

OBITUARIES



Derek Hubert Patrick Cope

Andrew P Cope

Consultant anaesthetist (b 1922; q Middlesex Hospital Medical School 1945; FRCA), d 16 June 2015.



Derek Hubert Patrick Cope was educated at Epsom College, where he excelled in sciences in the classroom and on the rugby playing fields of the college. On leaving Epsom in 1940, he was awarded the Freer Lucas entrance scholarship to the Middlesex Hospital. After qualifying he completed his first appointment as house surgeon at Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham. From September 1945 to April 1948 he worked as general duty orderly in the Royal Army Medical Corps. This was when he discovered his interest in, and aptitude for anaesthetics.

He was released from active military duty in May 1948 and started training in earnest, obtaining a position as junior anaesthetist at the Middlesex Hospital. In 1951 he was appointed senior registrar and in 1953 he was appointed to his first substantive post as consultant anaesthetist in the thoracic unit at Grove Park Hospital, taking up a senior post at the Middlesex Hospital the following year. Derek's special interests were in anaesthetic procedures relating to general and dental surgery, as well as to the maternity unit.

In 1959 he applied to become an honorary anaesthetist at the Hospital of St John and St Elizabeth, a world renowned hospice in St John's Wood. He had a distinguished career. He was

affiliated with many learned societies and associations, as a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine and member of the Association of Anaesthetists and the BMA. He published on a wide range of themes relating to his discipline, but was particularly interested in addressing the challenging problems of pain in childbirth. Derek was firmly of the opinion that an anaesthetic drug of sufficiently high molecular weight might not pass through the placental barrier, and would prove to be an ideal drug for maternal anaesthesia. Another of his major interests was the treatment of cerebral hypoxia—especially after severe dehydration. Notably, his seminal contributions to the discipline were published in *The BMJ* in March 1956. He continued to practise in the private sector well beyond retirement, in latter years providing anaesthetic services to local dental practices in Marylebone.

Derek Cope married Constance Radford in 1945 in Duffield Parish Church. They set up their home in Marylebone, London, soon after, where they lived for the rest of their lives. Derek and Constance both shared a great love of Derbyshire and would regularly spend holidays at their cottage in Ireton Wood. They also devoted much time in London contributing to the extensive portfolio of activities of St Marylebone Parish Church.

Courageous, stoic, compassionate, gracious, and kind; often outspoken, but always thinking of others before himself; and, above all, one of life's gentlemen—Derek fought his final illness with great bravery, dignity, and without complaint over a period of 12 months, facing each new challenge (and operation) with cheerful determination, thanks in part to the constant and devoted support of his family, his many close friends, and his strong Christian faith. He died in the London Clinic on 16 June 2015. Derek leaves nephews and a niece.

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