

Alfred Nowell Hamilton Peach

Studied the effects of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency in prisoners of war

Alfred Nowell Hamilton Peach (b 1914; q Bristol University School of Medicine, Bristol 1937), died on 13 January 2012 from heart failure.

Alfred Nowell Hamilton Peach was born in Bristol in 1914. He was educated at Clifton College and studied medicine in the city, qualifying in 1937. At the outbreak of the war he joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and was posted to Malaya in 1940. During the Japanese invasion of Northern Malaya in December 1941 Peach took huge risks to evacuate patients into trenches under heavy bombardment and then remained at the hospital until it was almost too late. For such selflessness he was mentioned in Despatches. In Nowell's words his retreat was done in style, at the wheel of an "old thirty horsepower Ford V8, secondhand from the Chinese garage in Singapore, which went like a train . . . I escaped down the length of Malaya . . . stopped at Kuala Lumpur . . . [for] a shower and lunch and then carried on down to Singapore and got there later in the evening . . ." He was swiftly drafted to Sumatra but had barely unpacked before more Japanese soldiers were parachuting on to the island.

He landed in Java, where at the end of February 1942 he arrived in Bandung at the No 1 Allied General Hospital, an Australian field hospital in a converted school, the Crystelyk Lyceum. Here he worked alongside the legendary Australian surgeon and hospital's commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Following the Dutch surrender (8 March) the Japanese allowed the staff to continue to patch up battle casualties for another six weeks before closing the hospital down. During that time Dunlop, knowing of Peach's intention to become a surgeon after the war, gave him a secondhand 1936 American edition of *Gray's Anatomy* that he had picked up in Bandung. Peach took the precaution of getting Japanese permission to keep the book (and more importantly their rubber stamped "chop" on the title page to prove it) and diligently read and memorized several pages a day throughout the rest of his three and a half years in captivity. This was to serve him well in the future.

In late October 1942 Peach joined a team of medical staff at Tandjong Priok, the large transit camp on docks north of Batavia. Initially there was not much work for the doctors and Peach busied himself meticulously recording a remarkable medical research study. His "Burning Feet" study consisted of detailed neurological examinations for over 50 men who were all suffering appalling discomfort in their feet owing to nerve



The other great love of Nowell's life was ornithological photography. What had started as an 8 year old boy's hobby turned out to be the perfect interest while incarcerated in Java, as his many notebooks, kept secretly throughout his captivity, reveal

damage caused by malnutrition and vitamin deficiency. In the absence of medicines to treat them, and with little other than sympathy to offer, Peach set about using the opportunity to learn more about the condition. In order to test their reflexes he needed a patellar hammer and called on the Royal Engineer Sappers to help. They used the head from a Wimshurst machine (used in physics to produce sparks), which they attached to the central rod of a syringe and fitted into a wooden handle carved by Peach.

In mid 1944 Peach was by then based at the St Vincentius hospital in Batavia when a group of emaciated and desperately sick prisoners of war arrived. He recalled 62 years later how he helped one of the men to walk again: "One of the several parties who came back from the Spice Islands—Ambon and Haruku—were in one of my wards at St Vincentius . . . one chap with beriberi had bilateral foot drop, which of course is a frightful impediment to getting around, so I made some bands to go round below the knee and on the foot and sort of threaded string between the two, which kept his feet extended, which was a great help for him to get around."

Peach returned to Britain on board the *Cilicia* from Singapore, arriving in Liverpool on 29 October 1945. He quickly resumed his surgical career in London and in April 1946 he passed the Royal College of Surgeons' Primary Fellowship examination after just a few months' study—an astonishing feat that he put down to his years of POW study. In 1949 Nowell became a fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons and met and married Pauline (a nurse), the love of his life for

the next 63 years. They had five children, settling in Horsham, Sussex. Nowell practised there as a GP surgeon from 1954 until his retirement in 1978, carrying out more than 3000 operations at Horsham Hospital. Apart from Pauline, their ever growing family and medicine, the other great love of Nowell's life was ornithological photography. His photographs taken over the past 50 years are extraordinary.

In 2007 Nowell agreed to take part in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's Far Eastern prisoner of war oral history study. In all he gave three interviews, generously and meticulously sharing his memories of those times. He gave permission for a paper to be written based on his "Burning Feet" study (currently awaiting publication). It was during the second interview that Nowell explained how in Java, with the aid of a Dutch dental officer's x ray equipment, they had managed to do barium meals on patients with severe gastric ulceration. Having only one small bottle of barium he helped to devise a method for "recycling" the barium after the first patient had been examined and nature had taken its course. With a wry smile he concluded: "I don't know whether the subsequent patients knew where it had been."

Nowell Peach died peacefully on 13 January 2012 and is survived by Pauline, their five children (one of whom is a deputy editor of the *BMJ*), 13 grandchildren and six great grandchildren, his copy of *Gray's Anatomy*, and his unique "Burning Feet" study.

Meg Parkes

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Peter John Fenton



Former consultant ophthalmologist, Portsmouth (b 1935; q St Thomas' Hospital 1959), d 9 December 2011.

