William Bryan Jennett

Pioneer academic neurosurgeon and world expert on brain damage prognosis

Bryan Jennett devised, with colleagues, the Glasgow coma scale, a tool used worldwide to assess states of consciousness, and the Glasgow outcome scale for patients with head injury. He defined the persistent vegetative state. He established the criteria for brain death and wrote lucidly and incisively on ethical issues, including the appropriate use of high technology. Combining a career as a neurosurgeon with laboratory and clinical research, he made Glasgow a world centre for neurosurgery. He was an inspirational teacher and trained many of the next generation of academic neurosurgeons.

Bryan was born in Twickenham, Middlesex, the son of a civil servant. He was educated at King's College School, Wimbledon, and King George V School in Southport. He entered Liverpool University on a scholarship and qualified top of his class in 1949, having been president of the medical students' society and of the National British Medical Students' Association.

He became house physician to Lord Cohen of Birkenhead, who steered him towards neurosurgery. Later, in Oxford, he developed his lifelong interest in head injuries. He was house surgeon to Sir Hugh Cairns, professor of neurosurgery in Oxford, and returned to

Oxford during national service in the Royal Army Medical Corps at Wheatley military hospital.

After being demobbed, he spent four years in training posts in Liverpool, Oxford, and Cardiff. In 1954, aged 31, he was appointed neurosurgery lecturer in Manchester, taking a year out on a Rockefeller training fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he conducted laboratory experiments on brain compression. In 1961 he gave the Hunterian lecture—on traumatic epilepsy—at the Royal College of Surgeons.

In 1963 he was appointed consultant neurosurgeon at the West of Scotland Neurosurgical Unit in Glasgow. Five years later he was appointed professor of neurosurgery, based first in Killearn Hospital and later at the multidisciplinary Institute of Neurological Sciences in Glasgow. During this time he codirected the MRC Cerebral Circulation Research Group and the MRC's head injury research programme in Glasgow.

Characteristically, he addressed topics that were challenging, even sometimes unpopular, but important to society. In the 1960s it became clear that increasing use of intensive care and artificial ventilation in treating patients with head injuries left some suffering severe consequences. Over the next two decades he identified the features of head injured patients that predicted outcome so that those with a poor prognosis could be spared distress and resources could be targeted appropriately. He described the Glasgow coma scale with Graham Teasdale, and the Glasgow outcome scale with Michael Bond and defined the persistent vegetative state with Fred Plum, the establishment of brain death criteria being integral in this.

He brought in scientists from other fields to apply their expertise to the solution of neurosurgical problems. This was expressed most productively in collaborations with neuropathologists that immensely advanced knowledge of traumatic brain damage and ways that it could be avoided. He sought practical applications for his findings, which led to the development of the first national guidelines on caring for patients with head injuries.

When in 1980 the BBC series *Panorama* broadcast a programme arguing that transplant donors were not always brain dead, he

led the fightback, tackling the issue with customary courage, clarity, and logic, his defence based on characteristically rigorous clinical evidence.

He ceased operating in 1981, when he was appointed dean of medicine in Glasgow, a post he held until 1986. He chaired and served on many committees for the university, Medical Research Council, Department of Health and Social Security, and similar organisations, and he was a member of the GMC. After retirement in 1991, he continued to contribute to topics ranging from transplantation to medical audit, the appropriate use of high technology, and ethics. He was president of the International Society for Technology Assessment in Health Care during 1987-9; the Royal Society of Medicine neurology section, 1986-7; and Headway, the National Head Injuries Patients' Group, 1988-95.

He was, said Dr Stephen Lock, former editor of the *BMJ*, an outstanding writer and wrote excellent leaders. He published over 200 papers, the most recent in December 2007, and several books: *Epilepsy after Head Injuries* (1962 and 1975), *Introduction to Neurosurgery* (1964, 5th edition 1994), *Management of Head Injuries* (with Graham Teasdale) (1981), *High Technology Medicine: Benefits and Burdens* (1984 and 1986), and *The Vegetative State—Medical Facts, Ethical and Legal Dilemmas* (2002).

In September 2007 at an international meeting in Glasgow, he was the first recipient of the medal of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons, the presentation being made by the society's president, one of his trainees.

He married Sheila Pope, a fellow medical student, a year after they both qualified. She became professor of physiology at Glasgow and some visiting research fellows had the privilege and pleasure of being supervised by both Professors Jennett.

His main recreation was sailing, a pastime shared with his family. Though tone deaf, he greatly enjoyed the musical skills of his children and grandchildren. He died of multiple myeloma, diagnosed in 2002. Sheila and their four children survive him.

Caroline Richmond, Graham Teasdale

Bryan Jennett, professor of neurosurgery Glasgow University 1968-91 (b 1 March 1926; q Liverpool 1949; CBE 1991, FRCS, Hon DSc St Andrews 1993), d 26 January 2008.

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Hyman Davies

Former general practitioner Salford (b 1918; q Manchester 1943; FRCGP), died from heart failure on 19 November 2007.

