

## **ESSKA - APKASS DJO TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP 2014**

In late April and early May 2014, Brett Fritsch from Australia, Atsuo Nakamae from Japan, Jia-Lin Wu from Taiwan and myself were privileged to undertake the ESSKA-APKASS DJO Travelling Fellowship.

We assembled in Barcelona and were welcomed on our first evening by host Joan Carles Monllau, who took us to dinner where we sampled local Catalan cuisine. His friendliness, hospitality, and generosity really set the scene to the whole of our trip. We were constantly overwhelmed at the effort all of our hosts made to ensure that our experience was both remarkable and memorable.

Our first day 'on the job' started with presentations at the University with an excellent attendance by both staff and residents, particularly given that it was a Saturday morning. We shared our experiences on a wide range of topics, mainly related to the knee, but also on hip arthroscopy. The academic session was followed by a cadaver workshop where we explored procedures such as meniscal substitution and posterolateral reconstruction.

This was followed by a tour of the Old City in Barcelona and we really started to get a feel for some of the local history and politics. That evening we were treated to dinner at a restaurant with wonderful views of the city, followed by drinks in a night club with even more spectacular views, organized by Pablo Gelber.

Despite being somewhat jetlagged, the next morning we set off to the Torres winery where we experienced an extensive selection of fine wines in a private part of this beautiful winery. Then it was back to the beachfront where we were treated to more wonderful food, this time local paella, before being left to our own devices for further exploration of this wonderful city.

Monday was a very full day in the operating rooms of two different hospitals. We were treated to a wide variety of surgery and were impressed by the skills and expertise of all the surgeons. Procedures included meniscal transplantation and replacement, anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction, joint replacement, and a very elegant arthroscopic labral repair of the hip performed by Marc Tey. I think Marc has given a new meaning to 'armchair surgery'.

Our stay in Barcelona finished with yet more food in an Argentinean restaurant where Atsuo and Jia-Lin consumed more meat than they had in the previous twelve months!

Our next stop was Bologna we were greeted by Stefano Zaffagnini's team. We were privileged to explore the famous library of the Rizzoli Institute and even more privileged to be given a guided tour of Professor Putti's private library and studio. After a walk through the centre of town we were treated to more fine food at one of Stefano's favorite local restaurants.

The next day we were privileged to see Professor Marcacci in action. He made complex procedures look easy, including distal femoral osteotomy. Stefano demonstrated his technique of anterior cruciate ligament reconstruction using computer navigation to document the improvement in stability. This was supplemented by a demonstration of the latest version of a very simple method of documenting the pivot shift in the awake patient. After further exploration of the campus, we had an afternoon academic session where we all presented selected papers.

That evening Professor Marcacci hosted us at his home - beautiful villa in the hills outside Bologna and yet more fine food, this time the highlight being some magnificent local beef.

The next morning (May Day) we explored Bologna. Coincidentally there was a wonderful art exhibition featuring famous works from the Golden Age of Dutch art including the famous "Girl with a pearl earring" by Vermeer. After a visit to the museum at the Palazzo Poggi at the university, we enjoyed an outdoor lunch, before heading to Munich.

In Munich we were greeted by our host Andreas Imhoff and his team over dinner, at which the arrangements for the visit was laid out. Yet again, a wonderful program had been planned for us the following day. We spent the morning in the operating rooms and again saw a variety of procedures and masterly exhibitions of surgery. Procedures included medial patellofemoral ligament reconstruction, tibial osteotomy, and, of course, ACL reconstruction. In the afternoon we had an academic session where we again presented papers, along with papers from our hosts and had valuable discussions. This was followed by traditional Bavarian food and beer in the Hofbräu.

This brought us to the weekend. We headed to the hills and lakes near Munich and walked up to Kloster Andechs, a well-known monastery. It was wonderful to be out in the fresh, is somewhat cold, air. After our light hike we sat down to more wonderful beer and hearty Bavarian food. The rest of the day was spent exploring Munich, which continued on the Sunday morning. Jia-Lin and Brett experienced high speed driving on the autobahn at first hand. On the Sunday afternoon we headed to Stockholm.

On Monday morning we gathered at the Capio Arthro Clinic where Bjorn Engstrom introduced us to the history and philosophy of this clinic. After a tour of the setup, Per Renstrom played tour guide and took us on a whirlwind tour of Stockholm including the famous Vasa ship that sank after only twenty minutes on its maiden voyage. From there it was on to a game of soccer where we caught up with our other local host, Magnus Forssblad. For an evening in spring, we were certainly feeling the cold by the end of it.

