Dr. Anthony David Hockley

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Gentle...compassionate...a wonderful human being...a willing and helpful man...friend...educator...mentor...teacher...first class clinician...pioneer in paediatric and craniofacial surgery

These are all the definitions widely utilised in the eulogies the Editor of CNS has received in honour of Mr Tony Hockley. Indeed, it is exceptional for a colleague to receive this kind of universal recognition as, in order to be paid such tributes, it is necessary to be a truly exceptional person, an exceptional teacher, and an exceptional surgeon.

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Tony Hockley was such a man and such a paediatric neurosurgeon to whom the international paediatric neurosurgical community is deeply indebted.

Tony was a gentleman who was always sympathetic towards patients, colleagues, and friends and always had time for all of us to seek his opinion and wisdom. Unfailingly, he had a smile for each of us, as too did his lifelong companion and soul mate, his wife Heather.

Such a smile is going to remain forever his gift and memory to us all, and our thoughts and hearts go out to Heather and “The Boys”

C. Di Rocco (Main Editor)

Anthony Hockley: pioneering paediatric neurosurgeon (1943–2009)

Anthony (Tony) Hockley was born in Hampton Court on October 3, 1943. He graduated in Medicine from the

London Hospital Medical College in 1966. In that era, Hockley recalls, “one didn’t apply for house jobs but rather the hospital would choose to offer a post to members of the graduating class”. And so it was that Tony Hockley was offered a medical neurology rotation for 6 months under the mentorship of Lord Brain and Professor Wilson. During this time in neurology, Hockley felt that most of the challenging and exciting cases were being passed on to the neurosurgeons, a team which was led by Jack Crawford and Douglas Northfield. For his second rotation of 6 months as a house officer, Tony applied for a neurosurgery post, encountering many comments along the lines of “you must be mad” and “you’ll have absolutely no time to breathe... that’s how hard the brain surgeons work”. Unfazed, Hockley proceeded to spend 3 months at the London Hospital in Whitechapel and a subsequent 3 months in Brentwood.

It was at that time that Northfield had just retired, and Tom King from Melbourne arrived to start as consultant. Hockley remembers when King arrived, it was a particularly cold London evening, and he lent him his sweater as a welcoming gesture. During this time as a houseman, Hockley decided that neurosurgery was the road for him. The other members of the department at the time were Krayenbuhl from Zurich who spent time there as fellow, and Bill Kennedy who was the registrar.

During this time, Hockley’s father became ill, and he was not sure what his next step in life would be. He decided to travel by becoming a ship surgeon for P and O shipping on the SS Himalaya in 1967. Tony remembers fondly how nice a time it was to cruise the Mediterranean, with duties in minor illness and injury accompanied by luxuries as a VIP, such as the best seats in the ship’s restaurants. Furthermore, it was a time to think about his career. Deciding to continue with surgery, he went back to England to study for the surgical primary examination by taking Last’s anatomy course in the mornings and funding this course with part time work in a general practitioner surgery. Hockley successfully passed his Fellowship of Royal College of Surgeons (FRCS) primary and final exam in general surgery, as there was no neurosurgical examination in those days. He then went to work in Birmingham Accident and Emergency for 6 months in 1968, followed by more work in general surgery at the St. James’ Hospital in Balham. He then undertook a 1-month locum job at Atkinson Morley “to see if he really still wanted to do neurosurgery”. The consultants there were McKissock, Walsh, and Richardson. This 1-month period convinced Hockley that neurosurgery was still the path for him, leading to an illustrious and pioneering career, for which he will be long remembered.

From 1969 to 1970, he worked at St Mary Abbots Hospital in London in general surgery, orthopaedics, and

urology, following which he was ready to embark on his neurosurgical training. There was a short gap to fill, and this led to a locum in paediatric general surgery at Queen Mary’s Hospital. It was the paediatric surgeons who took care of the shunts and spina bifida cases, and Hockley enjoyed this so much for a while; he was tempted to train in paediatric surgery. Based on this experience, it was already becoming clear to Tony that he was leaning towards the paediatric aspects of neurosurgery.

Professor Brian Jennett of Glasgow had asked the young Hockley to contact him after obtaining his FRCS. He offered Tony the senior house officer (SHO) job initially in Killane, then in Glasgow. Slightly dismayed by this “demotion”, as there were no registrar vacancies in Glasgow, he still took the post based largely on the advice of his mentor Douglas Northfield. Northfield advised Hockley to take the SHO position for two reasons. Firstly, to make sure that Tony “still wanted to do neurosurgery”, a recurring theme in those days, to ensure only dedicated trainees would later join the consultant body. Secondly, Hockley smiles as he recalls that Northfield thought “it would be a good reintroduction to neurosurgery at the ‘lowest level’”. Tony thought this was good advice and followed it, moving to Glasgow.

