

OBITUARY

Obituaries of any doctors will be considered for publication provided that the doctors have worked in the United Kingdom for a large part of their career. Obituaries must be submitted exclusively to the BMJ and should be up to about 400 words long. "Self written" obituaries are welcome.

Sister MARY AQUINAS OBE, FRCPED

Sister Mary Aquinas (Dr Kathleen Monaghan), who did much to organise the BMA's joint clinical meeting in Hong Kong in 1979 and was a world authority on tuberculosis, died on 28 November at the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, Hong Kong, after a short illness. She made a considerable contribution to the eradication of tuberculosis not only in Hong Kong but throughout South East Asia. As a lecturer in the University of Hong Kong she taught virtually every medical student for the past 30 years. Elective students from the United Kingdom and many postgraduate doctors also came under her friendly influence: she was always extremely cheerful.

Sister Aquinas graduated in medicine at University College, Dublin, in 1947, having joined the



Columban Sisters in 1939, and was destined to work in China. Shortly before she was due to arrive, however, Mao Tse Tung expelled all missionaries, so in 1949 she and her companions took over the Ruttonjee Sanatorium, a run down institution that had previously served as a hospital for seamen and a

Japanese prisoner of war interrogation camp. At that time two thirds of deaths in Hong Kong were due to tuberculosis and it was common practice for government trucks to pick up the bodies of those who had died during the night. It was an exciting period, with new chemotherapeutic agents coming into use, but it was difficult to institute chemical trials as the commercially wily Chinese often had under their beds a supply of newer drugs (which she could not obtain). They also had a habit of disappearing during the night before they had completed their course of treatment.

Her scientific work on tuberculosis was concerned with studies on minimal dose regimens, which are important in poor Third World countries. She was greatly assisted by the Medical Research Council, which encouraged and supported her in the early days: indeed, it continued to do so until her death.

Because of her unique clinical experience Sister Aquinas was asked to lecture in many parts of the world, from Moscow to Mexico. Apart from her humility and dedication she did not fulfil the popular conception of a nun. She enjoyed looking at Inca remains in Machi Pichu just like any other doctor having a busman's holiday. She certainly deserved these interludes because life was hard in Hong Kong. When tuberculosis was brought under control she became interested in the major problem of heroin abuse and was chairman of the Society for the Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers. She was concerned in community affairs and projects and was vice chairman of the Community Advice Bureau and secretary of the Soroptomist Inter-

national of Hong Kong. A past president of the BMA of Hong Kong, she constantly strove for moral and ethical standards. Of late she had helped in the alleviation of communicable disease in central Africa and last year worked in Ethiopia. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Hong Kong in 1978.

She was a frequent visitor to London and appreciated her welcome at the Medical Research Council. Last August she had the particular joy of receiving an invitation to afternoon tea with the Queen. Her final illness was short: despite considerable suffering from radiotherapy and chemotherapy she was uncomplaining and with her great faith accepted death courageously. Her life was characterised by selfless service to others and by extraordinary joy, graciousness, and good humour. —TAC.

ZL writes: That Sister Mary Aquinas was a leading expert on diseases of the chest, particularly tuberculosis, is well known the world over. What is perhaps not so well known was her deep interest in and knowledge of many other branches of medicine. When in 1954 the Society of Anaesthetists of Hong Kong was established Sister Aquinas graced many of its early meetings. Her always cheerful, friendly, and unassuming nature was but an outward sign of a brilliant mind that she used with great understanding, sympathy, and even enthusiasm when matters such as ether or spinal anaesthesia for tuberculous patients were discussed. As more and more learned medical societies were being established in Hong Kong it became progressively more difficult for her physically to attend their meetings, and so the Society of Anaesthetists had—in common with others—to be content with fewer personal participations on her part. Nevertheless, she kept up her interest in anaesthesia and was always available when wise counsel was needed. The anaesthetic fraternity in Hong Kong (in common with the whole medical community and, indeed, also the public) benefited in an incalculable manner by Sister Aquinas's life, work, and commitments in Hong Kong.

H R THOMPSON MB, BCHIR, FRCS

Mr H R Thompson, who was surgeon to St Mark's Hospital, London, from 1946 to 1974, died on 9 December. He was a leader in colorectal surgery and an authority on medical history and on the traditions of the city of London.

