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July 3, 1995

SCS Corresp.

Dr. Henry Blackburn
Division of Epidemiology
School of Public Health
University of Minnesota
Suite 300
1300 South Second Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55454-1015

Dear Henry:

Thank you for sending me a copy of "On the Trail of Heart Attacks in Seven Countries." It is, indeed, a wonderful story in which you and many others must take great pride.

I hope the future will permit more such "adventures."

I hope this note finds you well.

Warm regards,

Claude

Claude Lenfant, M.D.
Director

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IE/HEG

To PROFESSOR
Please quote ref: HENRY BLACKBURN

4 August 1995

FAX TO

00-1- 612-624-0315

Professor A.G. Shaper
8 Wentworth Hall
The Ridgeway
Mill Hill
LONDON NW7 1RJ

file SCS book copy

Dear Professor Shaper,

Dr. Astrid James has passed on to me your letter of August 2. How fortunate that both those seven countries books have materialised together. By all means pursue the commentary suggestion; I think that would be by far the best approach. First, let me give you a word limit of 700 and otherwise give you a free reign. I very much look forward to receiving this piece from you.

With best wishes.

Imogen Evans
Z

Dr Imogen Evans FRCPC
Senior Editor

9/8/95
Dear Henry
It now only remains
for me to get on
with it!

Yours sincerely,
Gerry

7504 Elmore Lane
Bethesda
Maryland, 20817

7/25/95

Dear Henry,

How very kind of you to send us a copy of your fascinating book on the Seven Countries Studies! Millicent swiped it first and took it with her to some jamboree she had in rural Wisconsin. (Quite appropriate reading for what may be the nearest American equivalent of, say, Illomantsi). Since her return I have been enjoying it greatly. I suppose predictably, though I found it a little surprising, your accounts recalled much of my youth. I think this must have been because you have evoked the flavour of survey life accurately and vividly. Home visits, (did you know I went round some homes in Illomantsi with one of the dieticians and observed the families sitting down to the midday meal. One of the items was a monster oatcake, which was covered with molten butter applied with a two inch paint brush from a large pot or casserole. This has remained an indelible memory throughout my life, though come to think about it I don't recall what else was eaten); exasperation (days when everyone came in and the ECG baseline heaved about all over the place); frustration (days when no one came and one wondered how to get them along to preserve a respectable response rate); and just plain fatigue from very long days and endless repetition. Ah me! Happy days. Another reason for my youthful memories was of course all the people you mention, colleagues and non-colleagues alike. Louise Dalderup, for example, who, like me, was a visitor to the Illomantsi survey had just received the galleys of an article she had written and was painfully anxious about dealing with them. I have a memory that Ancel and I were somewhat unimpressed with the difficulties she felt these imposed on her. If my memory is correct, which it probably is not, we decided that she would get over these fits of nerves in the fulness of time. On the reason you advance for Ancel's deciding to carry out the study in the first place, I think you are probably right. Donald Read once told me about an encounter between George Pickering and Ancel at a WHO meeting. His description was similar to yours. It must therefore have been the same meeting you refer to. Donald considered Pickering's question a well known debating strategy: "A typical debating ploy, Ian my boy." It is strange to think what mighty oaks grow from such puny acorns. Another reason your book gave me pleasure was because of the lovely places you worked in, many of them places Millicent and I have visited. We started our honeymoon after all at the Cipriani in Venice and used to look across the water to the Royal Danielli. Then on to Rome and Athens and Crete. In Heraclion we stayed at the new El Greco hotel, which only had cold water. I thought we had stopped paying money for our living in Crete - the hotel, I think was the equivalent of \$3 per day! Such a change from the Cipriani! The following year we vacationed in Corfu - a jewel of a place. I liked your picture of the harbour of Paleokastritsa.

A

Jugoslavia is, sadly, something else again. We were in Dubrovnik much more recently for a Thoracic Society Annual Meeting. The thought of high explosives and that lovely place is horrible; but not so horrible as the ghastly goings on in the rest of the country. We spent a few days in Belgrade and visited Touzla after the chest meeting. It was good to be reminded of Ratko Buzina, for whom I always had a high regard. You will probably not remember writing me a letter shortly after leaving (I think) Slavonia. You were clearly seeing Jugoslavia in realistic terms and referred to being pleased to leave "this somber, sodden land." I have treasured this phrase, I suppose, for nearly 40 years.