However, after 3 months in Glasgow, there was “little prospect” of promotion, and the registrar position at the Addenbrooke’s Hospital in Cambridge became available under the tutelage of John Gleave and Walpole Lewin. Northfield’s advice at that time again was simple: “go and see Mr Lewin”, and the following day, Hockley was offered the job. In the “interview”, Lewin had asked Hockley whether anyone had told him not to pursue a career in neurosurgery, to which Hockley answered with a resounding yes. Lewin simply smiled and said “so I take it you didn’t listen to them...” Again a “yes”, followed by Lewin’s “well I think you’ve got the job then”. And that was it—no advertisement, no curriculum vitae, no formalised interview. A chat and a handshake, and a career was born.

Moving to Cambridge in 1971 to become registrar, Hockley joined the senior registrar A. Holmes. Together, it was a “1 in 2” on-call rotation. After 18 months, Holmes was promoted to become the third consultant of the unit, and Hockley was made senior registrar from 1972 to 1978.

His training in Cambridge was interrupted with a year in Toronto at the Hospital for Sick Children, a fellowship in paediatric neurosurgery. Initially, Lewin was not keen on the idea commenting “why would you want to go there...in terms of paediatrics...we can teach you everything here”. Hockley recalls fondly how he became the fourth “H” to join the “three great Hs” of EB Hendrick, H Hoffman, and RP Humphreys. It was, indeed, a special year for him. Even before Toronto, Hockley had an inclination towards paediatric neurosurgery, though it was Toronto that firmly

cemented this inclination into the start of a long and remarkable career in this field. His position was that of visiting fellow, which enabled him to undertake “lots of cutting”. One area that was completely new to him and that he made his own upon his return to England was that of craniofacial surgery. Paris and Toronto were the leading centres in this field at the time, and Hockley made plenty of educational use of the latter. In Toronto, other areas of learning were the use of the operating microscope for paediatric brain tumours and the area of neonatal surgery. The multidisciplinary approach to paediatric care was something Hockley had not witnessed before. Hockley returned to Cambridge for two further years as senior registrar and during this time, was also given most of the paediatric work.

For his consultant job, Hockley was keen to find a centre with a rather prominent ratio of paediatric to adult work. At the time, there were two such centres in the country—Great Ormond Street Hospital and Birmingham Children's Hospital. His choice was Birmingham, and he was appointed to the job in 1978, with a position as adult neurosurgeon at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and paediatric neurosurgeon at the Birmingham Children's Hospital. For 20 years, Hockley practised a mixture of paediatric and adult surgery. In his adult practice, Hockley took on skull base and acoustic neuroma surgery. Much of his time at the Children's Hospital was devoted to his particular interest in craniofacial surgery. After 20 years of joint child and adult practice, Tony changed to a fulltime paediatric practice in 1998 when a new unit was set up at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

When asked what his thoughts are on his main contribution to paediatric neurosurgery, Hockley considers his work in craniofacial surgery as the most significant and rewarding. Hockley authored numerous papers on craniofacial techniques.

Hockley's love for teaching culminated in the coediting of the landmark textbook of paediatric neurosurgery of the time: “Paediatric Neurosurgery” with Marion Walker, Maurice Choux, and Concezio di Rocco, which was awarded the first prize by the Royal Society of Authors Medical Book Awards. Hockley's presence was felt not only in the neurosurgical literature of the day but also at international conferences. His international presence started one night with a phone call from Adelaide—it was Donald Simpson. “We need another Brit on the ISPN (International Society for Pediatric Neurosurgery) committee—can you do it?” He did and after long service on the committee, Hockley was recognised for his efforts by his peers with his election to the presidency of the ISPN 1997–1998. In 1989, Hockley founded the British Paediatric Neurosurgical Group. Through the ISPN and European Society for Paediatric Neurosurgery (ESPN), Hockley made many friends and was regularly invited to teach at the various

courses which both organisations held worldwide. The 1991 course was held in Birmingham, organised by Tony. The greatest organisational and administrative effort came in 1994 when Hockley hosted the ISPN Annual Congress in Birmingham, only the second time the meeting was held in the UK.