Henry Reynolds Thompson graduated from Cambridge University and The London Hospital in 1932 and received his early surgical training at The London, passing his FRCS in 1934. After holding the post of resident surgical officer at St Mark's Hospital he served during the war in the Royal Army Medical Corps as a surgical specialist first in north west Europe, when he was mentioned in dispatches, and then in South East Asia. After the war he was made consultant to the army and appointed surgeon to St Mark's Hospital, London, and also to the Forest Hospital and Woodford Jubilee Hospital.

During the postwar decades Henry Thompson

became one of the best known London specialist surgeons with an international reputation in colorectal proctology. He had many attributes that ensured his great reputation: a particularly skilled surgeon, he was a fine communicator and teacher, greatly appreciated by the many younger surgeons who went to St Mark's for special experience. He had tireless energy that enabled him to meet unflinchingly all his many commitments. With his big physique and his commanding but friendly, slightly diffident personality he inspired confidence among all those who worked with him and particularly among his patients. He saw them not just as surgical problems but as individuals, anticipating their unspoken fears and quietly mobilising any necessary supporting help. He gave a superb service to his NHS hospital patients and was greatly in demand by overseas patients.

At St Mark's Hospital his bold, careful, well planned operations, his reputation for unravelling the most difficult abdominal surgical problem, and his great energy meant exceptionally long operating lists, well attended by visiting surgeons. His attention to detail and his insistence on accurate record keeping set a high standard for the medical records follow up department, which he personally helped to supervise every week for many years. He was a modern successor to the surgical giants who had built up the work at St Mark's over the previous 150 years. It was a special delight to him and his colleagues that he was able to contribute to the 150th anniversary meeting held earlier in the year and also to the 25th anniversary meeting of the council of the research foundation that he helped to found.

An active supporter of several medical societies in London and at international meetings overseas, Henry served as president of the Medical Society of London, the Hunterian Society, and the section of proctology at the Royal Society of London. This enabled him to develop his interest in medical history. He joined the livery of both the Barbers' Company and the Society of Apothecaries as a young man, developing a deep interest in the history and traditions of the city of London and the city companies. At Barber Surgeons Hall he was closely involved with its rebuilding after the war and served on its court for 35 years. He became master of both companies. His interest in the history of surgery was reflected in his memorable Vicary lecture at the Royal College of Surgeons, "Sergeant surgeons to their majesties," and in the Sir Lionel Denny lecture to the Worshipful Company of Barbers on "The contribution of the city to medicine." His long service to the Barbers' Company was recognised by the rare honour of his being elected barber emeritus and his wife, Doreen, an honorary freewoman. With his clear resonant voice his witty after dinner speeches were greatly appreciated in all his spheres of activity. He maintained a standard of excellence difficult to emulate but giving a spur and an inspiration to so many associated with him, including myself. —FAJ.

DVB writes: Perhaps, after a 25 year partnership, an anaesthetist may add a few brush strokes to the portrait of his departed surgical hero. Surgery, with the mastery of its techniques, was the abiding passion of Henry Thompson's life, and he was

never happier than when practising it and imbuing others with his enthusiasm and delight in it. The unhurried cursive script of his calligraphy echoed the masterly simplified diagrams he enjoyed executing in coloured crayons on the glazed walls of his favourite operating theatre in explanation of what he had just achieved in his careful manipulation of tissues. Notwithstanding a considerable physical presence and resonant voice, he had an essentially unassuming modesty that endeared him to his patients and enabled him to take full account of their personal circumstances. Never just "cases," they were remembered by name in years to come as though their operations had been but yesterday. They, in their turn, expressed gratitude in terms akin to idolatry. Having entrusted the anaesthetic management of each patient to a colleague, he never thereafter interfered in its conduct or questioned a decision that to proceed at all would be unjustifiably hazardous. His deft and gentle handling of viscera reduced the stress of his operations to patient and anaesthetist alike. A surgeon's surgeon, a patient's surgeon, an anaesthetist's surgeon—he was all of these and more. Honour and integrity were of his nature and of malice was there none. To have known him was great pleasure; to have partnered him was privilege indeed.

WR writes: I knew this remarkable man as a surgeon and friend over many years. Patients, even doctors themselves, may be nervous at an interview with a consultant, but not so with this thoughtful man. He was an adept at what the late Lord Horder spoke of as "the close up" between the doctor and his patient. More than most he was endowed with a special sense of communication and understanding. It was inspiring to send him a problem case, and my memory is that the difficulties melted away in his hands. It has been my good fortune to have the support of many consultants in surgery and medicine. In none did I have more faith than this "Old Londoner," who was always so proud of the hospital he had grown up in.

JOANNA SHELDON MD, FRCP

Dr Joanna Sheldon, consultant physician to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton, and Hove General Hospital, died on 31 December.

