

## Obituary Notices

### V. S. HUGHES-DAVIES, V.R.D., B.Sc., M.B., CH.B., F.R.C.S.ED., D.C.H.

Mr. V. S. Hughes-Davies, consultant orthopaedic surgeon to the Bath clinical area, died on 5 August at the age of 64.

Vernon Stanley Hughes-Davies was born at Llanrhystyd, Cardiganshire, on 13 October 1905 and was educated at Towyn School and Cardiff University, where he graduated B.Sc. in 1927. For his medical studies he went to Liverpool University, graduating M.B., Ch.B. in 1930. He represented both universities at boxing, and was a keen cricketer, oarsman, and soccer player. He held a series of resident posts, taking the Conjoint diploma in 1931 and the D.C.H. in 1937 and worked in general practice before going to St. Martin's Hospital, Bath, in 1939. Three months later, as an R.N.V.R. officer, he joined the Navy, and spent much of the next six years at sea in North Atlantic and Russian convoys. After demobilization, he returned to St. Martin's. There, as one of a small band of devoted people, he worked unceasingly as surgeon, orthopaedic surgeon, and at times gynaecologist, but with ever increasing concentration on orthopaedic surgery. From St. Martin's he took the F.R.C.S.Ed. in 1948, and at St. Martin's, with occasional visits to other local hospitals, he continued to work unstintingly until illness pulled him down six months before he was due to retire. During much of this time he was without a registrar, and sometimes without a house

surgeon. Except during his brief holidays, he saw each of his patients every day of the year. All who worked with him realized that his clinical judgement was first-class, and though he wrote little himself he was always interested in recent advances in his specialty. His technical skill was considerable and he devised his own operation for arthrodesis of the ankle-joint. The operating theatre staff enjoyed his efficiency, his calm, and his sense of humour.

Outside medicine his greatest interest was in the R.N.V.R. He continued his sea-training and other service with the Severn Division of the R.N.V.R., and held the rank of surgeon commander, V.R.D. and Bar until his retirement in 1960. He attended Trafalgar Day and other functions, and was an active vice-president of the White Ensign Association.

Apart from his home, his life was centred in St. Martin's and there he was to be seen at all hours of the day and night, doing his job. He was in every sense an upright figure, and we who were his friends and colleagues and who enjoyed so much his company will always treasure his memory and aim for his high standards. He devoted his life to one community and to perfecting his service to the many who came to him for help.

He is survived by his wife and daughter.—J.R.B.

### G. V. STEPHENSON, M.B., B.CH., B.A.O., D.P.M.

Dr. G. V. Stephenson who, until he retired, was consultant psychiatrist at Hill End Hospital, died on 6 August after some months of illness, at the age of 68.

George Vaughan Stephenson was born on 21 December 1901 and was educated in Northern Ireland. An outstanding rugby footballer, he won 42 international caps for Ireland, playing first for his country at the age of 18, and continuing to do so with hardly a break till 1930. He graduated M.B., B.Ch., B.A.O. with honours from Belfast in 1924, did house jobs in the Royal Victoria Hospital there, and was demonstrator of anatomy at Queen's University, Belfast, and later at the London Hospital from 1925 to 1930. Then he decided to take up psychiatry, and worked at the Priory, Roehampton, from 1931 until 1954, eventually becoming its medical superintendent. There was, however, a seven-year gap during the second world war when he served as surgeon commander (psychiatrist) in the R.N.V.R. He took the D.P.M. in 1932. In 1954 he had a breakdown in health, and on his recovery entered the National Health Service, being appointed consultant psychiatrist at Hill

End, where he worked till retiring in 1968.

George Stephenson can hardly have had an enemy in the world. Wherever he went people were anxious to see or to get to know him, and he was a very popular figure at Twickenham at international rugby matches. As a psychiatrist he took immense personal trouble over his patients, never giving up trying to help them in one way or another. He was essentially a man of peace, and he always worked to help many varieties of people to get on more happily together. His death will be personally mourned by the many people who knew him in all walks of life. Modest, somewhat shy, and a greatly beloved person to his wife and children, he will continue to live a long time in the minds of those fortunate enough to have known him well.—W.S.

D.C. writes: I should like to pay special tribute to the first-rate work done by George Stephenson as a psychiatrist in the Royal Naval Medical Service during the second world war. He was one of the small original group of "neuropsychiatric specialists," as they were called in 1939. New ser-

vice psychiatrists were regarded with a good deal of suspicion and scepticism both by their medical colleagues and by the executive branch. It was certainly no disadvantage to George to be so well known as a rugger international. But it soon became obvious to all that, in addition to his athletic reputation, George was a man who was good at his job. He earned and deserved a high reputation wherever he served—first at the R.N. Hospital, Chatham, and subsequently at R.N. Auxiliary Hospital, Knowle, Hants, and in Colombo. George Stephenson was a good clinician combining conscientiousness with humanity and kindness, characteristics which were apparent to all who knew him. He was the most loyal of men, and was perhaps too modest about his very real abilities.

