

Philip Poole-Wilson

Cardiologist who advanced basic science and clinical practice

Philip Poole-Wilson was appointed in 1976 at the age of 33 to the National Heart Hospital as a senior lecturer and cardiologist. He was later involved in the merger of The Heart Hospital with the Brompton in Chelsea and the unification of the renamed National Heart and Lung Institute in 1988. The history of the specialist hospitals, institutes, and medical schools in London was characterised by closures and amalgamations during Philip's professional lifetime.

Leading a reformation

In 1997 he was the first head of the division of heart and lung in the newly formed Imperial College School of Medicine. During this time of change at home he was also leading a reformation in the European Society of Cardiology and was its president from 1994-1996. In 2003 he became president of the World Heart Federation and involved himself in prevention of heart disease in the developing world. He was not considered a natural politician, but he could rise to the occasion with great effect.

Basic scientists knew a very different side. Philip engaged them with enthusiasm, curiosity, intelligence, and an uncanny ability to ask the question that might redirect thought. He had a talent for collaboration. I first met him when we were both involved in basic research alongside our clinical training at St Thomas' Hospital. From my cardiac surgical perspective, and his involvement with coronary care, the need to understand potassium had become critical. A refugee Czech electrochemist, Jiri Kratochvil, was working in the physiology laboratories of David Band. Philip saw the opportunity, and we published a fundamental study on potassium ion activity in the *Analyst* in 1978. At that time the clinician-scientist such as Philip was a familiar figure, but the demands of clinical practice and the attraction of interventional cardiology were strong. Philip was fully involved with science to the end, a champion of true collaboration, and throughout he sought to understand the unglamorous clinical problem of heart failure.

Philip's international reputation was for research, particularly into the pathophysiol-

ogy of heart failure and its associated cellular changes. Like others of his generation he went to the United States for a fellowship. From the 19th century modern medicine was shaped by a constant traffic of medical men between Dublin, Paris, Berlin, Budapest, Zurich, sharing a growing understanding of neurology, surgery, cardiology. These interactions survived the first world war but not the devastation of world war two and the Iron Curtain. It fell to a few Europeans of vision to rebuild collaborations. The European Society of Cardiology was a prime example and it grew and improved its structure under Philip's leadership; his presidency at a young age was in recognition of what he had already done and provided him the opportunity to do more.

He titled his 2000 lecture to the International Society for Heart Research "A race between molecules, gadgets, and politics for heart failure." This showed his conscious willingness to engage with the most basic of science; technologies, such as the mechanical heart; and the necessary politics. His scientific collaborators knew him to be meticulously logical, unfailingly kind, a gentle man seeing the best that could be got out of every individual and every situation, and a believer in fair play—but always prepared to challenge. Is this at odds with making change happen for the best? In Philip's case, it was not.

To understand how so much was possible in one life we must note his ability to read quickly, be immune from distraction, to get the gist of matters, remain good humoured, and be known as an honest broker. Many of us know that when reputations and careers were at risk, as they can be in a competitive environment with much to play for, Philip found the good word, made sure there was a fair hearing and that there was a friend in court. On more than one occasion when adverse comments were

being made about a colleague, Philip would balance the record with a quiet reminder of to whom they sent their sickest patients.

To the end of a long career, with involvement on many fronts, Philip never lost empathy with the individual sick patient, or the entirely unselfish pleasure in seeing a patient that he had looked after for years, doing well. The management of heart failure is not a story of the quick fix but of getting the most out of a life which may be in decline over a long period. The contribution with which he was most pleased to be associated



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with was the six minute walk test, headlined in *Circulation* on 3 March, the day before he died. Among his lifetime's high level research into single ion channels, isolated myosites, and intracellular pH, this easily understood measure of the integrated function of the body in day to day life, requiring no more than a length of corridor, was chosen for special mention. One of Philip's scientific collaborators told me that a way he gained attention

was to say, "May I tell you about one of my patients?" The patient in question was a transgenic mouse, and the scientist needed an idea of clinical correlates to help validate his laboratory work.

In Philip's collaborations with his laboratory colleagues he nurtured the team rather than stamped his authority on it. With his trainees, whether in clinical practice or research, he always gave honest advice, even if it might be disappointing, and he was always delighted to let high achievers go, even though he would miss them. The list of the successful research degrees he supervised, and of his former trainees now heads of departments, is even more impressive, as a record of a generous man, than the remarkable listings of his own achievements. He leaves his wife Mary and three children, William, Michael, and Oenone.

Tom Treasure

Philip Poole-Wilson, (b 1943, q St Thomas', London, 1967) died from a heart attack on 4 March 2009.

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Rex Ernest Coupland

Emeritus professor of human morphology University of Nottingham (b 1924; q Leeds 1947; MD, DSc, PhD, FRSE), d 22 June 2008.

At the age of 33 Rex Ernest Coupland became professor of anatomy in Dundee, establishing a flourishing department. In 1967 he was appointed one of five foundation professors for the new medical school at Nottingham with its emphasis on the clinical application of science. He protected his staff, stood up for his subject, and was loyal to Nottingham, even refusing the regius chair at Oxford. Generous, forward looking, open minded, he helped to establish the British Association of Clinical Anatomists. He also researched adrenal and neuroendocrine function and magnetic resonance imaging and was prophetic about medical education. He leaves a wife, Eileen, and two children.