Joanna Sheldon was born in London on 10 March 1931 and educated at St George's School,



Harpenden, and King's College Hospital Medical School, where she graduated MB, BS in 1955. After house appointments at King's and Brighton she spent five years in the departments of medicine and endocrinology at Ann Arbor, Michigan. There her clinical and research ability was recognised and

she was offered a permanent staff appointment. She decided to return to King's and obtained the MRCP in 1962 and proceeded MD in 1966. In 1975 she was elected FRCP; this was the first time that a father (the late Sir Wilfrid Sheldon) and daughter had been currently fellows of the Royal College of Physicians. At King's she was diabetic registrar and senior registrar to the medical unit, which led to her appointment as consultant physician to the Brighton hospitals.

In appointing Joanna Sheldon Brighton obtained an outstanding general physician and diabetician. She found time to undertake bench laboratory work at the University of Sussex, but an ever increasing clinical and committee load, both national and local, eventually made this impossible. Despite opposition she set up a diabetic inpatient unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, which considerably enhanced patient care and education as well as the training of junior doctors and nurses in diabetes. Her abilities as a lucid lecturer and bedside teacher were shown by the number of Guy's students and MRCP candidates who thronged her ward rounds.

Joanna's dignity and charm concealed an impatience with those colleagues whose standards were not as thorough and exacting as her own. Her qualities as a physician were recognised over a wide area, as evidenced by the size of her practice and the number of doctors and their wives who were her patients. When not working she was a highly knowledgeable gardener and ornithologist and a lover of music, and she enjoyed hill walking in Scotland and the Dolomites.

Joanna had known she was dying for the past year; in the intervals between inpatient treatment and major surgery she continued to work. Those who visited her during the recent Christmas period came away with more than they had brought and strengthened by her deep religious faith.—PH-S.

W F A HERON MB, BS

Dr W F A Heron, a general practitioner in Darlington, died on 22 December aged 72.

William Frederick Arthur Heron graduated in medicine from the University of Durham at Newcastle in 1937 and during the second world war served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in campaigns in Africa and Italy. He subsequently settled in Darlington, where he became a well known figure in many circles. A keen rugby player and later a supporter, he was a patron of Darlington rugby club. Until his retirement two years ago he took an active part in BMA affairs.

Bill is survived by his wife, his son, John, his daughter, Anne, and grandchildren.—SSH.

V M K McKEIGUE MRCS, LRCP

Dr V M K McKeigue, a general practitioner in St Mary Cray, Kent, has died aged 68.

Valerie Mair Knoyle Davies was educated at Swansea High School and studied medicine at University College and the West London Hospital, at that time one of only three hospitals in London to accept women students. She qualified in 1941. After house appointments in London she served in the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1943 to 1945. She married Peter McKeigue in 1943. After the war she was faced with the demands of medicine and family. She accepted the priorities as she saw them, devoting herself first to her husband and family but continuing to practise medicine in local authority clinics. Not until her family was firmly established did she enter general practice in 1964.

Her medicine derived much from the deeply ingrained respect for knowledge and learning that her Welsh upbringing had given her. Always a voracious reader, she continued to keep up to date with medical advances. General practice suited her well as she could show her kindness and love of people and when necessary use her ability to fight for a cause. She had an endearing and lively sense of humour.

She had a shrewd understanding of the scope, as

well as the problems, of high technology medicine. She herself suffered major renal failure in 1981, and her last years were dominated by just such medicine. She survived her many setbacks with gentle courage, helped by her sense of purpose and the wonderful support of her husband and her family. She is survived by her husband, her two daughters, and her son, of whom two are doctors and one a social worker.—TDG, GAG.

J R McMICHAEL MB, BCH, BAO

Dr J R McMichael, who was in general practice in Hurst Green, East Sussex for 40 years, died aged 86 on 16 November.

James Ramsey McMichael was born on 25 October 1899 in County Derry and graduated in medicine at Queen's University, Belfast, in 1923. He worked for a while in Liverpool and then in Forest Hill, south London. He served for a short time as a lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps but was soon invalided out. After a short period in Cornwall he moved to Sussex: in 1945 he established



himself in the village of Hurst Green, where he spent the rest of his life in singlehanded general practice.

As was said at his memorial service, "He was universally known as Mac or Dr Mac to both friends and patients. And to him the two were synonymous. To have Mac as a doctor was to have Mac as a friend. It came almost as a surprise that he had a full name."