G. McC. writes: Much will be written about G. V. Stephenson and his "43 times in a row for Ireland." I did not know him then, when he was one of the greatest players among a galaxy of the very great, but did know him when during the war he was Naval psychiatrist, East Indies Fleet. His opinion was indeed valued throughout the whole of the South East Asia Command. He was a good and kindly man with a deep understanding, particularly of those who failed to stand up to the many stresses of war-time tropical life. Those who worked with him thought highly of him.

### J. T. MURRAY-AYNSLEY, M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P.

Dr. J. T. Murray-Aynsley, assistant medical superintendent, Mental Hospital, Barbados, died in Barbados on 12 July after a short illness, aged 61.

John Theodore Murray-Aynsley was born in Edinburgh on 10 May 1909 and was educated at Uppingham, Clare College, Cambridge, and St. Thomas's Hospital, qualifying with the Conjoint diploma in 1936. His interests soon turned to psychiatry, and after early resident appointments he became clinical assistant in the department of psychiatric medicine at St. Bartholomew's Hospital and assistant medical officer at Scalebor Park Hospital, Burley. During the second world war he saw active service in the R.A.F., attaining the rank of squadron leader. In the postwar years he travelled extensively developing his knowledge of his specialty. In 1951, feeling somewhat disillusioned with the National Health Service, he left Britain to do a three-year tour of duty in Rhodesia before going on to Barbados, where he

worked with Robert Lloyd-Still. In 1957, after a short spell of duty in Jamaica, he went as medical superintendent to the Mental Hospital at Castries, St. Lucia. Finally in 1961 he returned to Barbados as assistant medical superintendent at the mental hospital there.

Murray's father was a lawyer, and his mother came from an Austrian Jewish family. In his character and behaviour a combination of this interesting background was clearly apparent. To augment his meagre resources while a medical student he used his gastronomic knowledge to cook for a friend who owned a Chelsea restaurant, and in later years these talents gave untold delight to his many friends. A musician of some calibre he was a member of the University orchestra at Cambridge and always enjoyed music, especially that of the Viennese school.

Murray-Aynsley had a great and generous spirit. He did not suffer fools gladly neither did he dissemble or in any way compromise his true feelings. In his psychiatric work he gave much of common humanity, and this together with his wide range of clinical experience made him a first-rate practising psychiatrist. He was renowned in Barbados for his Viennese *élan* combined with the clear-minded legal logic inherited from his father. A wide circle of friends complemented his many interests.

He is survived by his wife.

#### A. B. SLACK, M.C., M.B., CH.B.

Dr. A. B. Slack, a general practitioner and honorary surgeon at Beckett Hospital, Barnsley, died on 20 July at the age of 74.

Arthur Birtles Slack was born on 13 June 1896, and received his medical education at Manchester University, graduating M.B., Ch.B. in 1924. After serving early resident appointments at Manchester Royal Infirmary he went to Barnsley where he took up general practice and joined the staff of the Barnsley Beckett Hospital. Until shortly before his death he served both with a liberality that in lesser men would have left little to give to other interests. But he was also a divisional surgeon of the St. John Ambulance Brigade for some years, and was made a serving brother of the Order of St. John. In the first world war while serving with the Lancashire Fusiliers he was awarded the Military Cross and Bar and mentioned in dispatches. He served for three years as a member of Barnsley Borough Council, was a member of the Local Medical Committee and Barnsley Executive Council, was chairman of the Barnsley Hospital Management Committee from 1948 to 1961, and was also a justice of the peace. A member of the British Medical Association, he was Chairman of the Barnsley Division from 1937 to 1939.

Such a list can indicate the breadth of his life, but what those who are left will miss most is the personal impact of the man, an impact which gained for him a welcome of deep affection and respect in every one of his activities. His patients felt that they were attended by a great man; I think they were right. All the people who feel poorer for his dying had been made richer by his living.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, and two daughters.—J.F.

