Epiretinal membranes and neural plasticity of the retina
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When I started work at the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam, one of the conditions I set for the appointment was that I would not have to do a PhD, even though the AMC is a teaching hospital. Professor Marc de Smet, the head of the department at the time, respected this and then after two years cunningly asked me to assist in a few experiments in the laboratory on trypan blue. He encouraged me to do the clinical studies and write up the results. So, not quite aware of the direction I was going, I was started on the route to a thesis. Thank you Marc for drawing me back into research and helping me to stick with it.

The research-baton was then, inadvertently, passed to the Fisher Laboratory in Santa Barbara. Just goes to show what beers at the bar at ARVO and in London can lead to. I had collected vast numbers of membranes with the dye we were using, but did not know what to do with them. David Charteris introduced me to Geoff Lewis, who was investigating epiretinal membranes and needed material. A perfect match!

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