

John Angus Black

Polymathic paediatrician who was dedicated to ethnic minority needs

John Angus Black (b 1918; q Cambridge 1943), died in his sleep on 21 May 2013.

When John Black landed by ship at Singapore five days after the Japanese surrender he was faced with an unsolved problem: restoring to normality starving and emaciated civilians and allied former prisoners of war. As the doctors who entered the German concentration camps had found, nobody knew what diet was the most suitable, but too rapid a food intake might cause circulatory collapse and death, probably because of acute thiamine deficiency. The solution, Black and a colleague found and later published, was a graded diet starting with condensed milk, beaten eggs, sugar, and protein hydrolysate, together with multivitamins and antimalarials.¹ The striking results included a weight gain of 2.5 kg in a week (these captives had lost 16–18 kg on average) along with a great increase in morale.

Yet, despite rewarding service in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) in India and Malaysia from 1944 to 1947, Black persisted with his ambition to enter paediatrics. During his clinical training at University College Hospital (UCH), he had been encouraged by figures such as Max (later Lord) Rosenheim and Arthur Watkins in Cardiff—where UCH was temporarily evacuated—and his ambition was confirmed by joining a special wartime residential scheme at Great Ormond Street Hospital. At this time, however, paediatrics was particularly badly served. There were a few specialist children's hospitals in the big cities, but as large a county as Lincolnshire had no full time paediatrician at all, and paediatric surgery was just as badly served.

Given that he had obtained the MRCP just before entering the army, Black was able to enter paediatrics at Great Ormond Street soon after he was demobilised in 1947, and then went to Zurich to do research with the renowned Professor Guido Fanconi, with whom he described a new syndrome. Subsequently he was appointed to a consultant job in Glasgow and then returned to Great Ormond Street as senior lecturer before securing a final consultant post in Sheffield. In Scotland he established a regional paediatric service throughout the whole of Renfrewshire and in



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his later appointments became particularly concerned with the health needs of children in ethnic minorities.

Black hated pomposity, not surprisingly entitling his book of wartime reminiscences *Rather a Mixed Crowd*—the dismissive term applied by the “pukka” British officers in India to those in the RAMC.²

A later anecdote confirms his attitude. At one hospital he found the car parking spaces changed. The administrators now had the slots nearest the hospital, and the medical consultants those furthest away. There were no consultant slots left, so Black circled the car park and found that, although it was only 4 pm, the chief executive was no longer there, though his parking bay was protected by plastic traffic cones. Without more ado, Black drove straight over these cones and walked into the hospital.

It was this hatred of pomposity, spurred by his experiences in the India of the Raj, that underlay Black's awareness of the needs of less advantaged people. So when the Italian medical teachers left Libya he stepped in to help fill the gap. During Eritrea's war with Ethiopia, he was smuggled into Eritrea lying prone on the floor of a van. In Eritrea he advised on developing a children's ward,

which had to be built into a cave, paying a follow-up visit the next year.

At home he wrote a series of articles for the *BMJ* on the special needs of children from ethnic minority groups, articles collected together in a book, which went into a second edition.³ What stands out is the directness of the text. Avoiding psychobabble and sociospeak, Black concentrates on practical matters, pointing out, for instance, that the needs of children of settled immigrant parents differ from those of newly arrived ones, while the medical problems of Afro-Caribbeans may not be the same as those of Asians.

Black's priorities were his wife and four children, but thereafter his interests were wide: archaeology, wild flowers, butterflies, gardening, photography, literature, India, cats, railways. He joined the local societies in Framlingham, where he had retired, taking to local and medical history with a passion.

With his wife, he researched and published about a surprising epidemic of plague that had occurred in Essex and Suffolk just before the first world war. He loved travelling, often to exotic places. So he went to Antarctica when he was 90, and, while on a trip to Burma and a hospital he had known during the war, he was delighted to find the same broken wheelchair in the casualty department that had been there 50 years earlier.

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References are in the version on bmj.com.

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Rizgar Amin



Consultant and honorary senior lecturer in psychiatry Park Royal Centre for Mental Health, London (b 1958; q Mousel Medical School, Iraq, 1982; FRCPsych), died from a heart attack on 15 April 2013.

After completing his first year of medical training in his native Iraq, Rizgar Amin moved to the United Kingdom. He passed the General Medical Council exams, got his Iraqi qualification recognised, and started working at Sheffield's Northern General Hospital. He then moved to the psychiatry and mental health unit at the Royal Free Hospital in London before being appointed consultant at the Park Royal Centre for Mental Health in 1997. He was an advocate for equality and human rights, especially women's rights, and sat a law degree in 2004. He died while getting ready to go to work and was pronounced dead in the Royal Free, where he trained. He leaves his wife, Shireen; a daughter; and a son.

