

Jeffery Adrian Priestley MARSTON

BA Oxon 1948; MA; BM BCh 1951; DM; MCh. Oxon 1964; MRCS and FRCS Eng 1958;
MD Hon Causa – Nice 1982
15 December 1927 – 7 April 2016

Adrian Marston was born in London on 15th December 1927, the son of Major J E Marston DSO, MC of the Royal Artillery who also was a novelist, and Doreen Norris, a publisher's reader. This literary inheritance was to stand him in good stead. There was also a distinguished family streak of medicine: his maternal great grandfather, Jeffery Allen Marston (1831-1911) *CB*, MD, MRCP, Hon FRCS entered the Army in 1854 and served all over the world for 35 years; in 1863 he was the first to describe Mediterranean Fever. In 1877 he also drew up dietary guidelines for Military Prisons. He became Principal Medical Officer to the Indian Army and retired from the Army in 1889 with the rank of Surgeon General. He was then Honorary Surgeon to Queen Victoria and later King Edward VII.

Adrian Marston (christened Jeffery Adrian Priestley Marston) was educated at Marlborough College (1941-45) where he was an Open Scholar, proceeding thereafter to Magdalen College, Oxford (1945-48) and thence with a university scholarship to St. Thomas's Hospital Medical School (1948-51). After house appointments at St. Thomas' and Putney Hospitals he undertook his National Service with the Royal Army Medical Corps from 1953, rising from Lieutenant to the rank of Captain as a junior specialist in surgery. Returning to St. Thomas' as a Surgical Registrar and then Senior Surgical Registrar from 1959 to 1965, he spent a year (1961-62) in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, as a Research Fellow in vascular surgery at the (then) Peter Bent Brigham Hospital and Harvard Medical School.

He was appointed Senior Lecturer in Surgery to The Middlesex Hospital Medical School from 1965 to 1967, achieving Consultant status. He worked not only at The Middlesex Hospital, becoming postgraduate sub-dean to the medical school for five years from 1970, but was also attached to the Royal Northern Hospital and later University College Hospital. He was Honorary Vascular Surgeon to Manor House Hospital, the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and National Heart Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital for Clergy. His interests were reflected in some 130 publications, mostly on vascular surgery with a special emphasis on the splanchnic circulation and intestinal ischaemia. His connection with the Royal Northern Hospital prompted him to research and write 'Hamilton Bailey: A Surgeon's Life' that was published in May 1996, was well received by critics and is still available.

In 1951 Adrian married Sylvie Colin, a prize-winning medical student who later became a dermatologist, and they had a family of three. Their daughter Joanna was born in 1954 and became a literary agent, a son John born the following year went into teaching and a further son Nicholas, born in 1963, became a Managing Director of Curtis Brown. In 1968 Adrian was elected to the Travelling Surgical Club (as it then was) and was often accompanied by Sylvie. As its Secretary, from 1971 until 1976 he organised the visits to Lisbon (October 1971), Norway (May 1972), Milan (1973), Paris (1974), Budapest and Pecs in Hungary (May 1975), and to Valencia in 1976 though this last visit was disrupted by Spain's first hospital strike (as one of the hosts said sadly "Here in Spain we are learning to live with democracy"). In the 1970s he also coordinated the home meetings in Newcastle, London (Westminster Hospital and St. Bartholomew's Hospital), Sheffield, and Birmingham. After an excellent home meeting at the Middlesex Hospital in October 1983, it is recorded in the TSS Annual Report for that year that it 'was all that we expected and everything that could be desired. We are grateful to Adrian and Sylvie Marston'.

Adrian and Sylvie made new members very welcome and were always engaging company. His skill with languages certainly benefited The Travelling Surgical Society. He was fluent in French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. In 1954 in Paris he gave 'a concise and lucid account, in fluent French, of *Colite Ischémique* at the Hôpital Le Kremlin-Bicêtre, answering questions fluently in French and English, according to the nationality of the questioner'.

From 1971-73 Adrian was Visiting Professor for the World Health Organisation to the University of Khartoum. Over the years he examined in surgery for the Universities of London, Liverpool, Newcastle and Cambridge. He provided exceptional support for the Royal College of Surgeons of England, giving the Arris and Gale Lecture in 1963. He served as a member of the Court of Examiners from 1979-89 and was elected a member of Council from 1984-1995 and Vice President from 1989-91. He was chairman of the External Affairs Board from 1990-92. He was subsequently a member of the newly founded Senior Fellows Society and was the obvious choice for first Chairman, guiding the committee with great dexterity during the formative period from 1999-2004.

His high professional standing was acknowledged by the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland of which he became a Council member in 1974, followed by Secretary (1976-1981). He was elected to the prestigious position of President of the ASGBI in 1986.

He devoted much time to the Royal Society of Medicine. He was Honorary Secretary of the RSM's Section of Surgery from 1971-73 then its President during 1979-80. He became the second ever Dean from 1995- 1999 and a Vice President from 1998-2000, and his portrait graces the passage to the Academic Department on the third floor at No. 1 Wimpole Street. From 2001 he was a Consultant in Health Care Studies at Canning House, and involved himself with other medical societies including the Harveian, the British Society of Gastroenterology and the Medical Society of London.

His professional achievements and linguistic skills brought him international recognition and helped to attract surgeons from overseas to watch him operate. He became an Honorary Member of the *Association Francaise de Chirurgie* and of the *Société Belge de Gastro-entérologie* and the *Asociación Española de Cirujanos* and was a trustee of the *Dispensaire Francais de Londres*. From 2002-2004 he headed a UK delegation to Colombia, visiting 26 Medical Schools and reporting to the President of the Republic. At the French Ambassador's stately residence in London he was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite de France. The Ambassador, no doubt in consideration of his audience, made a gracious and detailed speech in slightly accented English to which Adrian responded in detail in fluent French, without notes and with complete mastery of the language.

It was not all work during his very full professional lifetime. He was an accredited guide to Fulham Palace, where on several occasions he guided parties of members and wives of the 'Senior Fellows Society' of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. As an enthusiastic supporter of Fulham Football Club, he had been a season ticket holder since 1975.

Adrian Marston died peacefully on 7 April 2016 in Worthing General Hospital. In April 2012 his book *As it Were: Reflections of a Twentieth Century Surgeon* had been published, and can still be obtained in paperback through Amazon - a fitting tribute to an accomplished surgeon who left a considerable impression on anyone who met him, worked for him or saw him operate. He is survived by his wife Sylvie and children Joanna, John and Nick, to all of whom the members of the Travelling Surgical Society offer their personal heartfelt condolences.

Tim Williams
Editor
Travelling Surgical Society
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