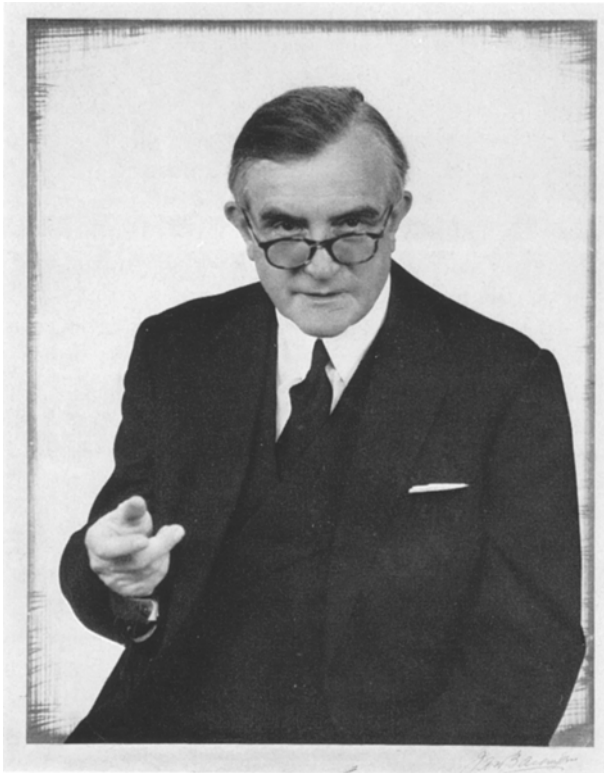


## Obituary

### George Frederick Rowbotham



G. F. Rowbotham died at his home at Wylam, Northumberland, on November 23, 1975, at the age of 76. He qualified in medicine at the University of Manchester in 1925. After a thorough and extensive experience in general surgery, the value of which to a neurosurgeon he always stressed, he became first assistant to Geoffrey Jefferson in the new neurosurgical unit at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, being the first of many distinguished holders of that post. In 1936 he achieved senior rank and was appointed neurosurgeon to many of the hospitals in the Manchester area. At this time he

pursued in particular his great personal interest in head injuries. In 1941 he moved to Newcastle upon Tyne to fill the post previously held by A. R. D. Pattison whose untimely death had created a vacancy at a time when efficient and integrated neurosurgical services were in great demand. Rowbotham threw himself into his task with great determination and, after brief sojourns in outlying hospitals, settled in Newcastle General Hospital where he rapidly built up a centre of international renown in which many who are now in charge of neurosurgical units were trained. He was active in research, and was a prolific writer, whose best known work "Acute injuries of the head" was first published in 1942. Rowbotham was a first class diagnostician and expert operator whose practice was based on an accurate and extensive knowledge of anatomy, physiology, pathology, and neurology. Although he affected to minimise the difficulty of operative surgery, he was himself an excellent surgeon possessed of a fast, meticulous, and safe technique. As a teacher of operative surgery at that time he had few equals anywhere in the world, and as befitted a pupil of Jefferson he was perhaps seen at his best when performing extradural fractional root section of a trigeminal nerve. Original ideas thrived in his fertile brain, one example being the "cooling cannula" which he described in 1959. He travelled a great deal, and was well known in centres in Europe, the United States of America, and Canada, where he had many friends. Numerous scientific associations honoured him, and he will be remembered by many for his period in 1962 and 1963 as President of the Society of British Neurological Surgeons. In that capacity he led a highly successful visit by the British Society to Poland in 1962, and he headed the British contingent at the Second European Congress of Neurosurgery in Rome in 1963. After retirement he pursued active research, wrote, and studied for an Open University degree which he obtained at the age of 75.

Rowbotham was a well known international sporting figure who played hockey for England. He was for many years a selector for the English hockey team.

A mere catalogue of his activities gives no idea of the man himself. Professor F. J. Nattrass has described him as a most attractive person, with great charm, vivacity, and good looks, and this description could hardly be bettered.

Rowbotham was greatly respected and held in affection by his staff by whom he was known as "Father". He was a worthy member of the small band of talented and outstanding men who shaped the course of neurosurgery in the middle of the 20th century.

P. R. R. CLARKE (Middlesbrough)