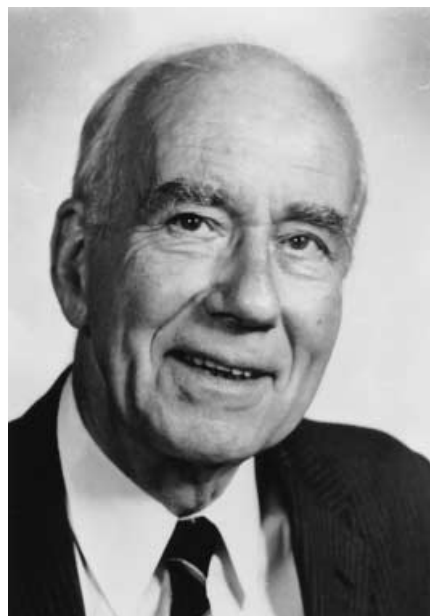


Dr. Richard “Dick” Hoare



Dr. Richard David Hoare, known throughout his profession as “Dick”, died on a visit to Romania in April 2000. It was entirely typical of him that, at 80 years of age, he was not simply on holiday, but had gone with his wife Shirley to see the fruits of their work with the Romanian Child Development Project, of which he was the chairman.

Known to generations of British radiologists, neurologists and neurosurgeons as an excellent clinical neuroradiologist, and one of the first to specialise very largely in paediatrics, he was rather retiring, a man who never sought publicity, and most of his influence was by personal contact. Those of us who had the good fortune to benefit from that contact remember him first as a charming, kindly person, who practiced his profession with dedication, modesty, and boundless good humour. In an age when traditional values have been severely eroded, Dick remained the exemplar of a gentleman. During the 1977 congress of the European Society of Neu-

roradiology, a British group dined at a fish restaurant in the Barceloneta quarter and, on leaving the restaurant, one of the wives vomited over Dick’s shoes. Typically, he showed far more concern for her health than for his footwear.

Born in 1919, Dick attended Bishop’s Stortford College, later to study medicine at King’s College, London and St George’s Hospital. That he became a doctor as long ago as 1941, may well surprise those who knew him in his latest incarnation as MRI specialist at the Churchill Clinic, more than 50 years later. (When asked how he’d coped with learning a new technique at an advanced age, he explained that “the radiographers have been very helpful”.) After serving in the Royal Navy during the second World War, including spells in two ships which “suffered misadventures” (a characteristic understatement), he essayed a career in anaesthetics, then trained as a radiologist at the Middlesex Hospital. He soon identified his future path, moving to the regional neurosurgical unit at Atkinson Morley’s Hospital, where he worked with the legendary Wylie Mackissock, and in 1951 was appointed consultant neuroradiologist to the Guy’s-Maudsley Neurosurgical Unit and radiologist to the Royal Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital; he relinquished the latter post in 1953 to join the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street. He enjoyed long and mutually fruitful collaborations with his neurosurgical colleagues, especially Murray Falconer at the Maudsley and Kenneth Till at Great Ormond Street.

Dick preferred to expend his energies on behalf of his patients and on teaching rather than on research and travelling, although he was at various times visiting professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Chinese University in Hong Kong. Not a brilliant lecturer, he excelled at one-to-one teaching; there was considerable competition to work with him among neuroradiological residents

and a number of those who did so were inspired to follow in his footsteps. In his turn, he always followed their careers with genuine interest. Perhaps uncharacteristically, Dick agreed to be at first Secretary, then President of the British Institute of Radiology (perpetuating an unwritten tradition of neuroradiologists occupying this post), and was Joint President of the 1968 Symposium Ossium. He was made Honorary Fellow not only of the Royal College of Radiologists but also of the Royal College of Physicians, and was ceaselessly active in trying to achieve this honour for his radiological colleagues. He was a founder-member of both the British and European Societies of Neuroradiology, and in the mid-1970s President of the former. The hilariously self-deprecating speech when he assumed the presidency in Cambridge will long be remembered by those fortunate to have heard it. Most appropriately, when, the following year, Dick organised the Society’s meeting at Guy’s Hospital, the annual dinner was held afloat – without misadventure – in the wardroom of HMS *Belfast*.

At that time it was a tradition for the Presidents to arrange to have their own presidential medal engraved; Dick modestly never did so, and on more than one occasion after his term of office, offered to give it back for recycling so as to ease the Society’s finances! Twenty years later, it was at his suggestion that the Society inaugurated a series of annual lectures bearing not his name, but that of his friend and colleague James Bull.

Dick Hoare engendered affection and admiration in all those who worked alongside him, not only other doctors, but radiographers, nurses, secretarial staff and even administrators. His professional legacy is for all to see in the neuroradiological units he created and the burgeoning field of British paediatric neuroradiology. His qualities as a husband, father and friend are remembered no less.

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