OBITUARY NOTICES

G F ROWbotham
BA, BSc, FRCS

Mr G F Rowbotham, formerly director of the department of neurological surgery at Newcastle upon Tyne, died at his home at Willand on 23 November. He was 76.

George Frederick Rowbotham was born at Altrincham and educated at Manchester Grammar School, Manchester College of Technology, and Manchester University. After qualification in 1925 he held surgical appointments at Manchester, Sale ford, Stockport, and London, and returned to Manchester in 1930 as surgical registrar at the Royal Infirmary. Here he came under the influence of Geoffrey Jeffer son, was converted to neurosurgery, and then was made first assistant in Jefferson’s new unit. In 1936 came his appointment as neurosurgeon at Stockport, Withington, and the Christie Hospital. He moved in January 1941 to Newcastle, where his department at the Newcastle General Hospital, and later also at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, soon became internationally renowned for its work in the whole field of neurosurgery, but especially for its prowess in the management of head injuries. He was a prolific and painstaking writer, whose best-known work was Acute Injuries of the Head, first published in 1944. In this unique book Rowbotham demonstrated his ability to see the whole problem of the head-injured patient from the time of injury until the completion of rehabilitation. Honours were numerous, including a Hunterian professorship and the presidencies of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons, the North of England Neurological Association, and the North of England Surgical Society. He played international hockey for England, and was for many years a selector for the English hockey team.

By his many pupils and his devoted staff he was always known as “Father,” a sign of the affection and respect which all had for this kindly, sometimes eccentric, and always compassionate man. After retirement he pursued active research, wrote, attended medical appeal tribunals, and at the age of 75 sat and passed an examination for the Open University BA degree. A devout churchgoer, he was vicar’s warden for 25 years. Mr Rowbotham is survived by his wife, who is a consultant in child psychiatry, a daughter, and four sons, three of whom are doctors.--PRRC.

JNW writes: Fred Rowbotham was a distinctive figure for many years on the Newcastle medical scene. A skilful and meticulous surgeon whose surgical prowess was always most evident when he sectioned a tri great enthusiasm, he was a proven skier. The Rowbotham Cup is still played for annually by the members of staff of Newcastle General Hospital. He will be mourned by generations of his pupils in Britain and overseas and beloved by all his colleagues. He was indeed “an unforgettable character.”

FJN writes: Rowbotham came to Newcastle in 1941, a pupil of Jefferson of Manchester, with an impressive background of experience in neurosurgery. He was a most attractive person, with great charm, vivacity, and good looks. He was also esteemed as a hockey player for England on many occasions, and an English selector. I liked and admired him enormously and we worked closely together in medical and surgical neurology for some 15 years. He established a distinguished department and achieved, especially in the treatment and rehabilitation of head injuries, an international reputation. He was sustained by his splendid wife Monica (a university psychiatrist) and a remarkable family, including three doctors. May sorrow be tempered for them, as for me, by happy memories.

KATHLEEN E H Rutherford
MBE, MB, ChB

Dr Kathleen E H Rutherford, who was in private practice at Harrogate and who had devoted years of her life to work for the underprivileged, died on 9 November. She was 79.

Kathleen Eleanor Hyde Rutherford was born on 19 June 1896. She qualified at Glasgow University in 1920, taking the MB, ChB from Glasgow and Leeds the following year. After a number of hospital posts she set up in private practice at Harrogate, where her brothers also practised. In 1962 she was bequeathed £42 000 by a friend and patient, which she gave away to the many causes most dear to her. It was not only in terms of money that she gave, but in time, energy, and her energy, at times to the point of exhaustion. She was connected with Oxfam and Save the Children Fund in particular, for young people were foremost in her endless concern for the deprived. In 1966 she made her first mission abroad to help the sick and suffering. This was to Naples, where Father Borelli had founded his House of Urchins and where Dr Kathleen was able to apply her medical expertise in helping mothers and babies. For many years she had been engaged in fund-raising for LEPRA, and in 1967 and again in 1971 she worked in a leper colony in Uganda. In 1970 she went to Port Harcourt to help organise relief at the end of the Biafran war. More recently she had visited Jerusalem, showing great concern for the Palestinian refugees there.

