

## Obituary

S. J. H. GRIFFITHS, M.B., F.R.C.S.  
Assistant Surgeon, Bristol General Hospital.

We regret to record the untimely death of Mr. Sidney John Hermann Griffiths, honorary secretary of the Bristol Division of the British Medical Association.

John Griffiths entered Bristol University as a medical student in 1919, after serving in the Royal Air Force. His vivacity and humour soon endeared him to his "year," while his keenness in the more serious work of the medical school marked him for academic distinction. His versatility made him an excellent comrade for all occasions, and there were few musical instruments that came amiss to him. He was fond of the sea, and later



made it a custom to spend his holidays as a ship surgeon. He qualified M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1924, and a few months later took the M.B. and Ch.B. degrees with honours in Bristol University. After completing his house appointments he went to Guy's Hospital and the London Hospital to study surgery, obtaining the F.R.C.S.Eng. in 1926. During this time he seized the opportunity of travelling widely on the Continent, visiting such surgical centres as Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and

Strasbourg. He returned to the Bristol General Hospital in 1927 as senior resident, where his efficiency and insatiable capacity for work soon made him indispensable to the honorary staff. His appointment as assistant surgeon in 1929 followed as a matter of course.

In association with the late Dr. Carey Coombs he devoted much attention to thyrotoxic conditions, and in the short space of three years was able to present a series of over one hundred thyroidectomies, with a low mortality of 3 per cent. Such figures speak for his skill and ability in no uncertain manner. Orthopaedics occupied his attention to a considerable extent, and here he applied with outstanding success the knowledge acquired during his close association with Mr. Hey Groves, to whom he acted as assistant both when senior resident and afterwards in private surgical practice. He revised the last edition of the *Synopsis of Surgery* for Mr. Hey Groves, and with the same author edited the orthopaedic section of the *Medical Annual* of 1932. In the teaching of surgery he took an especial interest, his "rounds" and out-patient room being attended by students of his own hospital and those of the Bristol Royal Infirmary. He was also constantly in demand as a medico-legal witness.

It was inevitable that such a man should rapidly build for himself a flourishing surgical practice extending far beyond the city of Bristol. His loss in this respect will be greatly felt by many practitioners, to whom he was particularly "available" for rich or poor alike. The question of a "fee" never deterred his prompt help, even in the poorest parts of Bristol. The medical school has lost an invaluable teacher and one who would have brought distinction and honour to its traditions. His friends have lost one whose happy spirit, sound advice, and trusted skill made him a pillar of strength in days of doubt and indecision.

Mr. HEY GROVES writes: A fortnight ago I left England for a sea cruise, having seen John Griffiths only a few

days previously, when he was suffering from a small carbuncle in the neck, which did not prevent his carrying on his work. On my return to England I was shocked to learn of the tragedy of his death from septicaemia. I can heartily endorse all that has been written above, and will only add that he was one of my most brilliant pupils, my most valued assistant, and a very dear friend. He devoted himself to helping me in practical surgery, clinical teaching, and literary work, and I looked to him to carry on the traditions of orthopaedic surgery at the Bristol General Hospital.

[The photograph reproduced is by Victor Turl, Clifton.]

A. E. R. HOSKINS, M.B., CH.M.

Resident Medical Officer, Southend General Hospital

News of the death of Dr. Albert Edward Roy Hoskins at the Southend-on-Sea General Hospital, on March 5th, after a short illness, cannot but bring a sense of loss to a very wide circle of friends and acquaintances. He was born in Sydney, Australia, in 1901, being the youngest son of Mr. T. J. Hoskins, for nearly twenty years a member of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales. He was educated at Trinity Grammar School and at Sydney University, where, in 1925, he took the degrees of M.B., Ch.M. During his course there he distinguished himself, winning the prize for operative surgery. In the same year he joined the resident staff of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital; in 1927 he was appointed house-surgeon to the Royal Hospital for Women, a hospital of 280 beds; and in the following year he became senior resident medical officer to the Coast Hospital, a large general hospital of 900 beds. He then acted for a year as locum-tenent in Australia before sailing for England in September, 1931. Within a fortnight of his arrival he was appointed house-surgeon to the Southend-on-Sea Victoria Hospital, which post he retained until 1932, when, on its inauguration, he was welcomed to the post of resident medical officer to the new General Hospital in Southend-on-Sea, working in this capacity until his death. At school and in his university life Hoskins had a distinguished career, both academically and in athletics. He was a double blue of Sydney University, playing in the Rugby First Fifteen from 1921 to 1925. In 1922 he toured New Zealand with the Combined Australian University Rugby team, and in 1924 he played as forward for Australia against the New Zealand All Blacks.