Well Henry we go back a long time together you and I. As one grows older regression into the past becomes more important - I recently wrote to a friend I had not been in touch with for 50 years. Increasingly I have regretted my laziness in keeping in touch with old friends. With a computer and a word processor there is now even less excuse. Anyway very many thanks for your book.

All best wishes,

Lan Higgins

PS No, even I cannot diagnose your nightmare fit. Amanita muscaria seems most likely; but it must have been horrendous.

✓
pelle

8 WENTWORTH HALL, THE RIDGEWAY, MILL HILL, LONDON NW7 1RJ

15 July 1995

TELEPHONE 0181-959 8742

Professor Henry Blackburn,
Division of Epidemiology,
Suite 300,
1399 South Second Street,
Minneapolis, MN 55454- 1015.
USA.

SCS Book
Cover

FAX 612-624-0315

Dear Henry,

I am delighted with "On the trail of heart attacks in Seven Countries" and paging through and looking at the pictures of old friends and colleagues has been a nostalgic experience. I am not sure where cardiovascular epidemiologists go to when they die but I suspect it is to somewhere called "The Seven Countries". I had great pleasure the other day, when speaking on the telephone to an American interviewer about The British Regional Heart Study, in claiming the 7CS as the legitimate parent and indeed it is only the same study but in one country. We now have money for another visit to some towns to pilot carotid ultrasound studies in relation to the current and past risk factor status, so it lives on in the hands of my successors.

I shall settle down with the book tonight with only one misgiving. It has no publisher's imprint, so if I wish to review it for one of the journals, from where would it be obtainable and at what price etc ?

I still have not had the second book on "Lessons for Science from the Seven Countries Study". If it is around, I would be delighted to do another review for The Lancet. Do let me know what has happened to it.

With kindest regards to you and Stacey,

Yours sincerely,

Professor A.G. Shaper

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1495

Henry Blackburn, MD
 Mayo Professor of Public Health
 University of Minnesota
 Epidemiology/School of Public Health
 1300 South Second Street, Suite 300
 Minneapolis, MN 55454-1015

Dear Henry (I am tempted to say Enrico),

Thanks very, very much for the memoirs and scientific evaluation of the Seven Countries. I read the memoirs with avid interest, especially in the light of our last conversation. You give credit where it is badly overdue.

I'm just sorry I didn't get the books a few weeks ago when there would still have been time to cite them in my paper. Thanks for the kind words on the paper, by the way. Coming from you, they mean a lot. The paper is in press as part of the June 1995 Mediterranean diet supplement to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. If you do not normally receive AJCN, let me know immediately and I will make sure that you get a copy. I expect to see it within the next couple of weeks.

I am also happy to know about the Japanese book. The Oldways people, who planned the 1993 Mediterranean diet conference that led to the AJCN supplement, have scheduled an Asian diet conference for late November/early December in San Francisco. It will be useful to have the Japanese results, systematic or not. I will suggest to the Oldways people that they contact you about participation or suggestions for participants.

Finally, may I again bring up the question of a scientific evaluation of Keys' work. I am often asked for biographical information, and have by now accumulated quite a lot, much of it from Bob Barnett, a free-lance reporter who interviewed Keys in Pioppi a year or so ago, but did not come up with anything that interested the editor who sent him there. His interview, which mostly repeats much of what Keys has been saying since the piece in Time, remains unpublished but he was generous enough to share it and his research materials with me. For obvious reasons, I still think that somebody should take this on--and soon, perhaps

as a piece for one of the medical journals. I'm intrigued, but don't feel that I know enough. If it's really true that nobody else is doing one, would you be willing to consider some kind of collaboration? It might be amusing to interview people about what they really think.

In any case, I'm pleased that we are in contact and delighted with the books. Do come to one of the next FDA meetings, as I am due to rotate off the committee very soon.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Nestle', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marion Nestle, PhD, MPH
Professor and Chair

DR. THOMAS STRASSER
AV. DU BOUCHET 20
CH-1209 GENÈVE

Dr Henry Blackburn
School of Public Health
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USA

SCS letters

Gva, 28.8.95

Dear Henry,

I have now read your "On the Trail of Heart Attacks in Seven Countries"; let me tell you how much I enjoyed your memoirs. Of course, as most of us Keysians, I am somewhat emotional about the good old times, but the book is particularly pleasurable because of its touch of blackburnesque humour.