The next day we spent time in the operating room where we were again exposed to a wide variety of surgery of the knee and shoulder, all performed with wonderful expertise. We saw first hand just how effective knee arthroscopy under local anesthesia can be. In the afternoon we had a high quality academic session and we treated to evidence of the quality outputs of the highly developed research programs in the Scandinavian countries. The fellows were fortunate to meet one of the greats of European sports medicine, Ejnar Eriksson.

The next morning we headed to the South Hospital where Karl Eriksson and Bjorn Barenius were our hosts. We took a tour of a self-contained underground hospital dating back to the end of the Second World War. This made one remember how volatile the world political climate has been. After another elegantly performed ACL reconstruction and lunch, we set off for Wigan in northern England.

We arrived in pouring rain and were greeted by our host, Len Funk. We wove our way through traffic jams and Manchester to get to another game of soccer where Manchester City played Aston Villa in an penultimate round of the season. For us it was great to experience the English soccer fans in full voice.

The next day was spent at Wrightington Hospital. Len showed us what a master he is of shoulder surgery and teaching. In the afternoon we had an academic session, and were privileged to hear Bodo Purdek tell us something of the Charnley total hip arthroplasty experience. Sadly, the Charnley museum is no more and has made way for 'progress'. Then it was off to the local pub for some fine English pub fare.

The following day it was more time in the operating room, including a classic Charnley hip replacement performed according to the original technique. Len generously hosted us at his home for fish and chips that evening and showed off his prized car.

The following day it was back across Europe, finishing in Larissa in Greece. There we were met by Michael Hantes. After the rain of England, we were greeted to the sunshine of Greece and woke the next morning to find ourselves enjoying breakfast by the pool. But our rest was short

lived and we headed off to Vergina where we visited the tomb of King Philippos, the father of Alexander the Great and, perhaps, heard the final word regarding the true Macedonia (well, at least from the Greek perspective!). This was followed by lunch on the Aegean where we caught up with Professor Malizos and enjoyed a sumptuous feast of fresh local seafood. After getting back to town and resting up, we made our way out for dinner at a fine wine bar. There seemed to be little room left to enjoy wonderful cuisine and wine after our massive lunch by the sea.

The next morning we visited the University hospital. Even though Greece has had financial troubles, their standard of medicine remains high and we were impressed by the skill of both knee and shoulder surgery. We were able to visit to a nearby private hospital and were extremely impressed by the facilities. After this it was back to the University where we had the last of our scientific sessions, which was attended by easily the biggest audience of our trip, including many medical students. It was held in the 'Hippocrates Theatre', so named as Hippocrates had spent the later part of his career and life in Larissa, and it was a fitting place to wrap up such an enlightening tour of modern orthopaedics.

That evening we went to the very special Nikodimos restaurant followed by drinks at a wine bar owned by one of the surgical team. By this time we had been adjusting to the much later social life of the Mediterranean. The final morning of the Fellowship component of the trip was spent on a trip to Meteora where we saw the breathtaking monasteries set high on the cliffs. Thanks to Professor Malizos' generosity, we were privileged to be taken on a private tour of one of these monasteries. From there it was back to the airport and then onto Amsterdam.

In Amsterdam we attended the ESSKA conference. To some degree we all went our own ways as we caught up with our various contacts from Europe and around the world. We finally caught up with Joseph Ramesh, the ESSKA Fellowship co-ordinator who had done such a wonderful job putting together the program, as well as Pietro Randelli the Educational Secretary of ESSKA and Chair of the Fellowship Committee. It was wonderful to be able to thank Pietro and Joseph for everything they had done to put together such a special trip.

The Congress itself lived up to its reputation. The ESSKA Congress is a very special meeting as it brings together ideas from not only Europe, but also from around the world in a unique and open manner. It clearly fosters the exchange of ideas and many high quality presentations were made. Niek Van Dijk is to be congratulated for hosting this tremendous event.

The Gala Dinner was a fitting finale to a wonderful trip. We were treated to a wonderful display of music and ballet with a very personal touch. We caught up with Mike McBrayer from DJO and were able to express our sincere thanks to him and his company for their support of the Travelling Fellowship program.

And then, all too suddenly, it was all over. Having met only three and a half weeks previously, Brett, Atsuo, Jia-Lin and myself had become close friends and it was really very sad to say farewell. However, the experiences we shared and the knowledge we gained will mean that we will forever have a common bond. We cannot thank the organizers, hosts, and sponsors enough for this trip and encourage all younger surgeons to consider applying for such a fellowship. The experience is truly unforgettable.

Julian Feller  
Godfather