Stanley Monkhouse

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John Moullin Davies



Former surgeon commander Royal Navy (b 1925; q Oxford/St George's, London, 1951; MA, DIH, DPH), died from a heart attack on 20 December 2008.

John Moullin Davies went up to Oxford aged 16, his four years there being solely funded by his grandmother's bequest of £500. He joined the Royal Naval Medical Service in 1952, seeing service in the Korean war and Malayan emergency. He served until 1971, being the last senior medical officer to HM Dockyard Chatham, and he was then civilian medical officer to ships of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary until 1982. John also wrote about his mother's families in Guernsey and on Channel Island history, regularly contributing to the *Journal of the Guernsey Society*. He leaves a wife, Elizabeth; four

children; and 16 grandchildren.

Elizabeth Davies, Peter Davies

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Jeevan Muddappa Deyanda



Specialist registrar in cardiology All Wales Training Rotation (b 1971; q JSS Medical College, Mysore, India, 1996; PhD, MRCP), d 17 July 2007.

Soon after house posts in Mysore, India, Jeevan Muddappa Deyanda conducted cardiology research at the Moscow Medical Academy. He defended his PhD thesis, on cerivastatin, in Russian in 2000. He continued his training in the United Kingdom in 2002 on a general medical senior house officer rotation in Abergavenny, studying for the MRCP. From 2003 he held cardiology posts in the University Hospital of Wales, Cardiff. He gained his national training number in December 2006, shortly before his illness recurred, but he was unable to return to work after January 2007. He died as he lived: positive and uncomplaining. He leaves a wife, Patricia.

Patricia de Lacy

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Ian Kirkland Hart

Senior lecturer in neurology University of Liverpool and consultant neurologist Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery, Liverpool (b 1958; q Glasgow 1983; BSc (Hons), PhD, FRCP), d 10 November 2008.

Qualifying with commendation, having gained a BSc, published three papers, and won two research



scholarships, Ian Kirkland Hart then showed his clinical ability during his junior posts in Glasgow. In London he learnt specialised research laboratory methods, and in Oxford he laid the foundations for his renowned work on encephalitis and peripheral nerve disorders. Ian came to Liverpool in 1995, becoming a national authority on neurological disorders caused by abnormalities of the immune system, including myasthenia gravis. Publishing over 40 papers, Ian also supported the Myasthenia Gravis Association and the Encephalitis Support Group. He leaves a wife, Gillian, and two daughters.

Nicholas Fletcher

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Brian Higgs

Former consultant surgeon South Bucks Health Authority (b 1935; q Cambridge/Westminster 1959; MA, MChir, FRCS), died on 4 October 2008 after 10 years with leukaemia.

At Westminster, Brian Higgs won four prizes, and his first house surgeon post was working under Lawrence Abel. He then had 11 different roles over nine years, gaining wide experience in adults and children in all types of surgery, vascular reconstruction, and malignant disease management and research on both sides of the Atlantic. He was appointed consultant surgeon to Wycombe Hospital in 1969 at the age of 33, the youngest at that time. He then worked in Buckinghamshire for nearly 40 years until he retired in 1998, owing to ill health. He leaves a wife, Rosemary; two sons; and three grandchildren.

Richard Higgs

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Bernard Cecil Rosenberg

Former consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist Rotherham District General Hospital (b 1939; q Dublin 1962; TD, MA, FRCOG), died from bladder cancer on 24 February 2009. After house jobs in Dublin, Bernard Cecil Rosenberg came to England in 1963 and quickly decided on a career in obstetrics and gynaecology. His special interest was the management of patients with fertility problems. He



became consultant in Rotherham in 1976 and helped to develop the unit until his retirement in 2001. He served in the Territorial Army from 1970 until 2004, attaining the rank of lieutenant colonel commanding Field Ambulance Unit 307. He was also pivotal in establishing the Sheffield and District Reform Jewish Congregation and was active in several multi-faith organisations. Predeceased by a son, he leaves a wife, Rosemary, and two daughters.

Rosemary Rosenberg, David Fenton, Sarah Rosenberg, Rebecca Rosenberg

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Sheila Margaret Spedding (née Ruell)



Former consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry Salisbury (b 1933; q St Mary's Hospital, London, 1974; BSc, MRCPsych), died from a heart attack on 22 October 2008.

An honours graduate in chemistry at Manchester, Sheila Margaret Spedding (née Ruell) first worked as a research chemist in Cambridge and Norwich. The family then moved to Australia, and she began her medical training at Monash University, completing it in London when the family returned to England. After psychiatry training posts in the Southampton area Sheila was appointed consultant in child and adolescent psychiatry in Salisbury, a post she held from 1982 until her retirement in 1993. Predeceased by a son in 2003, she leaves her husband, Albert; four children; and three grandchildren.

Anne V Spedding

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