

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.

R L WATERFIELD

FRCP

Dr R L Waterfield, formerly consultant haematologist at Guy's Hospital, died on 10 June. He was 86.

Reginald Lawson Waterfield was born on 12 April 1900. He was educated at Winchester and qualified MRCS, LRCP at Guy's Hospital in 1925. He was a lecturer and assistant physician at Johns Hopkins' Hospital, Baltimore, during the early 1930s. There he acquired a considerable reputation as a skilled diagnostician and further developed his already growing interest in the scientific, investigational aspects of medicine, which led him to haematology. He returned to Guy's as medical registrar until the war, during which he served in north Africa, being responsible for blood supplies and transfusion. He returned to Guy's after the war but then developed an unusual and severe form of poliomyelitis. Despite severe residual paralysis he continued to pursue his career as a haematologist and played a large part in day to day diagnostic work and the teaching of undergraduates and technical and medical staff.

He had already written papers on topics of particular interest, such as abnormal blood pigments and the erythrocyte sedimentation rate, but it was during the 15 years leading up to his retirement that he devoted most of his attention to the accurate measurement of red cells, which, earlier than many, he had recognised as being of considerable importance in the diagnosis of anaemias. After developing the Halometer for measuring mean cell diameter he produced a machine that, in addition, could measure mean cell volume and the ratio of diameter to thickness (the Waterfield spherocytometer). Although red cell measurement by alternative, electronic methods subsequently became routine in haematology laboratories, these methods confirmed the value of such measurements in diagnosis.

The knowledge of mathematical and physical principles that he showed in his studies of red cells was of a high order and responsible for his eminence in astronomy. He had developed this interest at an early age and became a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society while still at school. He had a special interest in comets, was a skilled photographer, carried out innovative astrometric work, and photographed the principal eclipses in various parts of the world. He had an international reputation, and, in addition to being awarded the Jackson-Gwilt medal by the Royal Astronomical Society and the Walter Goodacre medal, the highest award of the British Astronomical Association, he was the first recipient of a medal for work on comets awarded by the Astronomical Society of the Pacific. He held various offices, notably the vice presidency of the Royal Astronomical Society and presidency of the British Astronomical Association.

"Reggie" was a gifted man of considerable character and some eccentricity. He enjoyed a reputation for elegant and, on occasion, flamboyant dress. He had a lively wit and was a great raconteur with a fund of good stories, especially of

his prewar exploits, with which he would regale his friends over a pink gin or a glass of port. He liked to entertain in style and was an expert on culinary matters and wine. An excellent pianist with a penchant for the works of Bach, he liked to tell of one occasion when he accompanied the physicist Einstein on violin (he met or knew an interesting collection of the famous in earlier days).

In retirement he lived in Somerset, where he devoted much time to astronomy. He had seen Halley's comet in 1910 and observed and photographed the comet again recently from his observatory, something he was quite determined to do despite increasing frailty. He never married but often had his friends, chiefly those who shared his love of astronomy, to stay at "The Observatory" in the later years.—JAC.

LYDIA I H TORRANCE

MD, FRCOG

Dr Lydia I H Torrance (Mrs Allen), formerly superintendent of the Lady Dufferin Victoria Hospital, Calcutta, and honorary consultant gynaecologist and obstetrician to the Woolwich group of hospitals, died on 6 May aged 92.

Lydia Ida Huber Torrance was born in Tiberias, Palestine, the daughter of Dr David Watt Torrance, of the Scottish Mission Hospital by Lake Galilee. Sent to school in Scotland, she studied medicine at Glasgow University, graduating MB, ChB in 1918. In 1923 she proceeded MD with commendation for research into "the normal electrical excitability of the nerves in infancy and early childhood." From 1923 to 1926 she worked with her brother, Dr Herbert Watt Torrance, in the Scottish Mission Hospital in Tiberias. After a short period in Colombo, Ceylon, she was with the Women's Medical Service of India from 1928 to 1941. She was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind gold medal by King George VI for her services to India. Her husband, Major Arthur J L Allen, of the Indian Army, died in 1941.

On returning to England in 1950 she became consultant in obstetrics and gynaecology to the Woolwich group of hospitals. She retired in 1961, remaining an active member of the Medical Women's Federation. An accomplished linguist, speaking French, German, Arabic, Yiddish, and Hindustani, she was a gifted surgeon who cared for all her patients with gentleness and dedication.—WFMD.

N M D BLYTH

MB, ChB, FRCOG

Mr N M D Blyth, formerly consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist at East Glamorgan General Hospital, died suddenly on 25 March.

Norman MacGregor Downie Blyth was educated at the High School of Stirling and graduated in medicine from the University of Aberdeen in 1948. After many years of training and service in the United Kingdom and abroad he was appointed

consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist to East Glamorgan General and Llwynypia hospitals, a post he held until his premature retirement in 1985 due to ill health. During this period he dedicated himself to the service of his patients and, through his personal devotion, hard work, integrity, honesty, and kindness to all, endeared himself to his friends, patients, and colleagues.

Maintaining his dry, crisp Scottish sense of humour to the very last, Norman was a gourmet and a person of many abilities with a refined and well educated mind.—BMA, DHOP.

S L MOHAN

MB, BS, DCH

Dr S L Mohan, formerly a general practitioner in Bristol, died on 2 March aged 78.

Sohan Lal Mohan was born on 2 November 1908 and graduated from King Edward's Medical College, Lahore, in 1933. He came to the United Kingdom in 1939 and after serving as a clinical assistant at the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, entered general practice. His first appointment was in Caerphilly, but in 1942 he moved to Bristol, where he remained until his retirement in 1972. After spending two years in India he returned to London and resumed part time general practice in Victoria until forced by ill health to give this up.

Dr Mohan was a careful and conscientious doctor who kept up with current medical practice despite poor vision. His principal hobbies were photography and travel. He is survived by his wife and son.—JM.

D H BRINTON

DM, FRCP

MR writes: The perceptive obituary of Denis Brinton, that kindly and courteous neurologist (28 June, p 1743), mentions that "he used to complain, in his good humoured way, about the scarcity of physical signs in his RAF practice" as a neuropsychiatrist. There was one sign, however, that became celebrated throughout the service as "Brinton's sign." At one time war weary pilots who were suffering from the stress of continuous combat were stigmatised by the chairborne as suffering from lack of moral fibre (LMF). It was also the fashion at the time for pilots to sport luxuriant moustaches. Brinton put a stop to an iniquitous slur by enunciating the dictum: "If you can see a pilot's moustache from behind he must be suffering from LMF."

Correction

An error occurred in the obituary on Dr A F M Ali (28 June, p 1743). The obituary stated that Dr Ali practised in Bridge of Weir; in fact, although he lived in Bridge of Weir he practised in the neighbouring town of Johnstone.