The book also looks very nice with the many photographs and is well documented.

With kind regards.

Cordially,

T Strasser

THOMAS A. KELLER III
4800 NORWEST CENTER
90 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55402-4129

July 3, 1995

Book letters

Dear Henry:

Thank you for your gift of On the Trail of Heart Attacks in Seven Countries.

More than that, thank you very much for the gracious inscription you gave me.

This past weekend I picked up the book meaning only to look at the forward and the first chapter -- before I knew it, I was halfway through the book and late for an appointment.

It is a remarkable saga. The book is very well written -- making this great medical adventure both understandable and exciting to the layperson. Bravo!

I look forward to reading the second half of the book and then, undoubtedly, re-reading several parts of it.

It is thrilling to know that this great undertaking in understanding and preventing coronary disease was started and carried forward here.

It has also brought me great satisfaction to have the privilege of your friendship over so many years, Henry, and to feel through our association some sort of closeness to one of the great achievements in medical research.

Sincerely,

Tom

Henry Blackburn, M.D.
1525 Kaltern Lane
Golden Valley, MN 55416



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

August 24, 1995

National Institutes of Health
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Henry Blackburn, M.D.
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University of Minnesota
Stadium Gate 27
611 Beacon Street, S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455

*pc RL
file SCS book
" pc Epstein recent folder*

Dear Henry:

Thank you for your letters about the celebration of Fred Epstein's life. I think the arrangements you have made are the ones he would have wanted, and that the Epi Council Meeting is the best place for his numerous friends to gather and share memories of his scientific accomplishments and generous provision of guidance and support to colleagues. His willingness to share ideas and friendship with old established and new colleagues was remarkable. Having Andy and Tony there to reflect on Fred's strong family ties will round out an important aspect of his character. I hope Doris will come, but traveling such a long way might be difficult for her.

Please let me know how I can help with the arrangements. Unfortunately, financial support from the Institute is not likely, given the current uncertainty about the budget, but things may change between now and next March. The best bet would be support for a scientific presentation if that is needed.

On a slightly different subject--I love your book. Ian was right in saying I swiped it first. I read as far as the Greek Islands on a protracted trip to Steven's Point, Wisconsin which included an unanticipated overnight stay in Chicago because of thunder storms between Washington and Chicago. I was foolish enough to encourage Ian to start reading your book when I got back, which meant I couldn't get my hands on it again until he was finished. I have just finished the remaining chapters on my flight from Amsterdam back to Washington. These remaining chapters were well worth waiting for. Your marvelous and vividly told stories brought back my own memories of epidemiology as it should be practiced. Although my own studies were in less exotic places than yours--Tecumseh predominantly, but also Marion County, West Virginia; Berlin, New Hampshire, and Stavelly, England where working conditions were sometimes pretty rugged. It makes me sad to think that our younger colleagues don't have these experiences but turn data collection over to technicians. The data they collect is of very high quality, but talking to and examining study participants gives a better understanding of the strengths and limitations of the data, than that which comes from playing with the numbers, no matter how sophisticated the statistical analyses are. The lasting friendships forged in the heat of survey battle are also likely to be sadly missing from the current scene.

I know you are collecting and recording impressions of your travels and meetings. I remember you dictating as we watched the celebration of midsummer day in Helsinki. I look forward to your next book and writings whatever form they may take. With best wishes and many thanks,

Yours sincerely,

Millicent

Millicent Higgins, M.D.
Deputy Director
Division of Epidemiology
and Clinical Applications.

The University of Chicago

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*File in book
SCS letters* July 18, 1995

Dr. Henry Blackburn
1525 Kaltern Lane
Minneapolis, MN 55416

*In the
USA*

Dear Henry:

Thank you so much for the remarkable volume of your three volume series on your adventures in more than seven countries. As you know, I admire not only your work but your excellent musicianship and your ability to bring joy to many individuals with your lively presence and lively music. It was very thoughtful of you to send this volume which I will treasure along with a volume that Fred gave me of the Seven Country Study.

If any plans develop for a memorial service to Fred Epstein, as you know, Betty and I would like to be involved. Best to you and to your bride. Thank you again,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Bob".

Bob (and Betty too)

RW:pt