In 1970 she was awarded the MBE and in 1972 was privileged to be a member of the first official party of British doctors to be invited to the Republic of China.

Never physically robust, and despite failing health, she continued to help to the end. A highly intelligent person, possessed of a great sense of humour, she loved music, the theatre, art, and literature. This gifted and charming lady, loved and admired by all who knew her, who became a legend in her lifetime, will be sadly missed by her family, friends, and colleagues, not only locally but in many lands. She was unmarried.—PAJ, FMP.

G A C Gordon
MC, MB, ChB, DPH

Dr G A C Gordon, who served for many years in Nigeria in the Colonial Medical Service, died on 18 October after a long illness. He was 85.

George Alexander Connell Gordon was born on 6 January 1890 in Fearn, Ross and Cromarty, and graduated at Aberdeen in 1914. He enlisted on the outbreak of war and was posted to Egypt with the RAMC, first to Alexandria and later in charge of a field ambulance with General Allenby in Palestine during the action which liberated Jerusalem from the Turks. It was during this campaign that his unit, attached to the Camel Corps, was badly hit by enemy shell-fire. Despite serious injuries he rallied and evacuated his unit to safety. He held the rank of captain and was awarded the Military
Cross and was also mentioned in dispatches. Later he was present at the Dardanelles, serving in a hospital ship. In 1917 he married Edith Mary Hine, at that time a nursing sister attached to the military hospital in Cairo. In 1920 he gained the DPH at Aberdeen and proceeded shortly after to Singapore as senior assistant medical officer of health, returning to Britain in 1925. After a short spell as deputy MOH Dover, he joined the West African Medical Service and served in several stations in Nigeria, but mainly in Port Harcourt, Kano, and the last years in Ibadan, retiring as senior MOH in 1947.

Dr Gordon had a sensitive and warm-hearted nature. His retirement to Westend, near Southampton, was occupied fully by his great interest in gardening and for several years laterly caring for his wife, who was progressively disabled with arthritis and who predeceased him by only six weeks. He is survived by his daughter and a son who is a doctor.—CGIG.

C N CHITNIS
MRCS, LRCP, MRCPG

Dr C N Chitnis, who was in general practice at Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, died on 1 November. He was 70.

Chidamber Narayan Chitnis was born at Belgaum, India, on 4 November 1904. After schooling and early medical studies there he went to Birmingham for preclinical studies and then did his clinical training at St George’s Hospital, where he qualified in 1931. After a post as house physician at Nuneaton General Hospital he spent several years as resident surgical officer at the Birmingham and Midland Ear and Throat Hospital. In 1938 he went into general practice at Castle Bromwich. Throughout the second world war he was medical officer to the RAF, Castle Bromwich, and afterwards medical officer to the University of Birmingham Air Squadron and the British Industries Fund.

Dr Chitnis set an example of personal family medicine which reflected the time in which he trained, but which he firmly believed must continue to be our ideal. He is survived by his wife and four children, the eldest son having been in practice with him.—JGC.

J D DESMOND
MB, BCH, BAO

Dr J D Desmond, formerly in general practice at Cardiff, died on 20 October. He was 75.

James Denis Desmond was born at Macroon, County Cork, on 19 November 1899, the son of a farmer. His medical studies were at University College, Cork, where he qualified in 1923. Later that year he went to Cardiff, where he practised for almost 40 years until his retirement in 1964, being away from Cardiff for only a few years. He was medical officer at Nazareth House, Cardiff, for over 30 years, a post which delighted him and where he loved to visit. Throughout his life he took a keen interest in medicine and when he was in active practice attended regularly all BMA and Cardiff Medical Society meetings and functions. He read his RAMC from cover to cover every week, and this he continued to do even after he retired.

Des was an excellent family doctor who enjoyed being a doctor and his care and kindness made his patients his friends. A warmhearted, generous man with a ready smile, he got on well with all his colleagues.

He was a keen golfer. Dr Desmond will be missed by very many friends. He is survived by his wife.—DAW.

A J BLOOM
MB, BS

Dr A J Bloom, who was in practice in Hong Kong, died on 1 October 1975. He was 28.

