

Ian Greville Tait

Pioneering polymath and Benjamin Britten's general practitioner

Ian Greville Tait (b 1926; q Cambridge 1953), died from pneumonia on 4 February 2013.

When Ian Tait entered general practice in 1959 a dowager's message told him that GPs were received only on Fridays at 11 am, through the back door. Yet a few years later the practice was firmly in the 20th century, with a national reputation. Not only had it adopted the rapid developments elsewhere (such as the practice ancillary team), but Tait had also pioneered a vocational training scheme, problem oriented medical records, and practice educational meetings. Surprisingly the location was Aldeburgh, the Suffolk seaside town that in E M Forster's words is a "bleak little place, not beautiful." As today, it contained a mixture of aristocrats, fishermen, former spooks, and musicians—including Benjamin Britten, who became Tait's patient and friend.

Though on call 24 hours most days, Tait also served the community outside medicine, becoming a town councillor, for example, in a (vain) attempt to stop ribbon housing development along the country roads. His other interests were wide. A published poet himself, he helped establish an international poetry festival, became an accomplished watercolour painter, and sailed as far and as often as possible, besides succumbing to the local addiction to golf.

Born in Sussex, Tait had wanted to go into the Royal Navy but was persuaded to follow the family tradition of general practice. During national service in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) at the end of the war, he was taught navigation in London by being given a map, a compass, and a tradesman's bicycle adapted for selling ice cream and told to find specified locations. He studied medicine at Cambridge and St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School, where he held house appointments before going for a year to internships at St Luke's Hospital, New York. After a further junior post at Ipswich Hospital, his lifelong friend John Stevens invited him to join the practice at Aldeburgh, where he stayed for the rest of his life.

Firm Quaker principles

Handsome and modest, with a warm smile, and deeply concerned about the problems of others, Tait unsurprisingly became a member of the Society of Friends. Their firm Quaker principles enabled him and his wife to stand



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Brick Dock from Round Hill, Aldeburgh. Tait studied painting with the Aldeburgh artist Tessa Henderson, becoming an accomplished watercolourist

unembarrassed in Aldeburgh High Street, lobbying against the proposed war in Iraq. Similar principles had emerged earlier when the practice doctors decided to undertake attachments in the developing world, working for 18 months in Swaziland. Tait's obsession was general practice and how to make it ever better. He became deeply involved with the emerging college of general practitioners, becoming regional adviser for East Anglia and establishing his own trainee scheme linked to Ipswich Hospital. Later he was to hold three travelling fellowships, give the Gale Memorial Lecture, and serve as a visiting professor of general practice at University College Hospital, London, and at Canberra. His over-riding interest in medical records culminated in a general practice rarity, an MD degree. While in retirement he took the undergraduate course in medical history at the Wellcome Institute in London—subsequently playing an important part in its new faculty of 20th century medical history.

One of Tait's last concerns was that somebody should refute a contentious claim that Benjamin Britten's death was due to aortic syphilis. The composer had been his patient for several years,

and Tait had masterminded his treatment for diverticulitis, subacute bacterial endocarditis, and aortic incompetence, liaising with Britten's cardiologist and recruiting a superb nursing sister to look after him at home. Britten had encouraged him to make statements about his health, while the medical records were in the public domain—yet a recent biography had stated as a fact that his heart disease was caused by syphilis, despite the congenital defect found at operation and its histology as well as the previous negative serological tests. As somebody who had often dined at the composer's house—invitations that were reciprocated—Tait was understandably upset but sadly died before the controversy had come fully into the open and the opposite case could be proved.

Tait leaves a wife, Janet, whom he met at Barts and to whom he was married for almost 60 years. She also had an important role as a doctor in the practice, as well as being prominent in the Liberal Democrat Party; there were three sons and a daughter and nine grandchildren.

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Joseph Footitt



Former Walport clinical lecturer infection in airway disease research group, National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College, London (b 1974; q Guy's and St Thomas' Medical School 2000; PhD), died in a road traffic accident in Bermuda on 13 June 2012.