His countless publications are far too numerous to list in this tribute, though some of the papers he most treasures and is proud to have written including his well-known surgery for pygopus twins. Even during official retirement, Tony did not stop learning and writing. He undertook a master of laws through the University of Wales, with a thesis on the Ethical Considerations in the Management of Conjoined Twins, completed in 2005.

Hockley has trained countless paediatric neurosurgeons from all parts of the world and has left a legacy that not only influences this field in Britain but also in the most distant parts of the globe. However, when recalling those who trained him, Hockley smiles and cites the great Northfield, for kindling his passion for surgery, Lewin of Cambridge for his training, and the “three Hs” of Toronto for steering him towards the neurosurgical care of children.

From house jobs in London to training in Cambridge and a life-changing period in Toronto, Anthony Hockley became the most eminent British paediatric neurosurgeon of the last few decades. When retired, he was still called upon by paediatric units to consult and advise. The neurosurgery and medical community at large mourn his passing last week. Hockley is survived by his wife and three sons.

Authors note: The authors regret that not all the fascinating anecdotes of Anthony Hockley's illustrious career could be mentioned in this report.

P.M. Schweder, T.Z. Aziz

Anthony D. Hockley—the gentlest of giants

It is with great sadness and sorrow that we learnt of Anthony David Hockley's sudden and unexpected death on the 21st June 2009 at the age of 65. It has deprived paediatric neurosurgery of one of its most popular and well-regarded leaders.

Born in 1943, brought up in Hampton Court, Surrey, Tony began his medical training at the Royal London Hospital, in the East End of London in the mid-1960s. During his early apprenticeship, he was to meet Mr Douglas Northfield with whom he worked for a few years and with Mr Willey McKissock at Atkinson Morley Hospital. These great men left an indelible impression on his young mind. He then moved on to Cambridge working

with Mr Walpole Lewin (who started the Addenbrooke's Neurosurgical Unit) and under Prof. B. Jennett in Glasgow where he worked as a registrar, obtaining his FRCS in 1970. In 1974, Tony visited Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, working with Dr. E.B. Hendrick, Dr. H. Hoffman, and Dr. R.P. Humphreys as chief resident. A visit that was to make life-long friends and leave a lasting impression. Tony was fond of saying he was the fourth "H" in Toronto.

In 1978, Tony was appointed as consultant to the Queen Elizabeth and Birmingham Children's Hospitals. An inspiring career followed, during which time, Tony worked assiduously to develop the budding speciality of paediatric neurosurgery to an entirely new level in the UK.

As a clinician, Tony Hockley is a widely recognised pioneer in paediatric and craniofacial surgery and one of the best paediatric neurosurgeons in the world. His pioneering surgical approaches for children with craniofacial disorders, is well known, but perhaps less well known is his lead contribution to the successful separation of the first pygopus siamese twins in the UK, performed in Birmingham in 2001.

Tony Hockley's dedication to his patients was well known. His affable manner and considerate approach endeared him to parents and children alike. As his successor, I know this first hand as parents often ask after him and wished him well in his retirement, which many considered, came too soon. He often received letters from past patients thanking him. His humane touch was self-evident in the way he treated patients and how he agonised over every difficult decision. He never lost sight of the belief that the well-being of the patient was central to all medical practice. He taught the importance of history taking quoting Bruce Hendrick "Whatever mother says ..." is still just as important as "what the scan shows".

Tony prided in knowing his numerous patients by first name and promptly recalled their antecedent history. There are countless children (many of them now adults) that benefited from his knowledge and skills. Yet, he remained humble about his accomplishments, soft-spoken, and careful not to offend others holding a different opinion, maintained a gruelling schedule of clinical and managerial duties, inspiring his colleagues and junior doctors with his example. One less well-known facet of his commitment to children was the charitable work he did particularly with children in Africa. Only recently, Tony spent some time operating on children with advanced and complex craniofacial disorders in Ghana.

As an educator, he spent a significant part of his time successfully educating the current and next generation of paediatric neurosurgeons. Many heads of departments and clinical directors in this country and elsewhere were trained by him. In the operating theatre, Tony would often highlight operative pitfalls by recalling examples from his enormous repertoire of "surgical lessons" that he would generously impart. During surgery, Tony would invariably call his

assistants "Jasper"! I was later to learn that this peculiar habit dated back to his experience with Walpole Lewin who in turn seems to have picked it up from Dr. Wilder Penfield. I am told, Dr. Penfield could be frequently heard around theatres calling on his most dependable neurophysiology assistant (Herbert) Jasper during "strategic" moments in the course of an operation!

