

John Havard

BMA secretary responsible for seat belt and drink-driving legislation

John Havard, a former general secretary of the BMA, was the architect of Britain's seat belt and drink-driving legislation. He also modernised the BMA, increasing the respect in which it was held by both the profession and the public.

Havard was a fourth generation doctor and the first not to speak Welsh in his family. His Wales-born father was a Lowestoft GP and John, who at one point wanted to be an archaeologist, was expected to carry on the family tradition. From Malvern College he went to Jesus College Cambridge, doing his clinical training at the Middlesex Hospital and staying on to train in the professorial medical unit until called to do his national service. Shortly before he left he helped set up a sports injury clinic at the Middlesex after pulling his hamstring.

He spent 1950-52 as a doctor working on aircrew selection. Bored and with time to spare, he took a correspondence course in law. Later he sat Cambridge law finals and, after eating the requisite number of dinners at an inn of court, was called to the bar in 1953. By this time he was in general practice back in Lowestoft. There he spent his spare time writing his MD thesis on detection of secret homicide. It was published as a book in 1960 and remains a standard reference text. In his last two years in Lowestoft he was secretary of the East Suffolk local medical committee, his first taste of medical politics.

Wanting a change of direction, he joined the BMA as a fairly junior assistant secretary in 1958. He remained there, rising through the ranks to become secretary in 1980. Michael

O'Donnell commented on his appointment in *World Medicine*, "Fate may have smiled on the BMA and delivered the right man at the right time." He took over a demoralised staff and revitalised them. He considered committee meetings an unproductive use of time. He remained in the post until his retirement in 1989, when he was awarded the BMA's gold medal. In the same year he was awarded the Royal Society of Medicine's Stevens gold medal.

He modernised the BMA, employing their first personnel manager and abolishing unnecessary paperwork. Stephen Lock, then editor of the *BMJ*, said he shifted the BMA's emphasis away from GPs' earnings and got it a high public profile over science.

He hired the first public relations officer, who raised the public profile of the BMA. He also campaigned against boxing because of its propensity to cause brain damage.

Dr Lock added, "From the *BMJ*'s point of view he was the only person on the other side of the courtyard who knew any medicine—and he knew a lot of it. So we got him to write editorials on his pet subjects—drink-driving, seat belts, and protecting children from road deaths—the UK's were the highest in the West. I think he must have been the first secretary for years to be made an FRCP." During his BMA years Havard served on the General Medical Council and on the Whitley council, which determined NHS salaries. He was consultant to the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. Jointly with Professor David Goldberg he wrote a report on blood alcohol levels and driving that induced several countries to adopt or modify legislation.

After his retirement from the BMA he rerouted his energies to the Commonwealth Medical Association, and under his leadership it advanced the medical associations of developing countries. The CWA was consultant to the United Nations and contributed to advances in safe childbirth, AIDS prevention, and medical ethics.

A patrician man, Havard was equally effective in the lecture theatre, television studio, debating chamber, or advising members of parliament. He talked to individuals in the same tones as he addressed an audience of a thousand. Tough when he needed to be, he had few friends but many admirers.

He held the all-time London University 100 yard sprint record of 10.1 seconds from 1946 (the race was converted to 100 metres shortly afterwards) and was a possible contender for the Olympics. He was



selected to run for England against Scotland and Wales. This got him into trouble with his Welsh relatives, but he got out of it by saying he wouldn't have been good enough to run for Wales. He belonged to the Achilles Club, the combined Oxford and Cambridge athletics club; two of his team-mates were Ross and Norris McWhirter. He kept up his interest in athletics by refereeing Oxford and Cambridge sprinters, and once disqualified Jeffrey Archer for making two false starts before the starting pistol sounded.

As musical as he was athletic, he sang bass in the Bach choir; one of his gigs was singing in the chorus at Prince Charles and Lady Diana's wedding. He also sang with the Collegiate Singers, a group that did locums in cathedrals when their choirs were away on tour.

He had two sons and a daughter by his first wife, Margaret Collis. They divorced in 1982 and he married Anne Boutwood, a gynaecologist. He also had a son with Diana Northcott.

He was bereft after Anne's death last year, by which time he was troubled by his long-standing prostate cancer. He left his house in Islington, north London, and moved to a bungalow with a fine garden near the home of his daughter Mandy, a radiologist. Alas, he had only 11 days there before needing to enter a hospice, dying two days later.

Caroline Richmond

John David Jayne Havard, doctor and barrister, born 5 May 1924, q Cambridge and Middlesex Hospital 1949, general practice Lowestoft 1952-8. BMA 1958-1989 (Secretary 1980-89), died 23 May 2010.

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Lawrence Brimacombe



Former general practitioner Sheffield (b 1927; q Sheffield 1954), died from complications of Parkinson's disease on 22 February 2010.

