



Having completed my Ph.D at the University of Manchester (1976), I started my Drug Discovery/Development career at Fisons Pharmaceuticals (Loughborough) in the Department of Drug Metabolism. What such departments did in those days and what they do now would amaze many DMDG attendees. The DMDG began with a small meeting in London, the purpose of which was to establish simple things like how many animals (and how long) should be used in mass balance studies. Drug Metabolism was mainly just that and exclusively Development. The Open meeting and the Site meetings evolved rapidly and were very popular. Not all the science was of the highest standards, but the meeting allowed approaches, problems etc. to be presented and discussed, even if anonymised by compound X. The fact that the science presented was sometimes quite routine is not a criticism, but a strength. The approach gave a friendly less intimidating atmosphere for younger or more junior staff to take their first steps onto the podium, handle discussion, make improvements etc.

A key point was that Academic and Industrial drug metabolism and pharmacokinetics were quite different. In fact, there was the DMDG and the DMG in the UK. Two "rival" groups with very little connection and overlap. The UK had several centres of academic excellence and maybe industrial drug metabolism was still not fully enabled despite the efforts of the DMDG. I moved on to Pfizer (1987) which was concentrating on helping drug discovery and this excited me. During this period Industrial work and Academic work began to align. Metabolic stability in human, avoidance of DDIs, attenuating high metabolic variability led to the widespread adoption of many of the reagents and techniques pioneered in academic laboratories. These were then improved and automated. Moreover, analytical science was moving rapidly allowing quantification of drugs in the circulation of animals and humans. Suddenly Pharmacokinetics was mainstream (and toxicokinetics). Many a DMDG session on these topics has happened to provide insight, discuss problems etc. The fall of the Industrial / Academic Wall and the welcoming of academic and contract houses into the DMDG family celebrated this. The common interest and true diversity have been a cornerstone as the DMDG is now a European not a UK organisation. In 2020 with a long history it still plays its vital roles, but now embraces a wider remit. The DMDG has been a cornerstone of "Drug Metabolism" for so many, immediately recognisable in its role, its remit, its passion for the science and its continual evolution. Most of all it always looks to support the younger scientists encouraging them to try new things and be better. I was very proud to be elected as the first Fellow of the Drug Metabolism Discussion Group in 2015. The DMDG and its journey and mine intertwined so many times and helped make me the scientist I am (the good bits that is).

~ *Dennis Smith*