In turn, Tony's nickname in the department in later years became "headmaster", a name that best typified his authoritative presence which commanded respect from all those that worked closely with him. Tony bore his sobriquet with good grace, and I suspect a certain degree of pride!

Tony was a popular tutor with the ESPN and ISPN courses and travelled all over the world lecturing not only in courses but also as a much sought after invited speaker to neurosurgery congresses. He edited a major textbook of paediatric neurosurgery, wrote numerous book chapters, published just under 90 articles, and was geographical editor for *Child's Nervous System*.

Tony was passionate in everything he did. As head of paediatric neurosurgery and with his good friend and head of neurology the late Stuart Green, they championed for better delivery of neurological services for the children of the West Midlands. Tony continued to argue for improvement in standards of neurosurgical care and to support efforts to centralise craniofacial surgery in the UK, leading Birmingham to be one of the first supraregional craniofacial units in the UK. A well-deserved reputation for strong research, surgical innovation, and excellent outcomes in this field were gained. A less well-known fact is that in 1994, a few years before Muenke's report, Glass, Chapman, and Hockley first reported "A distinct autosomal dominant craniosynostosis-brachydactyly syndrome".

Working with colleagues nationally, the first "Safe Paediatric Neurosurgery" Standards which set the standards for excellence in service provision in children's brain and spine surgery were developed. His commitment to neurosurgery extended to supporting the Society of British Neurological Surgeons (SBNS), of which he became a member of the council. He cofounded the British Paediatric Neurosurgery Group (BPNG) and was its founding chairman. BPNG is now de facto the voice of paediatric neurosurgery in the UK working under the aegis of the SBNS.

With his good and long-time friend Alain Pierre Kahn in Paris, Tony was a driving force in founding Paediatric International Neurosurgery Group which has gone from strength to strength and serves as a convivial way for UK and continental paediatric neurosurgery colleagues to meet once a year and share clinical experiences. As his international reputation grew, Tony was called in to take a greater role in the affairs of International Society of Pediatric Neurosurgery where he again excelled. He chaired

the bye-laws and later the scientific programme committees. It culminated with the presidency of the 1994 Annual Meeting which he hosted here in Birmingham. Tony later also served as president of the 1998 ISPN meeting in Melbourne.

Even after retirement, Tony continued to help the neurosurgery society and colleagues all over the country with his surgical skills and senior advice. Not content with this alone, his keen intellect led him to complete a master's degree in Medical Law and Ethics after retirement.

His energy and interests led him well beyond medicine. He was a member of the Lunar Society. Tony was an accomplished pianist, a keen sportsman playing rugby and cricket in his youth, and was due to represent Great Britain in the veteran tennis category at the forthcoming Maccabi Games in Israel.

Tony was a devoted husband and family man. He is survived by his wife Heather, his three sons, Richard, Andrew, and Nick and his brother Peter. We extend to them our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy.

One of the Jaspers...

G. A. Solanki

Tony Hockley was a remarkable leader in paediatric neurosurgery. At a time when paediatric neurosurgery was struggling for recognition all over the world, he dedicated himself to this new specialty by training in one of the few institutions in the world that were recognised to be training future leaders in paediatric neurosurgery. He travelled to North America to train with three dynamic leaders, Drs. Bruce Hendricks, Harold Hoffman, and Robin Humphreys. Following his return to the UK, his dedication to paediatric neurosurgery led to widespread interest in his home country. Working in conjunction with other European paediatric neurosurgical leaders, he devoted a great deal of energy in the establishment of an organised training programme for interested young neurosurgeons throughout Europe.

He was the founder of the British Pediatric Neurosurgery Group bringing together an original group of seven interested neurosurgeons in the UK, a group that has subsequently grown remarkably in number and influence.

Under his leadership, Birmingham became an internationally recognised centre for training in paediatric neurosurgery. Tony's self-view was uniformly positive. He saw himself as a mentor to young neurosurgeons, his colleagues internationally, and governmental organisations. He was always the picture of quiet confidence. He was passionate about teaching and the care of his patients. Having been a friend for almost 20 years, I cannot remember ever seeing Tony visibly angry or overtly confrontational. He was a great role model for all of us. I will always remember the

happy times that I have spent with Tony and his wonderful wife Heather. Tony has meant a great deal to paediatric neurosurgery and to me personally as well.

H.L. ReKate

Tony Hockley was not only an excellent neurosurgeon. He was a wonderful human being. Tony was very important in the initiation of the recognition and organisation of paediatric neurosurgery not only in Great Britain but throughout Europe. His surgical skills, his kind manor, and his diplomatic approach allowed him to be a perfect agent for change. The success that paediatric neurosurgery enjoys throughout Great Britain and Europe can be traced to a small number of individuals, and Tony is one of them.