After two years in India with the Royal Air Force, Lawrence Brimacombe ("Larry") was offered a government grant to study medicine, which had previously been financially impossible. He specialised in neurology before going into general practice. After the untimely death of his first wife, Lilian, he was left with four young children together with a singlehanded practice. With his second wife, Moira, he developed the practice and took on sessions as a hospital medical practitioner. In 1979 he developed Parkinson's disease. Despite increasing disability, he retired unwillingly at 70 and worked for the Benefits Agency for a further seven years, eventually completing 50 years of medical practice. He leaves Moira, six children; and eight grandchildren.

Moira Brimacombe

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Robert Angus Fletcher Gilbert



Former general practitioner Stenhousemuir, Stirlingshire (b 1922; q Edinburgh 1946), d 28 March 2010. Robert Angus Fletcher Gilbert ("Robbie") was denied military service because of profound myopia, but he worked for the Home Guard and was made honorary Oberleutnant to the prisoners of war who worked under him as medical orderlies. He was orthopaedic registrar at Gleneagles

and Bridge of Earn before entering general practice in 1947 in Hull. He moved to Brora in 1964 as a singlehanded practitioner and district hospitals officer for Sutherland. He practised in Stenhousemuir from 1974 until retirement in 1981. Robbie's knowledge of firearms history was respected by many of the world's leading academics, and his personal collection of specimens was one of the finest outside museums. Predeceased by a son, he leaves a wife, Liliias; two children; and six grandchildren.

Michael Simpson

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Isabel Mary Headen (Gardner) (née Woodhouse)

Former family planning doctor Buckinghamshire (b 1917; q Trinity College Dublin 1940), d 26 March 2010. After qualification, Isabel Mary Headen (Gardner) (née Woodhouse) came to Liverpool and married fellow graduate George Gardner. After his death in 1959, when she was 42, she moved from their shared practice and devoted herself to the welfare of her mother, four daughters, and extended family while continuing to practise medicine in blood transfusion, school, community medicine, and family planning clinics. She believed that male and female doctors have equal but different gifts and attributes. In 1968 she moved to Buckinghamshire, where she helped train doctors in family planning, her chief interest for 45 years. In retirement she married again and travelled extensively in Europe. She leaves four daughters.

Isabel Headen

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John Houghton



Former clinical medical officer Ribbles Valley (b 1936; q Manchester 1961; FRSPH), died from lung cancer on 22 February 2010.

After house jobs in Salford and Preston, John Houghton worked for a few years in general practice in Dartford and Longridge. He then made a new career in public health and remained a staunch supporter of his chosen specialty even after retirement in 1991. A strong and lifelong Catholic faith sustained him before and through his terminal illness. He leaves a wife, Enid; two sons and three daughters (two of whom are doctors); and nine grandchildren.

Alban Houghton

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Kenneth Fawcett Mole



Former general practitioner London (b 1919; q St Mary's 1954; BA (Oxon)), d 13 March 2010.

An organ scholar, Kenneth Fawcett Mole read classics and philosophy at Oxford. During the second world war he was a conscientious objector before joining the Royal Air Force and being recruited into the Intelligence Service because of his fluent Chinese, which enabled him to report Japanese fleet movements from Japanese occupied China. Four years after qualifying, he started a singlehanded practice in Kensington, retiring to France in the early 1980s. He returned to Dorset towards the end of the '80s as he had developed a rare neurological condition. He then wrote the best selling *Easy PC*, his wartime memoirs, and a treatise on evolution and philosophy. He leaves a wife, Jeanne-Marie; three children; and six grandchildren.

Alasdair Fraser

Michael Laurence

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David Norman Howell Owen

Former general practitioner Fishguard, Pembrokeshire (b 1925; q Cambridge/Guy's Hospital, London, 1952; DA), died from prostate cancer on 11 November 2009.



David Norman Howell Owen's retirement in 1990 brought to an end 175 years of continuous practice by five generations of the Owen family in Fishguard. David worked singlehandedly with obstetric and anaesthetic sessions at Witybush General Hospital. As clinical assistant in anaesthetics he was particularly skilful with children. He was a rugby Blue at Cambridge, later playing for Guy's, and a keen skier and dinghy sailor. He also took up gliding, later gaining a pilot's licence for powered aircraft, and he was preparing for an examination in instrument flying during his last illness. Predeceased by his wife, Helen, in 2005, he leaves two daughters and four grandchildren.

Lyn Perry

Philip Robinson

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Zaki Rizk Salib

Former general practitioner Liverpool (b 1919; q Liverpool 1951; MRCPG), died on 26 April 2010 after several strokes. Zaki Rizk Salib spent his undergraduate years and his working life in Liverpool, working in Broadgreen and Walton Hospitals before becoming a general practitioner for over 30 years. His quiet diplomacy and sense of humour facilitated the growth of his practice, and he took on two partners. He served on several committees, did a lot of work for first aid and family planning, and helped plan the purpose built health centre where he spent half of his working life. His activities outside medicine included gardening, travel, and competitive bridge. He retained a great fondness for north Wales, where he eventually retired. He leaves a wife, Alona, and two children.

Zaki Rizk Salib

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