Andrew Jonathan Bloom was born on 18 December 1946. He was educated at Mill Hill School and then studied medicine at the Middlesex Hospital, graduating in 1970.

During his pre-registration year at St Andrew’s Hospital, Billericy, he decided on a career in general practice, preparing himself with a series of postregistration appointments. He worked first in the department of paediatrics at the Whittington Hospital and then returned to the Central Middlesex to take up a post in obstetrics and gynaecology. Throughout his student and early hospital career Andrew had always been fascinated by Chinese culture and philosophy, both ancient and modern. He was a member of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding and in 1973, together with a party of fellow enthusiasts, he toured the southern provinces of China. After his tour he joined a practice in Hong Kong.

Like his father and brother, who are both physicians, he found internal medicine an intriguing study and in Hong Kong was able to learn at first hand something of the diseases that are rapidly becoming names in a textbook to the British undergraduate. He was also a keen supporter of the BMA, and in 1971 he was elected as a junior member to the Hong Kong Branch. Despite his medical activities, he still found time to relax with friends, enjoy his music, and continue his interest in the Chinese language and way of life.

Dr Bloom was a good and conscientious doctor, a kind person who will always be remembered with affection by patients and friends.—MA.

H W GABE
OBE, FRCS Ed

Mr H W Gabe, honorary consulting surgeon to the Swansea General and Eye Hospital, died on 19 October. He was 92.

Howell Woodwell Gabe was born on 6 September 1884 at Morriston, Swansea, where his father was a general practitioner. He qualified from the Middlesex Hospital in 1909, and took the FRCSEd in 1912. During the first world war he served with distinction in the RAMC, being surgical specialist to No 56 CCS in France. In recognition of his services there he was awarded the OBE (Mil). After the war he became a founder member of the Travelling Surgical Club, the first of several such clubs which have come to play an important part in the maintenance of standards in British surgery and the fostering of good relations in the international surgical world. The club received the personal blessing of Lord Moyhina, who entertained its first members to an inaugural dinner at his Leeds home. Howell Gabe was present and loved to recall the magnificence of the occasion. The table was set with a fine silk tablecloth, in the centre of which was a huge silver bowl of roses. The guests were spellbound by the personality and oratory of their host.

From 1919 until his retirement in 1948 he was consulting surgeon to the Swansea General and Eye Hospital. He was a popular and excellent surgeon and ran a very busy practice, patients coming to him from all over Wales.

A great sportsman, he played rugby football for Llandovery College, the Middlesex Hospital, and the London Welsh as centre three-quarter. Later he became a fine golfer, a keen cricketer, and a first-class tennis player. He was a man of striking good looks and arresting charm, and for many years a well-known figure in medical circles throughout South Wales. In 1958 he married his brother’s fiancée, Anne, in whose declining years in spite of a succession of strokes which caused increasing disability, her devoted nursing and loving care throughout the long twilight of his life meant everything to him.—BW.

Colonel E S CUTHBERT
MRCS, LRCP, late RAMC (Ret)

Colonel E S Cuthbert, formerly of the Royal Army Medical Corps, died at the Military Hospital on 29 October. He was 83.

Edmund Sheppard Cuthbert was born on 3 April 1892 at Weymouth. He received his medical training at Barts and qualified in 1915. He then joined the RAMC (TA) and spent the rest of the first world war in France. After the Armistice he was stationed in India and while there was mentioned in dispatches in 1919. During a three-year period 1923-6 while at the Victoria Hospital, Weymouth, he met his future wife Anne, who had undertaken her nursing training at Barts. Except for a period from 1929 to 1932, he spent the time until the second world war in the Far East. The outbreak of hostilities saw him back in Europe and North Africa. In 1947 he retired from the Army with the rank of colonel, having held a number of senior posts since 1939. During his retirement Colonel Cuthbert and his wife lived quietly together in Essex.

Ted Cuthbert was a religious man. He had been a lay reader since 1932 and was always active in the diocese. He was a man of impeccable manners and had a wonderful sense of fun. A former colleague under whose care he was in his last illness made the following comment: “There is no doubt that in his disease society has lost a very charming and truly Christian gentleman.” Colonel Cuthbert is survived by his wife and daughter.—DMM.

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