Mr. RODNEY MAINGOT writes: No one who knew Hoskins personally could fail to appreciate the outstanding merits of his character. In his work he was always thorough and conscientious, possessing extraordinary tact, keenness, and ability in all he undertook. His aptitude for organizing and his initiative were of infinite value in helping to establish the new Southend General Hospital in its medical and administrative branches, and the many improvements and innovations for which he was, either directly or indirectly, responsible at the Victoria Hospital during his term of office there bespoke the whole-hearted enthusiasm which marked him in everything he took up. Only those who had had personal dealings with him and had worked side by side with him could appreciate fully all his excellent qualities, both as regards his actual work and in the untiring way in which he devoted his whole energy and thought to the prosperity and well-being of the new General Hospital, which he had so constantly at heart. His zeal and his efforts to further and secure in every possible way the good of this hospital will long be remembered and valued, and cannot but be keenly missed. Apart from his work he had a charming personality, and his unflinching cheerfulness and courtesy, his loyalty and discrimination, and his outstanding enthusiasm had certainly won the hearts, not only of

those who knew him well, but also of many with whom he was less intimately acquainted. His fortitude and his sense of duty are clearly shown up in the determined way in which he kept to his post until compelled to relinquish it so shortly before his death.

Dr. WALTER LATHAM of Newton-le-Willows, Lancs, died on March 1st after a life of incessant labour and public service. Born near Wigan in 1865, he realized at the age of 17 that his ambition to be a doctor could not be attained without very drastic effort and self-sacrifice. He obtained employment at Crewe, and devoted all his leisure to study of the preliminary medical subjects at the local institute, where he obtained first-class honours in chemistry. He then removed to Liverpool, and while working in a chemist's shop attended the school of pharmacy, qualifying in 1891 as a pharmaceutical chemist. After continuing this line of employment successively in Liverpool, Birkenhead, and Sheffield, he went to Bolton, and while still in business studied medicine at the Victoria University of Manchester (Owens College). He obtained the triple qualification L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S.Ed., L.R.F.P.S.Glas. in 1896, and the D.P.H.Vict. in 1902. After qualification he joined a relative in practice at Ashton-in-Makerfield, and in 1898 removed to Earlestown, where he took a deep interest in local life generally. He associated himself actively with the building of the public library and the school for technical instruction; he promoted sanitary developments, and was an active agent in the development of street and house lighting. In 1901 he was elected a member of the Newton Urban District Council, and for many years, with occasional remissions, continued to be re-elected. During the war he did good work as chairman of the war relief committee and as a member of various other organizations promoted in the course of his chairmanship of the local council. Throughout all this time Dr. Walter Latham carried on a large general practice. He was a member of the St. Helens Division of the British Medical Association, and his son, Dr. W. C. Latham, is also in practice at Newton-le-Willows.

We regret to record the sudden death on February 17th, in his sixtieth year, of Dr. JAMES ALLISON, who had been carrying on medical practice in Cambuslang, Lanarkshire, since 1898. He graduated M.B., B.Ch.Edin. in 1895, and proceeded M.D. in 1912, having obtained the diploma in public health of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of Edinburgh eight years previously. Before settling in Cambuslang he had filled an appointment as ship surgeon, and had held various locumtenencies. His great professional abilities were quickly recognized, and he soon built up an extensive practice. For many years he was a member of the Glasgow and Lanarkshire County Panels. He found time for helping in different ways in the general life of the community, one special interest of his being ambulance training, which he continued for nearly thirty years. He was a keen supporter also of the local ex-service men's club and football club. The extent of his association with local interests was recognized on repeated occasions by presentations of different kinds. Twelve years ago he was appointed a justice of the peace. Dr. Allison was a loyal member of the British Medical Association, and attended its meetings faithfully. He had held the office of vice-chairman of the Division, but did not see his way to accept the chairmanship when offered.

