obituary

Gordon Hamilton Fairley, a leading authority in the drug treatment of cancer, was killed by a bomb explosion in London on October 23. He was 45.

PROFESSOR Hamilton Fairley began his clinical studies at St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, qualifying in 1954. From 1958–61 he held the Leverhulme Research Scholarship of the Royal College of Physicians. During that time he began his research into the immune mechanisms of blood diseases. In 1965 he was appointed to the consultant staff at St Bartholomew's, where in 1970 he became director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Medical Oncology Unit. He was appointed professor at the unit two years later. Much of his time was spent in work on tumour immunology and in improving drug combinations used in the treatment of leukaemias and related disorders, such as Hodgkin's disease.

As reality replaces grief, the magnitude of the loss of Gordon Hamilton Fairley becomes increasingly clear, and facets of his work, taken for granted, suddenly become irreplaceable. It seems difficult to realise that only a decade has elapsed since Gordon directed his attentions to a new approach to cancer research. Following his sound clinical training in oncology, gained under Sir Ronald Bodley Scott, he chose to develop a close liaison with pure scientists to develop a rationale for future clinical studies. During this period he became a close friend of Peter Alexander, a scientist without clinical training, and between them they taught each other much of their respective disciplines. Basic scientific observations were rapidly reported, particularly in tumour immunology, and tested in clinical programmes. One of his major contributions was to lay down rigid principles concerning these clinical programmes, particularly the concentration of efforts into only a few diseases at any one time, and the use of carefully controlled randomised clinical trials. He had the remarkable knack of keeping the programmes relevant, while keeping an open mind for scientific developments that were important. Using these principles his contribution to the fields of leukaemias and lymphomas was considerable. He had the ability to be effective without making enemies, because of a personality and charm with a common purpose, without intertive smile could shorten committee meetings by hours. It meant that a unit was created which was bound together with a common purpose, without internal squabbles; and his generosity to those who worked for him instilled into them a quality they passed on to others. He was responsible for training half the medical oncologists at present practising in Britain, and his monument will be the living contribution yet to be made by these people. All these qualities made Gordon an obvious choice to steer the direction in which medical oncology takes in Britain. Because he was so young, in this he is irreplaceable. With his death we lose the founder of British medical oncology, but more tragically to many of us we lose a dear friend.

Ray Powles

B. A. Southgate, CBE, a leading British researcher in problems of water pollution, has died at the age of 71.

Shortly after leaving Cambridge, he joined the recently formed Water Pollution Research Organisation (part of the former Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) as a member —and ultimately leader—of a team investigating the effects of pollution on the Tees estuary. Subsequently, many other such surveys were carried out under his direction, the most important of which was that concerned with the Thames estuary. A predictive mathematical model was developed to establish the best way of improving conditions in the estuary. This research was to form the basis of a new kind of approach to river management. At the outbreak of World War II, Dr Southgate set up the first permanent Water Pollution Research Laboratory (WPRL) in the UK at Watford and was appointed director in 1943. In 1948 he published *Treatment and Disposal of Industrial Wastewaters,* for many years one of the standard reference works. He was awarded a CBE in 1954, the year in which his laboratory moved to Stevenage. After retiring from WPRL in 1966 he continued to act as a consultant to relevant organisations in the UK and in the United Nations.

announcements

Appointments

D. A. Hamburg has been appointed president of the Institute of Medicine, Washington, D.C.

The new pro-vice-chancellor of the City University, London is to be **J. C. Levy.**

E. C. Melby, Jr., has been appointed chairman of the Institute of Laboratory Animal Resources of the National Research Council in Washington, D.C.

Award

The Gairdner Foundation of Ontario has presented one of its 1975 awards to **H. E. Huxley** in recognition of his outstanding contribution to our understanding of the molecular basis of muscle contraction.

Miscellaneous

A workshop on **biological surveys of estuaries** is to be held at UWIST, Cardiff, UK from January 5–9, 1976. A limited number of workshop places are available for river biologists. For further details apply to:—Technical Presentation Manager, Water Research Centre, Stevenage Laboratory, Elder Way, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 1TH, UK.

Scientific visits to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. Cultural agreements with the above countries provide for short visits (two weeks) and medium term research visits (two to six months) for British scientists. Scholarships are also available for periods of up to one year. For full details apply to:—Higher Education and Science Department, The British Council, 10 Spring Gardens, London SW1A 2BN.