the hall, since it may not be on the conference site, arranging flowers in the foyer and on the platform, ensuring that there is adequate transport for delegates to and from the hall, and notifying the police for security and control of traffic. Finally, it is worth considering employing an official master of ceremonies who will be responsible for the platform party and introducing speakers for this occasion.

Receptions and free evening

These are no problem, since the hosts will deal with the detailed organisation. The limiting size seems to be about 300 guests, so that it is convenient, at a large conference, to disperse the party among several simultaneous receptions. All that the social committee will have to do is to allocate guests to each, and arrange transport.

It is a great advantage, especially in a large international meeting, to leave at least one night free of formal entertainment. There may well be local delegates who will welcome the chance to repay hospitality and there are often sectional interests within the main conference—regional clubs, class reunions, and the like—which may use the occasion. The latter may be glad of a little space on the printed programme and may ask for a desk in the registration area or a hospitality room.

Hospitality rooms, social club, ladies' club

The question of hospitality rooms arises only at large conferences: they are rooms at or near the registration area

where important visitors may be entertained in some comfort, or conference business transacted. The number of hospitality rooms should be kept to a minimum, usually restricting their use to the chairman of the organising committee, the president of the conference, and the press. The rooms should be clearly signposted and should have telephones.

Catering for lunches, a social club, and a ladies' club are all related and depend on the size of the conference and existing local services. Modern conference centres may take account of all this but, where a purpose-built centre is not used, it is still important to keep all aspects of the meeting as close together as possible. Ideally, the registration area, restaurant, lounge, and bar should be in the same building. Where this isn't possible, the catering should be close to the venue of the meeting. If the conference is being supported by a trade exhibition, the lounge and bar may be sited close to it to attract delegates to the exhibition. When everything can be centred on the registration area there may be no need for a ladies' club but, if one is to be provided, the ladies' committee must decide whether it is to be near the conference site or near the town shopping centre. There are advantages in both.

The ladies' programme

This includes a range of entertainment for the wives of delegates and, indeed, anyone who wants a day off from the meeting. Some of this can be organised professionally: conducted tours of the city or bus tours of the surrounding countryside. But there are questions of home hospitality, coffee parties, and a ladies' club, which must be dealt with by a ladies' committee. At an early stage, it is a good idea to choose a convener of the ladies' committee who can discuss with the organising committee the dates, expected numbers, whether or not a ladies' club will be needed, what should be organised by the committee and what by official travel agents, and what money will be available for a ladies' programme. Once these main lines are clear, she can convene a small committee of ladies which should be responsible for the details and which, much nearer the time, can mobilise such local support as is needed. Arrangements for a ladies' programme have to be rather tentative, because the number of visiting wives remains uncertain until registration, but it is wise to overestimate, especially in calculating numbers for bus tours. Again, during the conference itself, it is better to mobilise too many of the "home team" than too few, as this spreads the load more comfortably.

The ladies' programme should be scheduled during the hours of the main meeting, evening events being poorly attended. Bus tours are always popular. Fashion shows and similar displays are so only if they relate to national dress or customs. Attendance at a conference can be fitted so easily into a package holiday that a delegate may be accompanied by his whole family. It isn't necessary to organise a crèche, but it is worth collecting some information on how to amuse teenagers during the meeting and, indeed, the ladies' committee can help with the production of the printed conference brochure by compiling a list of useful telephone numbers and addresses of shops, taxis, hairdressers, and restaurants (graded according to cost of a meal).

The dinner

This is the most difficult part of the programme to arrange—at least for a large conference. The problems are mostly related to the numbers of guests, and our discussion assumes a meeting of 1000 or more delegates. You can confidently predict that not all will attend the dinner. You may have some information about numbers at previous dinners but, even if only half attend, there will be too many for any hotel not built with an eye to the conference trade. This means using a hall not originally designed for catering, and employing a firm of outside caterers. The success of the dinner will depend very largely on the latter, so they must be chosen with care. Use an established firm that is

known to be capable of handling the expected numbers. Book them early, settle the venue of the dinner, and get an estimate of the cost per head. Wines form much of the cost and you can save a lot by buying the wine in bulk as soon as possible, to offset inevitable price rises in the year or two before the conference takes place. Any surplus wine can be sold at a profit after the event, so that this is a reasonable speculation.

