

## Pierre Lasjaunias

Interventional neuroradiologist who pioneered paediatric neurointervention

Anatomy is now seldom lauded. Still less are professors of anatomy widely known and loved. But by the time of his premature death, Pierre Lasjaunias commanded a unique reputation and affection internationally, both as an anatomist and as an interventional neuroradiologist, having practically created the discipline of paediatric neurointervention.

He was an inspired and inspiring teacher and a fine illustrator. "Learn the anatomy: it's the cheapest way of being safe," he often exhorted. He believed that anatomy could be understood only as a dynamic subject: the three dimensions of traditional anatomy together with the influences of time, in the short term embryonic development and in the long term vertebrate evolution.

Pierre recorded this work in his four volume textbook *Surgical Neuroangiography*, whose second edition was completed not long before his death. When an unusual pattern of cerebral blood vessels was encountered doctors from all over the world would send images for his opinion. For example, in 2003 when the Iranian craniopagus conjoined twins Ladan and Laleh Bijani were being assessed before their attempted surgical separation in Singapore, he was consulted to elucidate the anatomical complexities of their fused cerebral venous sinuses.

Pierre was the first member of his family to achieve academic success. His appreciation of other cultures grew with his time as a student and young doctor in the Yemen. He developed an early fascination for anatomy and radiology. He was appointed assistant in radiology and trained in neuroradiology at the Fondation Rothschild from 1971 to 1977 while also being assistant in anatomy.

He began his quest to understand better the vascular anatomy of the head and neck. The possibilities of treating lesions in these vascular territories by embolisation with gelfoam or polyvinyl alcohol particles were beginning to be realised, but many stroke complications occurred because dangerous



communications between the external carotid and internal carotid arteries were barely understood. Pierre's early work explained these dangerous anastomoses and predicted where to find them, leading to safer practice and a flourishing subspecialty. These early publications—for example, on the ascending pharyngeal artery—are still widely cited. In 1983 he received his PhD in anatomy together with his specialist qualification in radiology. He moved to Hôpital Kremlin Bicêtre and became head of the neurovascular section from 1977 to 1998. In 2006 he became head of neurosciences at Bicêtre.

Technological improvements in catheters and guidewires, the development of true microcatheters and embolisation coils, and the growing use of cyanoacrylate glues led to rapid growth of interventional neuroradiology for treating traditionally neurosurgical diseases such as aneurysms and arteriovenous malformations. He also began to treat vascular abnormalities in children. Bicêtre Hospital and the Fondation Rothschild and Lariboisière Hospital made Paris, together with Nancy, destinations for neuroradiologists and neurosurgeons from all over the world.

Pierre was appointed adjunct professor in radiology and neurosurgery at New York University from 1986 to 1996, in Berlin from 1991 to 1999, and visiting professor of radiology in Toronto from 1984. Here he began to perfect the techniques for treating newborn babies with malformations of the vein of Galen with which he is so much associated.

This rare condition consists of a large arteriovenous shunt in the centre of the brain draining into the vein of Galen, which becomes enormously dilated. The shunt

causes severe rapidly fatal heart failure. Previous surgical attempts at closure of the shunt usually resulted in early death. Pierre showed that it was often possible to close the shunt by microcatheter injection of cyanoacrylate glue with a normal outcome for the baby.

His mastery of these techniques in newborn babies led to worldwide referrals. Doctors from many countries trained at Bicêtre. His support for Thai neuroradiology led to his being presented with the Royal Noble Order of Thailand by the King in 1998, and he held honorary doctorates from many leading universities. At home he was made chevalier of the légion d'honneur in 2003.

He published 327 original papers, editorials, and commentaries; contributed many individual chapters to multiauthor books; and wrote 11 textbooks with his long term collaborators Alejandro Berenstein (New York) and Karel terBrugge (Toronto). He was also first editor in chief of *Interventional Neuroradiology*; founding member and current president of the World Federation of Interventional and Therapeutic Neuroradiology; president of the European Society of Neuroradiology, 1996-8; and founder and organiser of the annual anatomy, biology and clinical correlation (ABC) course in Val d'Isère, 1991-2008. He was the driving force behind the international masters degree in neurovascular diseases—a joint venture between the University of Paris and Mahidol University, Bangkok, and taught at Chiang Mai University in Thailand.

Pierre was sometimes seen as conservative in adopting new techniques and materials. This resulted though from a natural scepticism and desire always to strive for his patients' safety. In France he was sometimes controversial, attracting criticism for his willingness to teach and write in English rather than French. This in itself sometimes created problems because if he could not find an appropriate English word he would coin a neologism, which he would defend in heated but entertaining arguments.

He leaves his wife, Pascale, and three daughters.