#### A. SKENE, M.B.E., M.B., CH.B., F.R.C.P.ED.

C.D.F. writes: "Skene" (obituary, 22 August, p. 469), as at times he would mockingly describe himself, could never be lost in a crowd. Even his stance had character. A tall man, he would stand like Charlie Chaplin, feet together, toes out, with head and torso tilted forward to be nearer to his audience, thus ensuring maximum rapport. Insulated within a group of listeners, he would regale them with stories. He was a great story teller and, like an organist waiting for the vicar, he could improvise on his fable for as long as was required to reach the appropriate tension, whereupon he would resolve the situation. Although ebullient and an easy mixer, his popularity derived from his outstanding asset that he was really interested in, and cared for, everyone he encountered. Loyalty was central to his character and he gave it in full measure to the British Medical Association. Specially important to the Association was his work as chairman of the committee which prepared evidence for the Sainsbury Committee, and his membership of the working party on the control of potentially dangerous drugs. However, his main interest was the Central Committee for Hospital Medical Services. Here he was an acknowledged leader, as confirmed by his election to both the executive and negotiating subcommittees—at once the most important and demanding cabinets of hospital staff. Yet further responsibility fell to him on his appointment as chairman of the Hospital Services Development Subcommittee. He was intensely interested in this work, which entailed consideration of the Bonham-Carter report on the *Functions of the District General Hospital* and discussions on the contribution of general practitioners to the hospital service. Although in recent years he had suffered severe restriction of vision he never complained of this obvious difficulty, for Sandy never thought of himself. Three aspects of his professional life brought him abounding happiness. First was his wartime service as a squadron leader, for he was devoted to the Royal Air Force. Next was his election to the Fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, which was a continuing joy to him. But above all he was proudest to be physician superintendent of Walton Hospital. He loved the hospital, its staff, and the people of Liverpool who came to it. No wonder they loved him.

H.H.L. writes: Sandy Skene gave freely of his time in conspicuous service to the British Medical Association and especially to the Central Committee for Hospital Medical Services. He first joined this committee in 1960, and during the past ten years in addition to serving on the Joint Consultants Committee he gave invaluable help and long hours to the chairmanship of the Hospital Development subcommittee and the Control of Dangerous Drugs committee. As one who during this period came to know him well and to value greatly his friendship and wise counsel I would like to pay warm tribute not only to his charm of manner, which indeed was great, but also to his clear and penetrating mind and excellent judgement. Aided by a delightful dry sense of humour Sandy had the capacity to cut through discursive debate and quickly clarify

the issue under discussion. If necessary he would bring it back to earth in a manner that could be uncompromising, but never gave offence.

When time came to relax after the day's debate was over his excellent memory and broad outlook on life could enliven the moment with a dry Scots story or a penetrating analysis of a political situation or personage. We shall miss him very much.

A.K.B. and J.K.B. write: While official tribute has been paid to Dr. Alexander Skene for his contribution to the medical profession and postgraduate education, we, the junior doctors of Walton Hospital, would like to pay our own tribute because to us he was a very special chief. Hundreds of doctors had the privilege of working at Walton Hospital during the 18 years that Dr. Skene was physician superintendent. His absence will be felt not as the loss of a senior colleague but rather as the loss of a personal counsellor and friend—and this said of a man whose commitments were many and whose time so abundantly filled indicates the great range of his qualities. In the management of the junior staff of a very large hospital his sense of humour was invaluable in relieving the stresses that invariably arise in such a community. He was always ready to provide the junior staff with an ear, and not without reason he acquired the affectionate title of "Father Skene." He leaves a legacy of goodwill and will be greatly missed.

#### R. H. HUNTER, M.D., M.CH., PH.D.

D.P.G. writes: Dickie Hunter (obituary, 1 August, p. 290) was usually the first university teacher whom a medical student encountered when starting his career at Queen's some 40 years ago. The experience was memorable. The small immaculately dressed figure, the bald head, and the flashing brown eyes accompanied a vitality and warmth which overcame the freshman's fears within a very short time. Hunter's forte was embryology, and this subject was made interesting and exciting by his humorous exposition together with beautiful sketches and line drawings. He began his academic career only when already a mature man and was later to endure the experience of his former students being preferred to him for appointments to chairs of anatomy—positions which he himself would have filled with distinction—yet he never complained, but rejoiced in their achievements. As an undergraduate he gained fame as a comedian, being a prominent member of the "Queen's Jesters." He was an artist of ability and had an expert knowledge of painting, which he indulged in the acquisition of an interesting and valuable collection. His activities as a circus promoter and ring master have already been mentioned, and friends will recall the anxiety he caused by entering the lions' cage armed only with a small whip. Hunter's early life was impeded by lack of means, and much was sacrificed to the constant care of his aged mother and invalid brother. It is a rare privilege to know a man of such varied talents and irrepressible vitality. He was never dull and rarely downcast. There must be many who, like myself, owe him debts for unremitting kindness which can never be repaid.