

Obituaries

Michael Phelps Ward

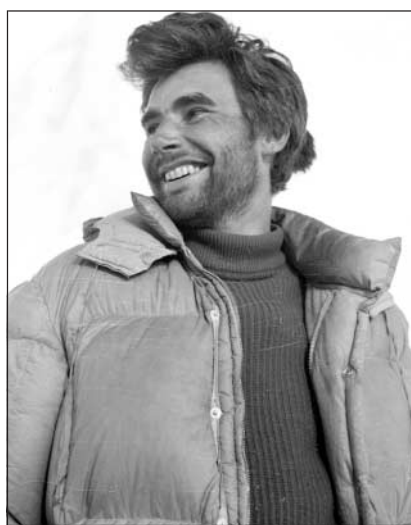
Medical officer and route finder to the 1953 Everest expedition, who became a surgeon in the east end of London and wrote books about high altitude medicine

Michael Ward was a surgeon and high-altitude physiologist, but his most notable achievement was being route finder and medical officer in the team that conquered Everest in 1953. He laid the groundwork for an assault on Everest that would set out from Nepal to the south, which had been a closed country since 1949. Previous attempts had entered from Tibet, which was sealed off after the Chinese invaded in 1950.

Ward developed the idea for this approach to the world's highest mountain while doing his national service in the Royal Army Medical Corps. He had discovered a potential route after finding photographs taken by the unsuccessful expeditions in the 1930s, a map compiled from them, and aerial photographs of Everest's south face, taken by the Royal Air Force. Although the route went through a field of tall and unstable ice cliffs, Ward thought he could see what looked like a more scaleable way to reach the summit. He also believed that previous attempts on Everest had failed through insufficient understanding of high altitude physiology. He felt that getting the science right was the key to a successful attempt, and events proved him right.

He took his ideas to the joint Himalayan committee of the Alpine Club and Royal Geographical Society, and convinced them. Thus the 1951 expedition was launched, under Eric Shipton and with Edmund Hillary on the team. Ward later described the unstable cliffs of the Khumbu icefall as a "glimpse into purgatory." On this expedition they were shown footprints of the supposed abominable snowman, but the sceptical Ward thought that they were probably bear prints. The expedition paved the way for the 1953 ascent, led by Sir John Hunt.

Ward was greatly frustrated that his job as medical officer, dealing with little more than the odd sore throat, disallowed him from doing as much climbing as he felt competent to do. He was permitted no further than Camp VII, a high base camp halfway up the Lhotse face, where he prospected the route up the South Col. He took Jane Austen and the Brontës to read. He had doubts about Hunt's self inclusion in the summit team, feeling that he was not



young enough or fit enough to function efficiently at high altitudes, even with oxygen.

The *Times* newspaper's correspondent covering the exhibition was James Morris, who later became famous as the travel writer Jan Morris, and who wrote of Ward: "He was a slender, lithesome man, and it always gave me great pleasure, even in those disagreeable circumstances, to watch him in action. His balance was so sure, and his movements so subtle, that when he turned his grinning and swarthy face upon you it was as if someone had drawn in a moustache upon a masterpiece by Praxiteles."

After Everest, Ward eschewed the lucrative lecture circuits and returned to medicine, though he continued mountaineering. He led two expeditions to the Tibet-Bhutan border and to Chinese central Asia, where he did scientific work while Chris Bonington made the first ascent of Mount Kongur. He took part in a joint UK-China traverse of Tibet.

Michael Phelps Ward was born in London in 1925, the son of a colonial civil servant. His parents were interned by the Japanese when he was at prep school and he spent school holidays with a guardian. He was inspired by climbing at Marlborough School—where his housemaster was a

veteran of two 1930s Everest expeditions—and, when 12, read a book on Everest that determined his future. He read natural sciences at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and survived a fractured skull while climbing with the university club in northwest France. He did his clinical training at The London Hospital medical college, qualifying in 1949, and was in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1950 to 1952.

Ward did his house jobs at The London Hospital, where he became surgical registrar. In 1958-9 he worked in Montreal on an exchange system. Here he was appalled at the way patients had to be financially assessed before treatment could be considered. He was deeply committed to the NHS. When he became a consultant he worked in the east end of London, at Poplar Hospital (1964-75), St Andrew's Hospital, Bow (1964-93), and at Newham Hospital (1983-93). He was also a lecturer in clinical surgery at The London Hospital from 1975 to 1993.

Lean, fit, lithe, aloof, decisive, intuitive, and kind, Ward was a good leader and brought out the best in people. When the administrators closed a ward, he reopened it and filled it with his "cold" surgery patients. He never did private work, though he would treat friends at private hospitals without charge. He officially retired at 65 but was his own locum for a further three years, until his wife persuaded him to retire.

His published work included a number of papers on high altitude physiology, and the books *Mountain Medicine* (1975) and *High Altitude Medicine and Physiology* (1989). As well as several books on mountaineering, he wrote *Everest: A Thousand Years of Exploration* (2003), where he argued that the scientists were the real heroes of Everest.

In 2002 his neck was dislocated in a collision. It was successfully operated on, along with a heart valve defect. He died from an unsuspected aortic aneurysm. He leaves a wife, Jane, and a son. [CAROLINE RICHMOND]

Michael Phelps Ward, consultant surgeon London 1964-93 (b 1925; q Cambridge/The London Hospital 1949; CBE, FRCS, FRGS), d 7 October 2005.