Common sources of complaint are: too long an interval before dinner is served; slow service letting dinner get cold; not enough wine; inaudible after-dinner speeches. These difficulties arise from handling large numbers of guests. The pre-dinner interval should not be more than 45 minutes, but this time will be needed for the guests to arrive and sort themselves out, and to marshal top-table guests. Generous space should be allowed for foyer and cloakrooms, and plenty of extra cloakroom staff engaged. All wines, including drinks before dinner, should be included in the price of the ticket. It is courteous to meet top-table guests at the foyer and entertain them separately before dinner. It also ensures that they can be seated expeditiously in their proper places.

A big dinner demands a good toastmaster. His first duty will be to announce dinner. For very large numbers an individual seating plan is too laborious, but some sort of order must be imposed. One solution is to give out numbered cards on arrival, each matching one in the dining hall indicating a table or group of tables. The toastmaster can then invite the guests in to dinner by these numbers. Slow service and cold food are due to an over-ambitious menu with too many hot dishes. The first course, *paté* or *hors d'oeuvres* and a glass of sherry, can be on the table at the start. A hot soup can follow this, and then a cold main course with hot vegetables if desired, and a sweet and fruit to follow. A menu of this sort simplifies the choice of wine and lets

the wine waiters concentrate on seeing that everyone is well served.

A short interval may be necessary between the end of dinner and the speeches. At a very large dinner it is unwise to announce this formally—it may be difficult to persuade the company to resume their seats. Speeches should be brief, clearly announced by the toastmaster, and audible throughout the hall. This means more than usual attention to the position of amplifiers throughout the hall. The toastmaster must be able to obtain silence for the speaker, who, in turn, may reasonably expect to be heard by everyone. The acoustic problems of large halls are often difficult and should not be left until the last minute. It is worth while spending extra money to get an expert to arrange this, rather than an enthusiastic amateur.

One last word. Of all the conference papers, the dinner menu—dog-eared, wine-stained, signed illegibly by old friends and new—remains the most durable souvenir. It should start the evening as a pretty thing.

Acknowledgments

The idea for these papers on how to organise an international medical meeting came from the happy association we had with the other members of the organising committee of the Joint Congress of the International Surgical Society and the International Cardiovascular Society held in Edinburgh in 1975 under the stimulating and provocative chairmanship of the late Sir John Bruce. We acknowledge the overall contributions made by Mr George A Hendry, the organising secretary of the Joint Congress; Mr William Reid, treasurer; Mr John McGhee, public relations officer of the City of Edinburgh; Mr Andrew Hay; Mr John Ward; Mr John Cook; and Miss Hannah Harkins.

For Debate . . .

Preventing deaths from malaria

A P HALL

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Summary and conclusions

To reduce the number of avoidable deaths from malaria in Britain the following five points are recommended.

Parliament should pass a Malaria Prevention Act that compels travel agents and airlines to give written and verbal advice on prevention and diagnosis of malaria to people travelling to countries where the disease occurs. To improve diagnostic and therapeutic efficiency for all diseases the Department of Health and Social Security should prepare a procedure manual for the NHS that gives guidance for doctors and other medical staff. Avoidable deaths from all diseases should be the subject of open inquiries at district medical committees, with recorded evidence. Failure to perform diagnostic tests such as blood films for malaria in cases of sickness in people returning from the tropics should automatically

be considered negligent. Compensation should be offered by the State to the next of kin of people who have died because of medical negligence from malaria or other diseases.

Introduction

Several people die from falciparum malaria in Britain every year. Most of these deaths are avoidable—delays in diagnosis or incorrect treatment are important contributory factors. The victims have usually been given inadequate advice about prevention and early diagnosis. Bruce-Chwatt *et al*¹ consider that protection from malaria infection is largely the responsibility of the individual concerned, whereas Maegraith and others think that the travel agents and airlines should do more to warn passengers.^{2,3} I agree with the latter approach and recommend the following actions.

Prevention

Since airlines and travel agents do not come under the authority of the Department of Health and Social Security, I