



OBITUARIES

James Bernard Bourke

Emad George



James Bernard Bourke (“Jim”) was born in Southampton to Bernard, a doctor from Castlebar, County Mayo, and Edna, a nurse from Liverpool. From Downside he went to Christ’s College, Cambridge, in 1958 to read medicine, taking his part II in archaeology and anthropology. He completed his training and began his professional career at the London Hospital, where he met his future wife, Ann, a medical social worker. They married in January 1965.

On 1 January 1972 he started as a newly appointed consultant surgeon and reader in surgery at the Nottingham General Hospital. He was part of the team that established the Queen’s Medical Centre and founded the new medical school. For the following 30 years he worked tirelessly at both the hospital and the university. He was a talented administrator, who rose to become medical director of the latter, and an enthusiastic and committed educator.

When, in 1984 a mysterious body was discovered in a peat bog in Cheshire, Jim was asked to be part of the team who investigated. Lindow Man (also known as “Pete Marsh”) resulted, dating from somewhere between 2 BC and 119 AD and now on permanent display at the British Museum. Jim was

a co-author of the resulting book, *Lindow Man: The Body in the Bog*, and maintained an interest in this area throughout his career.

Away from medicine, one of his lifelong passions was sport. When his cricket playing days were done, he remained an avid watcher of the game. In Nottingham he became heavily involved in the city’s rugby club, spending many years in the 80s and 90s as the club’s chairman and doctor. It was a time of great strength for the club, with numerous English and Scottish internationals playing for the team. However, James’s experiences of seeing too many young men injured while playing led him to believe that scrums should be uncontested, a view published in *The BMJ* in 2006 that attracted national media attention. The scrum is a safer place today.

Jim was an opera enthusiast who enjoyed annual pilgrimages to Glyndebourne and Buxton, and also completed a long stint as a governor of Kimbolton School.

The past few years were hard, as the cruelty of dementia afflicted him, but he died peacefully of old age on 18 August 2018. He leaves his wife, Ann; his daughter, Susan; his sons, Patrick and Michael; and six grandchildren.

Biography

Consultant surgeon Queen’s Medical Centre, Nottingham (b 1940; q London 1964; FRCS Lond, FRCS Ed), died from old age on 18 August 2018

Published by the BMJ Publishing Group Limited. For permission to use (where not already granted under a licence) please go to <http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions>