

Derrick Henry RANDALL
MB BS, FRCS, MRCS, LRCP
1921 - 2015

Born on 10 June 1921, Derrick was educated at Dunstable Grammar School and entered the Westminster Hospital for his medical training. He qualified with the Conjoint Diploma in April 1943, taking the London University MB BS after serving in World War Two. He married Zoe (née Ellingham), a forester in the Land Army, on December 23rd 1943 when he was on embarkation leave. Derrick's ambition to join the Airborne Forces was realised after spending two months battling with bureaucracy. Serving in the RAMC with the rank of Captain he was with the First Airborne Division and the 1st A/L anti-tank Battery when landing at Arnhem and was mentioned in despatches for his part in this hard fought conflict.

Derrick manned the Medical Aid Post at the Hartenstein Hotel, Osterbeek from the beginning to the end of the battle and was asked by the General to stay behind and look after the wounded. He spent the next seven months in various POW camps in Germany, caring for a tattered group of British and American troops and those of other nationalities, as well as displaced persons from various parts of occupied Europe. They were later liberated by the American 9th Army, but by this time Derrick had succumbed to malnutrition and was evacuated as a 'casualty'.

Restored to health he returned to active duties with the 6th Airborne Division at a time when the war against Japan was escalating. About to embark for Colombo, Ceylon, the dropping of the atom bomb resulted in a diversion of the troops to Palestine. Derrick had a slight brush with the authorities by refusing to wear a Red Cross brassard and carry a pistol at the same time! Honour was satisfied when he was seconded to a military hospital for clinical duties, but as an anaesthetist!

Demobilised by Christmas 1946, he continued his medical training as house surgeon in Sheffield rather than at the Westminster Hospital, his alma mater. He passed the London MB BS with distinction and then gained both parts of the FRCS (England). Appointed first as registrar to Professor St Leger Brockman at the Sheffield Royal Infirmary and two years later Tutor in Surgery at the University of Sheffield, he finally returned to London as first assistant on the Surgical Unit at St. George's Hospital. From this he gained his definitive post as Consultant General Surgeon in Sheffield with Honorary Lecturer status in the University. Early publications are to be found in 'Clinical Surgery', edited by Rodney Smith and 'Operative Surgery' where he contributed chapters including one on blood transfusion.

Zoe Randall left the Land Army on health grounds to become a V.A.D with the blood transfusion service, later becoming a medical student at Sheffield University. Delaying her own career until the family were sufficiently established, she initially worked in general practice and then went into radiotherapy, passing the speciality Fellowship. She was appointed Consultant Radiotherapist and Oncologist to Weston Park Hospital and the Royal Infirmary, Doncaster. Since Derrick was closely associated with Weston Park as a surgeon, it was inevitable that the Randalls became known as 'Butcher and Baker'.

Derrick was welcomed into membership of the Travelling Surgical Club (as the TSS was then) during the 1969 visit to Greece; he travelled with Zoe, by now medically qualified. Zoe occasionally joined the 'members only' visits but more frequently enjoyed the company of the ladies. Derrick gave several papers abroad himself including the 1972 visit to Oslo where he gave an honest account of his experiences with Isolated Regional Perfusion of the Lower Extremity in Malignant Melanoma.

Derrick and Zoe were hosts of the 1974 home meeting in Sheffield from October 25th to 27th 1974, offering an excellent buffet supper at their house. Members stayed at the Hallam Tower Hotel within easy walking distance of the hospitals, where the scientific meeting was held after an excellent buffet supper the previous evening at the Randalls' home. Until they both retired, Derrick and Zoe never missed a meeting of the Travelling Surgical Society and always provided a warm welcome to newcomers.

Any spare time was spent with Zoe, walking the Derbyshire and Yorkshire moors or dinghy sailing on local reservoirs. His great love was the practice of surgery and the teaching of both undergraduates and postgraduates. His committee work, particularly as Chairman of the S.A.C in General Surgery, was outstanding. Derrick examined for the Royal College of Surgeons of England and was an external examiner for several Universities. After years of involvement with the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland he became its President in 1978.

Derrick and Zoe retired to Southwold in 1986 where they enjoyed visits to nearby bird sanctuaries. Integrating into local community activities, for a time Derrick was curator of the local museum (including the year the town celebrated its 500th year of being granted its Royal Charter). They hosted an annual party at their home for many friends and locals, drinking a toast as the Southwold Church bells tolled in the New Year; 'bird songs' was one of the many quizzes enjoyed by those present to aid digestion of the generous helpings of food and wine.

Zoe died in September 2001 and latterly, Derrick moved to Fordingbridge in Hampshire to be near his family (his son Christopher and his two daughters Julia and Heather). To them all go our condolences for the loss of their father, who has died in his mid-90s.

N Alan Green
Tim Williams