On a personal basis, Tony and Heather have been friends for many, many years. He has always been gracious and accommodating. Susy and I will miss him greatly and always remember him for his kindness, his generosity, and his contribution into our wonderful subspecialty. We will miss him greatly.

M. L. Walker

It was with great sadness that I heard of Tony Hockley's death. Memories came flooding into my mind of the wonderful times we shared together over the years. My heartfelt sympathies go to Heather and the boys.

Alec Holmes who taught Tony anatomy at the London Hospital and was the senior registrar then consultant in Cambridge reports:

"Tony started his neurosurgical training at the London Hospital with Northfield. He then went to Glasgow for a short time but left there to continue his training at Addenbrooke's in Cambridge where his easy going personality made him many friends among his colleagues and patients. It concealed his willingness to care for his patients with attentiveness and sensitivity—traits which were to stay with him throughout his career. During his time at Addenbrooke's, he developed an interest in paediatric neurosurgery, and this led to a year spent at the Children's Hospital in Toronto, an experience he found richly rewarding. It was to formulate the pattern of his neurosurgical activity after his appointment as a consultant in Birmingham and led to his influence on the developing role of paediatric specialisation in neurosurgery."

I first met Tony on 1 April 1972 at Addenbrooke's Hospital Cambridge, my first day in Walpole Lewin's unit. From that moment we were friends. You could not have a better colleague in a busy regional neurosurgical unit. Knowledge, expertise, busy nights, and weekends were

shared with virtually no cross word over 3 years. We shared the “broom cupboard” our office, thus labelled on the hospital plan. His tennis skills were honed, and he met and married Heather (a master stroke) who was to be his soul mate and companion for the rest of his life.

I like to think I had some influence on his choice of paediatric neurosurgery as I was already committed to returning to the Royal Children’s Hospital in Melbourne after my time in Cambridge, and I regularly told him of the pleasures of working with children. Tony was the right personality for paediatric work, and he was an excellent clinician and teacher.

Tony was influenced by a number of Australians. As a registrar, he kept a copy of Ken Jamieson’s (Brisbane) “A first notebook of Head Injury” beside the bed as did many an Australian. Professor Donald Simpson (Adelaide) led him towards service with the ISPN, thus strengthening British Pediatric Neurosurgery. At least two trainees spent time with him in Birmingham, Cindy Molloy (Adelaide) and Chris Xenos (Melbourne). I was very proud to have Tony as president of the ISPN in Melbourne when I was the congress chairman. Even one of his sons lived in Sydney for a time allowing Tony to visit us more often.

Others will report more eloquently than I could of his contribution to British Paediatric Neurosurgery. I only saw it from the outside, but I know he was a major force in its growth and influence.

Tony was a generous host, in spite of the fact that Australians always seemed to win when we attended cricket matches or watched rugby on TV! He and Heather were great company at any gathering whether formal or informal, their easy friendliness helped make the ISPN meetings a success.

Alec Holmes wrote, “We shall miss Tony. He was always such a willing helpful man, always cheerful and one who did a good deal for Paediatric Neurosurgery. It is a privilege to have known him from medical student to retirement”.

I can only echo those sentiments and be sorry he was the “elder statesman” for far too short a time.

Vale Tony, I will miss you dearly but I will remember you as a first class clinician, surgeon, and friend.

E. Lewis

I met Tony many years ago at one of the ISPN Meeting, and since that time, our great friendship grew up over many years. Meeting him and his lovely wife Heather has been always a great pleasure. With Tony, the conversation was usually not concerning only our profession, but also about different aspects of our life: our families, our hobbies, or simply joking about funny situations that, with his British humour, he was able to pick up.

He was a great friend and a nice companion, and I cannot forget his warm hospitality during the ISPN Meeting he organised in Birmingham in 1994. A cheerful memory of Tony was when he was appointed president of the ISPN in 1997 at the meeting organised in Verona by the other great Tony of our society, Tony Raimondi, with the Poncho ceremony in Gargagnago. Interestingly, at that time, Tony had a cast on his right leg because of a tennis accident; he loved this sport until the very last moment of his life.

I meet Tony, for the last time, in November 2008 during the craniofacial meeting organised by Jimmy Goodrich in New York. Leaving the States, we were already looking at the next appointment for the ISPN Meeting October 2009 in Los Angeles. Unfortunately, we will not have this opportunity, but I will keep his smile and his friendship in my heart.

C. Mazza