IAN GILLILAND
Obituary

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16 February 1913–10 July 1975

When Dr A. A. G. Lewis relinquished the editorship of the Postgraduate Medical Journal in February 1973, the choice of a successor was obviously crucial. The journal had taken a deliberate step to involve itself more deeply in the reporting and analysis of medical advances, and the availability of Ian Gilliland was warmly welcomed. His intense involvement in medical education had made him an obvious choice, and this was supported by his close contacts with the British Postgraduate Medical Federation and the Royal Postgraduate Medical School. Unfortunately illness struck within a short while, but he was able to carry on and guide the journal for a total period of some 2 years before he relapsed. During this brief time, he showed great intellectual vigour and considerable promise, and his loss will thus be all the more keenly felt.

Ian Gilliland had an interesting background and career. Born in Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, he came of mixed Northern Ireland and Scottish stock. His father and an uncle were clearly adventurous men for they had served with Cecil Rhodes, and had been members of Frank Johnson’s pioneer column that trekked through the wilds of what was to become Rhodesia, to establish Salisbury in 1890. His early days left him with vivid memories of life in the open, which he always treasured, even though relatively little of his life was spent there. He completed his schooling in Scotland, and qualified at Edinburgh in 1935. Before the war he had a spell in general practice in Yorkshire, something he considered invaluable as preparation for his later career as a consultant. His military service in the second world war was highly distinguished. After serving at home, he flew in to Normandy on D-day and served with great courage during the invasion. Subsequently he was stationed in the Middle East, where he developed a particular regard for the country and people of what was then Palestine.

After demobilization he briefly returned to general practice before becoming a House Officer at Hamme-Smith Hospital in 1946. His connection with that hospital was a continuing thread until his death as he rose through the training grades and finally became part-time consultant physician and lecturer in medicine. He developed great expertise in endocrinology and his M.D. thesis at Edinburgh earned him high commendation.

His main clinical appointments as consultant physician were, in addition to his sessions at Hamme-Smith, at the Prince of Wales’s and St Ann’s General Hospitals in Tottenham, and at the Bethnal Green Hospital. His arrival at Tottenham produced a resurgence in educational activities in one of the oldest postgraduate centres in London, and he in due course became clinical tutor. The active programme that he organized helped attract a very high standard of junior staff to the hospital, and was of immeasurable benefit to general practitioners, into whose educational needs he had keen personal insight. His clinical acumen and responsibility were widely recognized, and it was with considerable regret that his colleagues viewed his departure from many of his clinical attachments in 1970, when he took up the post of Assistant Director at the British Postgraduate Medical Federation. He had already been Regional Dean of the North West Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board, so this was a natural step; the particular aspect in which he interested himself was audiovisual medical education, and he worked very closely with the University of London Audiovisual Centre in devising and arranging suitable courses and programmes. He strove to make the lectures on the Scientific Basis of Medicine more widely available, both in book form and through the television programmes, and was also invited to lecture on methods of medical education in a number of countries abroad including the United States and Israel. Indeed it was during one of his trips to America that he developed the symptoms of his illness, which he faced with incredible fortitude.

Outside medicine, his interests were catholic. He was a very keen archaeologist and spent a number of holidays on digs in the Middle East and elsewhere around the Mediterranean. The results of his activities were much enjoyed by colleagues and a wider audience in the illustrated lectures for which he became renowned.

Ian Gilliland was always firm in his radical and compassionate political and social beliefs, which he pursued in many practical ways. He was a great believer in human progress and decency, and his own life testified to the validity of this faith. He was closely supported in this approach to life by his wife and daughters, to whom we, on the Editorial Committee, offer not only our condolences, but our shared loss in the tragic abbreviation of his fine life.

D.M.K.
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