Peter John Fenton ("PF") determinedly pursued his career in ophthalmology until he was appointed to the eye department in Portsmouth. A dextrous surgeon and shrewd clinician, he enjoyed the cut and thrust of medical politics, serving as president of the Portsmouth division of the BMA (1982-3). He was also active in hospital politics. His time as chairman of the medical executive committee coincided with the introduction of the Thatcher government's health reforms. PF skilfully steered Portsmouth Hospitals through these choppy waters until his retirement in 1995. Country pursuits provided an antidote to the stresses of consultant practice. PF was a keen gardener and kept bees. He is survived by his wife, Amanda, and two children.

David L Boase

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Syed Hasan

Former general practitioner, Coventry (b 1934; q 1961), d November 2011.

Born in India, Syed Hasan later moved to Pakistan, where he studied medicine at Dow Medical College in Karachi. He arrived in England in 1964 after a posting as a physician in Abu Dhabi. After various hospital postings across the UK, he settled in Coventry and in 1970 established himself as a general practitioner while also working in hospital clinics covering rheumatology, public health, and paediatrics. In 2008 he retired as a senior partner but remained a popular member of the local community and continued to practise in various surgeries and clinics across the city. Throughout his life he was active in the community, organising Asian cultural events and promoting multicultural

understanding. He is survived by his wife, three children, and four grandchildren.

Amer Hasan

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Francis Patrick Marsh

Former consultant and academic nephrologist London Hospital (b 1936, q Cambridge 1957), d 16 January 2011.

Francis Patrick Marsh ("Frank"), a substantial figure in British nephrology, died in the Royal Marsden Hospital. Trained in Cambridge and the London Hospital Medical College, he later served as senior lecturer on the medical unit and consultant physician to the London Hospital. There he created the Hanbury dialysis unit, which became one of the major renal centres in the country. Frank Marsh was a notable medical educator, an excellent example of someone who led from the front—he actually taught, rather than spending his time pontificating about teaching. He held important jobs in the NHS, the University of London, and the American University of the Caribbean. Outside medicine he was a fine violinist who led the National Youth Orchestra. He is survived by his wife, Pamela, and three children.

John Cunningham

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George Adam Newsholme



Former consultant radiotherapist Birmingham (b 1921; q Cambridge 1945; MD, FRCP, FRCR), d 1 September 2011.

George Adam Newsholme served in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Germany during and after the war. On his return he worked as a registrar on the medical professorial unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham and gained his MD doing research on the uptake of radioactive

material by the thyroid gland. As a senior registrar at the Royal Hospital in Wolverhampton he caught tuberculosis and nearly died. On returning to work a year later he was given a more junior job. He decided to move into radiotherapy and in 1958 was appointed consultant radiotherapist to United Birmingham Hospitals. He was at the forefront of the development of a comprehensive service for treating patients with cancer in the Midlands. He leaves a wife, Rosemary; three children; and seven grandchildren.

Dorothy Davies

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Mushtaq Abdul Rasool

Ophthalmic medical practitioner and clinical assistant Hull Royal Infirmary (b 1952; q Dow Medical College, Karachi, 1978), died from metastatic neurofibrosarcoma on 31 December 2011.

After completing undergraduate training and house officer jobs in Karachi, Mushtaq Abdul Rasool came to England. He secured a place on the ophthalmic senior house officer rotation in Yorkshire, working in Hull, Halifax, and Harrogate in the mid 1980s, when he completed his diploma in ophthalmology. In the late 1980s illness prevented him from working, but in 1991 he returned to full time work as an ophthalmic medical practitioner and clinical assistant at Hull Royal Infirmary. His tumour unexpectedly recurred in January 2011, and this time his treatment was unsuccessful. He is survived by his wife, Hufrize, and a son.

Reza Rasool

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Robert Basil Woodd-Walker

Former consultant paediatrician, Mid Essex and Northeast Essex (b 1933; q Cambridge/London 1958; FRCP, ex FRCPC), died from carcinoma of the pancreas on 15 December 2011.

After his preregistration house jobs Robert Woodd-Walker ("Bob") went to Zimbabwe and worked in Bulawayo in the then new Mpilo Hospital. After working as a senior house officer and registrar in various locations in the



UK and Cape Town, he was appointed consultant paediatrician in Mid and Northeast Essex districts in 1972. Bob represented Colchester at BMA House and saw his main responsibilities to be local and general, rather than specialised. His particular interest was in the effects of emotions on symptomatic complaints. He retired in 1998. Predeceased by his wife, Christine, he leaves a son and a daughter.

Basil Woodd-Walker

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Peter John James Wren



Former general practitioner, Chorley (b 1920; q Liverpool 1953; OBE, VRD, KSG, JP, DL, MD, FRCGP), died from chronic heart failure on 18 December 2011.

Peter John James Wren studied medicine at Liverpool University, and in 1955 he joined his cousin as a GP in Chorley. He received the Charles Oliver Hawthorne award from the BMA for his MD into Down's syndrome. In 1992 Peter was awarded an OBE for his work in Lancashire as a justice of the peace and chairman of the Chorley bench, commissioner of St John Ambulance, deputy lieutenant, and high sheriff (1984-5). After retirement he became chairman of the Medical Commission of the Amateur Boxing Association and a member of the medical commission of the International Amateur Boxing Association, in addition to being a medical officer at two Olympic Games. He leaves his wife, Margie; three children; and five grandchildren.

Damian Richard Wren

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