Soran Chawishly

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Ajay Kumar Rai-Chaudhuri



Former consultant physician in infectious diseases, Monklands District General Hospital, Airdrie (b 1932; q R G Kar Medical College, Kolkata; FRCP), d 4 October 2012.

After house jobs in Glasgow, Ajay Kumar Rai-Chaudhuri ("Chau") moved to Ruchill Hospital as a registrar in 1962, where his interest in communicable diseases started. In 1964 he was appointed to Belvidere Hospital. In 1979 he became consultant physician

at Monklands District General Hospital and set up the communicable diseases unit. He taught and wrote throughout his career, specialising in meningitis, hepatitis, and HIV. In 1996 he managed the world's worst recorded outbreak of *E coli* O157 in Wishaw. He retired in 1997 and devoted much of his time to caring for his disabled wife, Mary. He leaves Mary, two daughters, and two grandchildren.

Anita Rai-Chaudhuri

Naomi Rai-Chaudhuri

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James Leonard Hine



Former general practitioner (b 1925; q Cambridge and Middlesex Hospital, London, 1948; MRCP), died from Parkinson's disease on 18 February 2013.

After completing national service at the RAF Hospital Ely, James Leonard Hine ("Jim") joined a singlehanded practice in Ely, where he worked for the next 34 years. He was a police surgeon for 23 years and clinical assistant at the local geriatric hospital for 20 years. As senior partner for years he built up the practice from four to eight partners. Jim was interested in the wider social and family aspects of general practice and was active in local medical administrative and policy committees. He leaves his wife, Jill; three children; and seven grandchildren.

Iain Hine

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Howell Pritchard Jones

Former consultant general surgeon and rehabilitative physician (b 1918; q Guy's Hospital, London, 1939; FRCS Eng), d 2 January 2013.

In 1964 Howell Pritchard Jones had a massive haemorrhagic stroke while performing a nephrectomy. After many weeks in a coma, he recovered with a dense, left sided hemiplegia that ended his surgical career. Howell retrained in rheumatology and rehabilitative



medicine and was appointed medical officer of the artificial limb and appliance centre for Wales in Cardiff. After retiring to Wrexham in 1985, he continued an active medical interest and was president of the Welsh Language Medical Society. He was translating journal articles into the Welsh language up until his death in January 2013. His wife of 65 years, Olive, predeceased Howell in 2008. He leaves two children, three grandchildren, and four great grandchildren.

Rowan Pritchard Jones

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de Wet Stockstrom Vorster

Former consultant psychiatrist Plymouth (b 1928; q Cape Town 1953; FRCPsych), died from a pulmonary embolism on 17 February 2013.



de Wet Stockstrom Vorster gained his initial psychiatric experience in the USA, Canada, and the UK. He became consultant to Johannesburg hospitals in the 1960s and moved to the UK in 1970. As a child psychiatrist in Plymouth he pursued his interests, including published research in "holding therapy" for behavioural difficulties. After retiring in 1996 he continued to work in various areas, including post-traumatic stress disorder. He was fascinated in the interface between religion and mental illness. de Wet leaves his wife of 58 years, Moray; five children; and seven grandchildren.

Mark Vorster

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Laurence Geoffrey Rowland Wand

Former general practitioner and colonel in the Territorial Army (b 1924, q Cambridge/Barts 1946; MRCS, FRCP), died from cardiac failure on 23 November 2012.

Laurence Geoffrey Rowland Wand ("Laurie") was part of the contingent of medical students who volunteered to help in the liberation of Belsen in March 1945. This experience had a profound effect on him as a general practitioner and contributed to his compassionate approach, in general practice in Essex and as clinical assistant in dermatology in London. After the war, he joined the Territorial Army, rose through the ranks, and was appointed Queen's Honorary Surgeon for services to the TA in 1975. Laurie leaves two children and seven grandchildren.

Jon Wand, Jane Wand

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Hazel Wilkinson



Consultant chemical pathologist York (b 1942; q St Mary's Hospital 1965; MRCPPath), died from ovarian cancer on 4 March 2013.

Hazel Wilkinson (née Harrison) married a fellow student before qualification and benefited from an enlightened Department of Health scheme to retain married women doctors. This took her to Kingston Hospital, where she specialised in chemical pathology. She moved to York where she raised a family and obtained a consultant post. She had a particular interest in calcium metabolism. She became director of pathology and president of the York Medical Society, and after retirement she joined the council of the University of York with a particular remit for the new Hull York Medical School. She leaves her husband, David; two daughters; and three grandchildren.

David Wilkinson

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