Robert Lisle Gadd



Consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, 1967-86 (b Sale, Manchester, 1921; q Manchester 1945; MD, FRCS Ed, FRCOG), died from prostate cancer on 28 March 2005.

Lisle Gadd served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1946 to 1948 with the Coldstream Guards in Italy, Palestine, and Greece, reaching the rank of major. After specialist training in Manchester and Liverpool, in 1959 he was appointed consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist for Ashton, Hyde, and Glossop, where he pioneered the clinical use of amniocentesis. In 1967 he left Ashton and was appointed consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at St Mary's Hospital, Manchester, where he developed a first class pregnancy diabetic clinic. He leaves a wife, Veronica; three children; and three grandchildren. [IAIN ROBERTSON]

Valerian Pius Kimati



Professor of paediatrics Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (b Tanzania 1936; q Makerere University, Uganda, 1964; DCH, FRCP Ed, FRCP Glas), d 29 May 2005.

Valerian Kimati did his postgraduate training in Glasgow. Returning to Tanzania, he had a distinguished career, becoming the first Tanzanian professor of paediatrics at the University of Dar es Salaam in 1979. He was president of the Medical Association of Tanzania and the first president of the Paediatric Association of Tanzania. He later became Unicef regional adviser in primary health care for south central Asia. After retirement at 60 he embarked on another career as professor of paediatrics at the International Medical and Technological University, Dar es Salaam, where he was also appointed vice chancellor. He leaves a wife, Eugenia, and two children. [P M BARNES]

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Joseph Towfiq Thomas Marrow



Former consultant physician and cardiologist Basra, Iraq (b 1922; q American University of Beirut 1950; FRCP Ed), died from a heart attack on 30 September 2005.

Joseph Marrow did his postgraduate training in Boston, Massachusetts. He returned home to Basra and established a successful private practice. He was a founder member of the new medical school in Basra, establishing a reputable department with close links to the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. On his retirement he continued in private practice. He leaves a wife, Nada; three children; and three grandchildren. [LUAY ZEBOUNI, NAMIR AL-MOKHTAR]

Jean Katherine Patterson (née Ritchie)



Former director research records department, St Mark's Hospital, London (b 1923; q Oxford 1946; FFR, MRCP, DM), died from lung cancer on 28 July 2005.

Jean's early career as a radiotherapist was followed by marriage and bringing up a family. In the mid-1960s the Ileostomy Association appointed her to assess the outcome of current surgical treatment for colitis, which established Jean as a meticulous clinical researcher and gave her an abiding interest in the treatment of inflammatory bowel disease. St Mark's responded by appointing her as research fellow and later as director of its research records department. In retirement, Jean enjoyed her interest in natural history, especially bird watching, at which she became an expert. Predeceased by her husband, Pat, she leaves two children and two grandchildren. [JOHN LENNARD-JONES]

David Ian Rushton

Senior lecturer in pathology Birmingham Women's Hospital 1970-2000 (b Cheshire 1935; q Manchester 1960; FRCPPath, FRCPCH), died from a cholangiocarcinoma on 4 June 2005.



Ian did a senior house officer appointment in clinical pathology at Hope Hospital, Salford. He moved to Birmingham in 1962 and his interest and training in paediatric and neonatal pathology started when he obtained a registrar post at the Birmingham Children's Hospital. For two years Ian was a research fellow in cytogenetics, studying the chromosomal abnormalities in spontaneous abortions; this was to remain a lifelong research interest. He was appointed senior lecturer in pathology in Birmingham in 1970 and honorary consultant to the Birmingham Maternity Hospital, remaining there for the next 30 years until his retirement in 2000. He leaves a wife, Patricia; three daughters; and six grandchildren. [LYNN JONES]

Michael John Stone

General practitioner Lye, Stourbridge (b Rugby 1953; q Bristol 1977; DRCOG, MRCP), died from metastatic cancer (unknown primary) on 25 June 2005.

Mike joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1981 and was posted to Berlin and Hong Kong. In 1987 he joined the small urban general practice in Lye where he remained a principal partner until shortly before his illness and death. In addition he had an interest in gastroenterology and was employed as a clinical assistant endoscopist from 1988 to 2005. He was also a police surgeon. Mike enjoyed sailing and spent time as medical officer on the Jubilee Sailing Trust's tall ship the *Lord Nelson*, which allows both the physically disabled and able bodied to participate in crewing a tall ship. He leaves a wife, Jean, and two daughters. [PAULINE A STONE]

Stewart G Wolf

Former head of the department of medicine University of Oklahoma, USA (b Baltimore 1914; q Johns Hopkins Medical School 1938), died from Alzheimer's disease on 25 September 2005.

Stewart Wolf did postgraduate training at Cornell-New York Hospital. He subsequently headed the department of medicine at the University of Oklahoma, where he simultaneously held professorships in physiology, neurology, psychiatry, and the behavioural sciences. Sometimes referred to as "the father of psychosomatic medicine," he did groundbreaking research on the role of stress and emotions on gastrointestinal function, hypertension, heart attacks, and sudden death, the placebo response, and the cardioprotective effects of strong social support and stability. [PAUL J ROSCH]