Dr. A. M. COLLCUTT of Brighton, who passed away just about the same time as Dr. Edmund Hobhouse, was an active and honoured member of the British Medical Association, serving from time to time on its local executive. He was in active practice when he died, in his sixty-fourth year. Mr. George Morgan writes: Arthur Maurice Colcutt was the son of the London architect who built the Imperial Institute, South Kensington, and other important London buildings. After graduating M.A., M.B., B.Ch. at Cambridge in 1894, he was appointed house-physician at his hospital (St. Thomas's), and, later,

house-surgeon at Poplar Hospital. Coming to Brighton in 1898, he was engaged for the first few years in private practice, and acted at the same time as medical officer of the Brighton Post Office, and St. Mary's Home. He then took up anaesthetics, and soon became one of the most careful, skilful, and trusted anaesthetists in the district. In 1914-18 Captain Colcutt was attached to the Second Eastern General Hospital at Brighton, and he carried out the exacting duties of those strenuous years with no thought of himself, but gave all his time and talents to the service of the wounded soldiers and his other military duties. Though never of robust appearance he enjoyed good health until a short time before his death. A chilblain on his hand became infected with streptococci, which in a short time developed into a most severe attack of lymphangitis and cellulitis of his arm, to which he quickly succumbed. Dr. Colcutt was one of those quiet, unassuming, sincere folks who always make a permanent impression on their surroundings. Retiring to a fault, the chair nearest the door was generally Colcutt's chair. We have heard the expression "cultivating a friendship." Colcutt was one of those shy folk whose friendship needed to be cultivated, but when cultivated it grew into a flower and a fruit—a living thing of beauty and sweetness. Were I asked to put in a sentence a pen portrait of this shy, placid, patient, but most able and sincere man, could I say more than "He never slammed a door"?

## Medico-Legal

### AN ADJOURNED INQUEST

#### CONFLICTING MEDICAL TESTIMONY

At Paddington coroner's court on March 9th, before Mr. Ingleby Oddie, an inquest was concluded on Mrs. Frances Caroline Beech, aged 34, the divorced wife of Viscount Glenapp, now the Earl of Inchcape. The inquest had been adjourned from February 28th to obtain expert evidence as to the action of certain drugs which had been prescribed for the lady shortly before her death. It appeared from the evidence at the first hearing that she was passing through London on her way abroad and was taken ill on February 8th. She went to Dr. C. H. Atkinson, complaining of "nerves," insomnia, and colic. He prescribed for her paraldehyde and medinal in view of her extremely excited condition. On February 10th she told him she had taken a large amount of sal volatile, whereupon he called in Dr. R. D. Gillespie, who inquired into her history, heard about the drugs given her, and gave paraldehyde and, later, 4½ grains of nembatal. She was under constant supervision in a nursing home. Still unable to get sleep, she was given, on the night of February 11th-12th, 7½ grains of medinal. On February 12th she was given paraldehyde, and at 9.15 that evening 6 grains of nembatal. That night she had several hours' sleep, and awoke on the morning of February 13th apparently fresh and bright. Shortly afterwards, however, she became restless, and the nurse, on Dr. Gillespie's standing instruction, gave her 7½ grains of medinal. She afterwards lapsed into unconsciousness, and died at 3.30 in the afternoon. The post-mortem examination revealed no cause of natural death, and an analysis was ordered by the coroner. Dr. Roche Lynch found nembatal in the liver and kidneys, showing that although it had been taken eighteen hours before death, it had not left the body. A smell of paraldehyde was noticed, and perhaps a trace of medinal. Dr. Roche Lynch formed the opinion that death was due to the combined effect of the drugs taken, and he could not wholly exclude the sal volatile. Sir Bernard Spilsbury was of the same opinion.

At the resumed hearing Dr. Atkinson testified that Mrs. Beech was first attended by him at a nursing home in April, 1931. She was then taking omnopon, and it was desired to get her off this drug. She left the home in May. In September of that year he saw her again, when she had gastric trouble and was also suffering from mental upset. For the latter she was given paraldehyde. He recounted from a list supplied to him by the doctor previously in attendance the drugs which had been administered to her at various times; these included dial and luminal, which she had taken well,