Hyman Davies was a lifelong peace activist and campaigner against poverty and deprivation. After graduating and initial posts in tropical medicine, he served with the Royal Army Medical Corps in India and Nigeria until 1947. He then entered general practice in Salford, joining the Labour party to effect societal change. He achieved notoriety by leading a march for better flood protection in Salford—to him “simply a method of health promotion,” given the respiratory effects of damp housing. A founding member of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, he could not conceive that doctors could be anything other than active against the greatest threat to health. Latterly he wrote *BMJ* fillers, the last in 2006 on a heart attack almost missed during a flu epidemic.

Alan Silman

Herbert Thomas Foot

Former general practitioner Northolt, Middlesex (b 1918; q Cambridge/The London 1943; FRCGP), died from heart disease and septicaemia on 24 June 2007.

After qualifying, Herbert Thomas Foot (“Tom”) worked at The London Hospital and Billericay Hospital before joining the Royal Air Force in 1944. After the second world war he entered general practice, spending nearly a year in Melbourne, Australia, before setting up a new practice in Northolt in 1954. He joined the newly formed College of General Practitioners and was an active member of the local BMA committee, Harrow Hospital

committee, and the committee of management of Northwick Park Hospital, where he undertook anaesthetic sessions. He trained many new general practitioners, and his interest in medicine continued when ill health forced him to take early retirement. He leaves a wife, Brigid; five children; and eight grandchildren.

Stephanie Foot

James McCaughey Gilmore

Former consultant chest physician East Northumberland (b 1913; q St Andrews 1937; MD), d 14 July 2007. After qualifying and early jobs in Dundee, James McCaughey Gilmore (“Jimmy”) served in the Royal Air Force in Egypt as a medical officer. On return to civilian life he completed an MD thesis on the use of streptomycin in tuberculosis before settling in Northumberland as a chest physician. As tuberculosis waned, he became increasingly interested in other lung diseases in the local mining communities, serving on the pneumoconiosis panel until well into his 70s. He built his first television in 1949 and had a lifelong interest in matters technical, whether cars, electronics, or, latterly, computers. He leaves a wife, Jean; two children; and five grandchildren.

Ian Gilmore

Colin George Lake

Former general practitioner East Tilbury, Essex (b 1933; q Liverpool 1959), died from progressive heart failure on 10 February 2007.

Colin George Lake served as a general practitioner in East Tilbury, Corringham, and Stanford Le Hope in Essex for over 40 years. After

qualification his first post was in Sheerness, Kent. He moved to Essex in 1974, retiring in 2004. As senior partner he oversaw the move in 1996 from single storey premises in the grounds of the Bata Factory to the Rigg-Milner Medical Centre. He also served as a police surgeon and clinical assistant in orthopaedics. He leaves a wife, Sylvia; four children; and nine grandchildren.

S R Jones

Alistair John Robertson

Consultant and honorary senior lecturer in pathology Ninewells Hospital, Dundee (b 1950; q Aberdeen 1975; BMedBiol, FRCPath), died from a heart attack on 6 December 2007. Having excelled academically, Alistair John Robertson started his career in pathology and service development after house jobs. In 1982 he was appointed consultant in administrative charge of laboratory services for Perth and Kinross, and in 1992 clinical director of the NHS pathology service. He was chairman and then president of the Scottish Association for Clinical Cytology, was central in introducing a successful external quality assurance scheme, and also helped develop the national breast screening service. Alistair remained and readily identified himself as a working diagnostic histopathologist, but he also chaired national committees, recently successfully implementing a national digital telepathology system and chairing Cancer eHealth. He leaves a wife, Frances.

Alan Evans

Christopher Smallwood Savage

Former consultant in ear, nose, and throat surgery Chelmsford and Essex Hospital and Southend General

Hospital (b 1915; q Cambridge/The London Hospital, 1941; MA, FRCS), died from pneumonia on 10 December 2007.

After qualifying, Christopher Smallwood Savage joined the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (RNVR) and served as surgeon lieutenant on HMS *Havelock* on North Atlantic convoys. After the war he trained in otorhinolaryngology at The London Hospital before obtaining consultant posts at the beginning of the NHS. He worked as a truly general ear, nose, and throat surgeon, retiring in 1979. He was an active member of the Royal Society of Medicine’s ENT division. He leaves a wife, Jill, and three children.

James Savage, Robert Savage

Thomas Stapleton

Former professor of paediatrics University of Sydney, Australia (b 1920; q Oxford 1943; DM, FRCP, FRACP), d 15 November 2007. After qualifying and service in the Royal Army Medical Corps, Thomas Stapleton gained a travelling scholarship to work at the Boston Children’s Hospital on electrolyte physiology. He then became lecturer in the paediatric unit of St Mary’s Hospital before moving to Australia as the second Commonwealth professor of paediatrics, a chair which he held for nearly 40 years. As secretary and treasurer of the International Paediatric Association (1965-74) he made it his business to visit nearly every member country and persuade their heads of state of the importance of child health. In retirement in England he supported many postgraduate students from China and the former Soviet Union, bequeathing most of his money to this work.

John A Davis