### JJ Bhattacharya

Pierre Lasjaunias, professor of anatomy, University of Paris, and head of neuroscience, Hôpital Kremlin Bicêtre, Paris (b 1948; q Paris 1975; PhD), died from a heart attack on 1 July 2008.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1701

**Sarah Benton**



Consultant paediatric neurologist Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, London (b 1950; q Manchester 1974; FRCP, FRCPC), died from pancreatic cancer on 9 May 2008. In 1988 Sarah Benton was appointed the first consultant paediatric neurologist at the Royal London Hospital and rapidly developed outreach clinics at several hospitals in east London and Essex. From 1990 to 1996 she was the clinical director of paediatric services. In 1997 she moved to Great Ormond Street, where she was the clinical director of neurosciences until 2003. From 2003 she was the regional deanery adviser in paediatric neurology for North Thames and served on the council of the British Paediatric Neurology Association. She leaves a husband, Michael, and a daughter. **Carlos de Sousa**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1638

**William Benjamin Clee**



Former general practitioner Church Village, South Wales (b 1953; q Cardiff 1978; BSc (Hons), FRCP), died from corticobasal degeneration dementia on 19 January 2008. During his first year as a principal in 1985 William Benjamin Clee uncovered an outbreak of hepatitis B among young intravenous drug users and helped found a voluntary support group. He was invited to join the Welsh Committee on Drug Misuse, and then the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs in 1990, leading to publication of the

nationally distributed advisory book on substance misuse in the NHS. In 1998 he was appointed chair of the Welsh Advisory Council on Drug and Alcohol Misuse. During this time, he continued weekly drug clinics and a hospital gastroscopy session. He leaves a wife, Pat, and three children. **Patricia Clee**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1642

**Anna Isobel Cupples (née Pillow)**



Former general practitioner Loughbrickland, County Down (b 1920; q Queen's University, Belfast, 1946), d 16 July 2008. After graduation, Anna Isobel Cupples (née Pillow) ("Isobel") worked in Armagh hospitals for two years before marrying and moving to Belfast to become a minister's wife. In 1951 she opened a new practice in Loughbrickland, which grew over the next 50 years to four doctors, including her son, and over 8000 patients. Aged 80, she retired but still saw patients who sought her advice at her home, visiting those who were less able even up to a month before her death. Predeceased by her husband, Barnett, in 1995, she leaves two children and a granddaughter.

**Brian B Cupples, Margaret Cupples**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1650

**Robert David Mayer**



General practitioner, trainer, and family therapist Highgate, London; associate specialist eating disorders St Ann's Hospital, London (b 1959; q Bristol 1983; MRCPsych, MRCPG,

MSc), died from pancreatic cancer on 21 March 2008. Robert David Mayer combined quiet, sensitive erudition with a fierce intellect and a passion for equality of access to the NHS. His ability to listen to and analyse the narrative captured the essence for the recipient. Systemic theory in his family therapy practice, which he incorporated in his general consultations, also influenced colleagues. He contributed to the NICE guidelines on eating disorders. Robert's ability to communicate openly and honestly during his illness enabled him to make some sense of his situation, and he embarked on a diploma in the philosophy of medicine. He leaves a wife, Susan, and three children. **Jonathan Riddell, Sandra Rachman**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1215  
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**Mauveen Ethel Vera Munk (née Evans)**



Former general practitioner Peterborough, Cambridgeshire (b 1929; q Leeds 1954), died from cancer of the caecum on 18 July 2008. Born in Mexico, where her father was a goldmine engineer, Mauveen Ethel Vera Munk (née Evans) was fluent in Spanish, later learning Welsh when her parents relocated to North Wales. After qualification, she met her husband during a visit to Holland, and they settled in Stilton in 1958. Initially she worked for the Department of Health and Social Security and the Blood Transfusion Service, joining a general practice based in Whittlesey and Stanground in 1972. She retired in 1989, continuing her work for the Department of Social Security until 2003. She leaves a husband, Jan, and two sons.

**Ian G Mowat, Malcolm G Sadler**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1641

**Dennis Shirley Parsons**

Emeritus fellow Merton College, Oxford (b 1917; q Oxford 1944; MA, DM), d 28 July 2008. Medically qualified, Dennis Shirley Parsons was a distinguished physiologist who worked in Oxford throughout his professional life, becoming reader in physiological biochemistry and fellow and medical/biochemistry tutor at Merton College. His major research contributions were in intestinal absorption. His studies with R B Fischer in the early 1950s paved the way to understanding the cellular basis of active transport of sugars, work which formed the scientific basis for oral rehydration therapy. A gifted teacher with a strong quantitative feel for biology, he found pleasure in the careers of his many pupils, university gossip, the history of science and human absurdity. He leaves a partner, Pamela Mackinnon, and three children.

**Richard Boyd**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1640

**Mark Hamilton Towriss**



General practitioner Bottisham, Cambridgeshire (b 1954, q Newcastle 1977; FRCGP, FRACP, MA Medical Ethics and Law), died suddenly, probably from unsuspected atheroma of the anterior coronary artery, while on a charity cycle ride in Suffolk on 22 June 2008. In addition to being senior partner Mark Hamilton Towriss was active in medical education in Cambridge and East Anglia. He was a GP trainer and course organiser, a clinical teacher of Cambridge University Medical School, and coordinator of medical law and ethics at the Clinical School, Addenbrooke's Hospital. From 2001 to 2003 he was director of higher professional education for Cambridgeshire, West Norfolk, and West Suffolk. He leaves a wife, Ute, and four children.

**Ute Towriss**  
Cite this as: *BMJ* 2008;337:a1639