As a former clinical tutor I remember his faithfulness in attending evening lectures, which for him necessitated a journey of 15 miles each way. For 10 years after his eyesight began to fail he was driven everywhere by his devoted wife, Katherine. Her wonderful support enabled him to continue in practice until he was well over 80.

There was an air of courtesy and slight reserve about him. He really knew his patients and was something of a purist in the use of the English language. He had constancy and determination, which enabled him to carry on after a coronary and to cope with failing vision; integrity; a sharp wit and a strong sense of humour; but, above all, humanity, which warmed all who came in contact with him. He is survived by his wife, a daughter, Susan, and a son, Kevin.—REI.

E de H LOBO FRCPED

Dr E de H Lobo, consultant paediatrician to Luton and Dunstable Hospital, died on 30 September aged 51.

Edwin de Heredia Lobo graduated MB, BS in Bombay in 1957. He came to Britain soon afterwards and established himself in paediatrics, working his way up through several university appointments in professorial units in Glasgow, Sheffield, and Liverpool. Then in 1968 he bypassed the opportunity for an appointment at the Mayo Clinic and went to the Luton and Dunstable Hospital as a consultant paediatrician. He was a general paediatrician with vast experience and great wisdom and had a special interest in the needs and problems of

handicapped children. He did much to develop the assessment and other services for handicapped children in south Bedfordshire and was consultant to several special schools for physically and mentally handicapped children.

Eddie married an English girl and was very anglicised in his views and cultural attitude. At the same time he was fluent in several Asian languages and had an intellectual interest in and understanding of Asian and Oriental cultures, which was helpful in a district with a high immigrant population. He lectured and wrote widely, particularly on the problems of immigrant children. His book *Children of Immigrants to Britain—Their Health and Social Problems* stands as a classic guide to paediatricians. His work with the handicapped and those at a disadvantage lives on after him: his wife, Jill, continues to run a local charitable organisation for the handicapped, which they worked on together.

Eddie was an articulate and cheerful man who lived philosophically with the knowledge that he might die early. He wanted desperately to see all his four children reach maturity, but, sadly, this did not happen. His patients and colleagues loved him for his gentle understanding and compassion. Above all, he was a man who cared: he cared passionately for his patients, their parents, and their plight.—MJC.

T R HUNTER

MB, CHB, MRCP

Dr T R Hunter, a general practitioner in Kearsley, died on 28 November in his 59th year, after a relapse of a long illness borne with remarkable courage and fortitude. He had retired from his post as senior partner in June.

Tom Roy Hunter was a true Lancastrian, born in south Manchester in 1926. He attended Manchester Grammar School and Manchester University Medical School, where he graduated in

1950. After six months' hospital work he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps as a regular army officer and attained the rank of major before leaving in 1955 after service in Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Scottish Command. He entered general practice as an assistant in Stockport and Cheadle but left after

12 months to settle permanently in Kearsley, where he worked until his retirement.

Roy was a man who enjoyed life to the full, squeezing every drop of joy and happiness from everything he did. He had a particular and very personal approach to obstetrics, being one of the few remaining general practitioners still to enjoy domiciliary midwifery, and was kind, thoughtful, and intelligent in dealing with his patients. A police surgeon for many years, he was also involved in the St John Ambulance Brigade and was a member of the Bolton Area Health Authority management team from 1974 to 1982, a past chairman of the local medical committee, a member of the Bolton family practitioner committee, and a former chairman of Bolton Medical Institute.

Roy's interests outside medicine were almost too numerous to list and included photography, painting, gardening, the Rotarians, and freemasonry, in which he had attained the position of provincial officer of his lodge. He enjoyed dinghy sailing up to 1979, when ill health forced him to give it up, but it

was quickly substituted with golf, to which he gave as much time and effort as he could. Probably his main passion was for music. His interest was catholic; not only did he enjoy listening to music but he was a keen participant and had played with an amateur classical trio as well as jazz and as a pianist at dances. He is survived by his devoted wife, Pat, four sons, and his mother.—BVH.

J MACFADYEN

MB, CHB

Dr J Macfadyen, who was formerly in general practice in Nairn, died suddenly at his home on 22 November.

John (Ian) Macfadyen was born in 1914 and attended Paisley Grammar School before graduating in medicine at Glasgow University in 1939. After a residency in the Western Infirmary in Glasgow he joined the navy in 1940, serving in the Mediterranean and the Far East. After demobilisation he spent a short period in Goole, Yorkshire, before moving to Nairn in Scotland in 1948 to enter a partnership. He remained in practice for 32 years until he retired in 1980. He also held the appointments of superintendent of the local cottage hospital and medical officer to the Red Cross Society.