Joseph Footitt managed to combine membership of committees of the Royal College of Physicians and British Thoracic Society with a demanding PhD. He was passionate about chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and his research into the role of rhinovirus in exacerbations was beginning to spawn a flurry of journal articles when he died. His popularity with colleagues and patients is best illustrated by the fact that two of his research subjects, on hearing of his death, donated their participation fee to Joseph's Breath of Life fund. He leaves his wife, Emma, and a son, Aneurin Max Joseph, who was born on 20 November 2012.

Simon Merritt

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Alan William Fowler

Consultant orthopaedic surgeon Bridgend (b 1920; q UCH London, 1943; FRCS Eng), died from a stroke on 21 January 2013.

Alan William Fowler worked as an orthopaedic surgeon at Bridgend General Hospital from 1953 to his retirement in 1986. He published a technique for embedded toenails by excision of the germinal matrix in 1958 and for forefoot reconstruction (Fowler's operation) for irreversible claw toes in 1959. After retirement he was visiting professor of orthopaedics in Lusaka, Zambia. In 1995 he published a review paper on the importance of joint movements in the treatment of fractures, in which he advocated

the conservative management of fractures using short splints, thus allowing for movement at adjacent joints. His wide ranging interest in medical research and practice is reflected in his book *Modern Medicine and the Bible*. Predeceased by his wife, Margaret, in 2010, he leaves seven adopted children.

Joseph Fowler

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Frank Neville Garratt



Former director of public health Wolverhampton (b 1928; q Birmingham 1951; PhD, FFCM), died from bronchopneumonia and Parkinson's disease on 13 January 2013.

After house jobs at Birmingham General Hospital and national service with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Antwerp and Belgium, Frank Neville Garratt completed his PhD and worked as a lecturer, establishing his lifelong research interests in mental illness, learning disability, perinatal mortality, and their aetiologies. He was medical officer of health and then director of public health for Wolverhampton until his retirement in 1989. The Neville Garratt Centre for Independent Living is a tribute to his efforts to improve health and wellbeing in Wolverhampton. He continued his research in retirement, as an honorary consultant in Walsall, with a 2009 publication on maternal diet and pre-eclampsia. Neville leaves his wife, Mary; two sons; and three grandsons.

David Garratt

Anne McConville

Kevin Kelleher

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Athol Noble Hepburn

Former occupational physician Ministry of Defence (b 1931; q Aberdeen 1954; DPH, FFOM), d 31 December 2012.



Athol Hepburn did his national service in the Royal Navy, specialising in aviation medicine with the Fleet Air Arm. He then served in the Royal Naval Reserve unit at *HMS President* in London. After working for the airline BOAC he became senior medical officer at the Royal Aircraft Establishment Farnborough and subsequently director of civilian medical services with the Ministry of Defence. He was a member of the Anglo-French Concorde aeromedical subcommittee. In the latter part of his career he worked part time at the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston. He leaves his wife, Julia; two sons; and two grandsons.

Alastair L N Hepburn

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William Philip Dowie Logan



Epidemiologist and former director of the Division of Health Statistics, World Health Organization (b 1914; q Glasgow 1939; DPH, MD, PhD, FRCP), d 11 December 2012.

William Philip Dowie Logan joined the General Register Office in 1948 as chief medical statistician. He was adviser on statistics to the Ministry of Health, head of the World Health Organization's centre for classification of disease, and a panel member for health statistics for WHO. His statistical analysis of the consequences of the great smog of London on 5-10 December 1952 contributed to the rapid implementation of the Clean Air Act 1956. In his later years he developed bilateral macular

degeneration, which intruded on his great hobbies of reading and crosswords. He leaves his second wife, Barbara; four sons; two daughters; 16 grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

Alan Logan

Donald Logan

Ian Logan

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Muhammad Shafiq



Consultant general surgeon (b 1935; q Nishtar Medical College, Multan, Pakistan 1957; FRCS Edin), d 10 September 2012.

After coming to England in 1964, Muhammad Shafiq studied at the postgraduate medical school at Hammersmith and then became a senior house officer in trauma and surgery at the Princess Beatrice Hospital in Earls Court. He obtained the Hallet prize from the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Lilly prize as a joint author in 1983. After several other posts, he worked for the North Manchester Health Authority from 1974 until the last few years. His repertoire included gastrointestinal and vascular surgery. He died after an accident while on holiday in France. He leaves his wife, Fay, and four children.

John Clegg

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