Ian was a dedicated family doctor, loved by his patients for his unsparing service to them, held in high regard by his colleagues, and a fine example of the best in general practice to the young doctors he trained. Outside medicine he had many interests—rugby, golf, curling, fishing, and, most of all, his garden and greenhouse. He had a strong Christian belief and was an elder of his church for many years.

After his retirement in 1980 he was able to spend more time with his wife and family. He was also able to devote time and energy to helping those disabled by arthritis in the community. He was a wonderful combination of humour, tolerance, kindness, and integrity. He is survived by his wife, Gladys, who was his constant support in his work and his retirement, and his sons, Alan, a doctor, and Ewan, a teacher.—JDM.

M S ABRAHAMSON

MB, BCH, BAO

Dr M S Abrahamson, formerly medical adviser to Organon Laboratories Ltd, died on 19 December.

Mervyn Saul Abrahamson was born in Newry, County Down, on 10 September 1900. He was educated at the Christian Brother's School in Newry, where he and his elder brother, Leonard, who later became president of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, were the only Jewish pupils. He was very proud subsequently to be made an honorary life vice president of the school's Past Pupils' Union. He graduated in medicine at University College, Dublin, in 1922 and was then house surgeon and resident medical officer at Mercer's Hospital and postgraduate assistant at the National Maternity Hospital, Dublin. After a period in general practice in London he became medical adviser to Organon Laboratories Ltd, where he was particularly associated with developments in the use of anabolic steroids. He was for many years an occupational physician with GEC and was also medical officer to the Hammerson group of companies and to the Sutherland Nursing Home, in addition to having a private practice. He had been president of the Anglo-Irish Jewish Graduates' Association since 1975.

Mervyn Abrahamson's active career of more than 60 years spanned a period during which medical practice changed beyond recognition. His early training in Dublin provided a remarkably

longlasting foundation to which he was able to assimilate advancing knowledge, and he remained interested in new developments until his death. Many patients were indebted to his enduring clinical skills and commitment to them as individuals.

Mervyn did not marry but was always intensely interested in the welfare of his many nephews and nieces and grand nephews and grand nieces, and especially the careers of the seven who continued the family's medical tradition.—DA.

E O'D C GRATTAN

BA, MB, BCHIR, FRCS

Mr E O'D C Grattan, formerly surgical specialist in Sudan and Kenya and then principal scientific officer at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory, died on 7 December aged 75.

Edmund O'Donnell Colley Grattan graduated from King's College, Cambridge. He qualified MRCS, LRCP at St Thomas's Hospital, London, in 1934 and gained the FRCS two years later. He practised as a surgical specialist in the Sudan Medical Service and the Kenya Medical Department until his return to England in 1963. He then turned his talents in a new direction to the investigation and prevention of road traffic injuries as a principal scientific officer at the Transport and Road Research Laboratory until his retirement in 1978. Latterly he developed an absorbing interest and wide reputation in the medicolegal aspects of this work, particularly in relation to seat belt injuries, and was still working actively from home until a few days before he died. He wrote several articles on road traffic accidents.

His stimulating discussions and courteous manner will be much missed by his colleagues, as will his lively correspondence on the subjects of South Africa and freedom of the individual by readers of the national papers. He is survived by his wife and four children.—CG.

R T GAUNT

VRD, MSC, MD, FRCP

FJM writes: I should like to pay particular tribute to Dr Gaunt's gift for communicating with his patients, indeed a rare one (obituary, 14 December, p 1792). He really could make his patients understand what was wrong with them and, as far as was possible, how to cope with it. For many years I held a surgical clinic next door to his medical one and would, quite often, go across to seek his advice about some problem of mutual interest. He gave generously of his time, and his opinion was always clearly expressed and invaluable.

A TALBOT ROGERS

CBE, FRCGP

SB writes: I should like to add a personal note to the detailed obituary on Talbot (14 December 1985, p 1728). I well remember his energy in the early, now legendary, days of the NHS when he helped to shape the structure of the emerging service. His main concern was integration of all branches of the NHS—an objective that met with considerable opposition at the time. His vision proved right and has met with wide acceptance among the present generation of doctors. The confidence he enjoyed among his contemporaries was based not only on his wide experience in different spheres of medicine but also on his deep interest in the arts. This he shared with his wife, Jean, whose untimely death was such a shattering blow to him and altered the tenor of his life.

