

Dr Peter ME Drury

Obituary

Peter Drury was born in Dublin. His father was a civil engineer and his work took him almost immediately to the Gold Coast in West Africa so Peter was left with his mother in Ireland. When Peter was four years old his mother joined his father abroad and at that tender age Peter was sent to a boarding school in England. It was run by nuns, the Sisters of Mercy, and from this arose Peter's proficiency in, and love for, Latin. At the age of ten years he proceeded to the preparatory school for Ampleforth, a famous Benedictine public school where he excelled in classical languages. At that time he thought his future probably lay in the Diplomatic Corps. However Cecil Gray, an old-boy of Ampleforth, visited the school and Peter decided that he would like to be a doctor and moreover, he was going to be an anaesthetist! He graduated in medicine from Trinity College, Cambridge and after house jobs at Lewisham, Beckenham and a year as anaesthetic SHO in Bristol. He then served two years National Service in this country and Bahrein after which he returned to civilian life as registrar in anaesthetics in Southmead Hospital, Bristol.

Peter married Veronica in 1961 while he was in the Army. Until then Peter had had very little family life. In complete contrast, Veronica was one of eight children. Peter has been suffering continuous culture shock ever since their marriage. Veronica's siblings had 34 children and there are now 68 grandchildren. There were over 80 people at the last family gathering. Peter and Veronica had four children

Because of his concentration on classical languages at school Peter was comparatively weak in physics. This caused him considerable difficulty in passing the Primary exam for the FFARCS, which in turn caused him to move from Bristol to join the Liverpool post-graduate course in anaesthesia. He soon passed the primary and final exams and in 1967 he became a consultant at the Royal Southern Hospital in Liverpool. There he worked with the physician, Ronald Finn, and with the surgeon

Averil Mansfield, who specialised in vascular surgery including the emerging and very challenging surgery on the aorta. They had established an intensive therapy unit, mainly for the post-operative management of these patients and welcomed Peter's help, particularly with post-operative intermittent positive pressure ventilation. In 1974 Finn and Drury published 'A Guide to the Intensive Unit', possibly one of the first books on the specialty.

In 1978 the hospitals in Liverpool merged into the newly built Liverpool University Hospital. Drury joined a group of five consultant anaesthetists, including myself, who ran the Intensive Therapy Unit (ITU) there. The group benefitted from the various specialist experiences brought from their several previous hospitals and the connection with the University Department of Anaesthesia. They developed several new treatments including total intravenous nutrition and cardiac catheterisation, which had not previously been done by anaesthetists.

Drury managed to combine this demanding work with membership of the Liverpool Philharmonic Choir and for many years he ran the very popular annual Musical Evenings of the Liverpool Medical Institution. On these evenings, the entertainment was provided entirely by members of the Institution and their families, a remarkable number of whom had considerable and enjoyable musical talent. Peter himself was an excellent pianist (he possessed the rare gift of perfect pitch) and was organist at his parish church. He was elected President of the Institution in 1989. An enthusiastic hill-walker, he regularly led a group of the ITU staff on hikes in the Lake District.

Drury retired from clinical medicine in 1997 and had to find new interests. He joined a local orchestra and learnt to play the double bass. And his interest in medical history burgeoned: he had first attended a meeting of the History of Anaesthesia Society (HAS) in Llangollen in 1993. He became a Council Member in 1996, Hon Editor from 2000 to 2006, and he never missed a single meeting for fourteen years. He organised HAS meetings in Liverpool in 1997 and 2004. He had previously written his book with Ronnie Finn, a chapter on Anaesthesia

for ENT Surgery in the fourth edition of Gray, Nunn and Utting's textbook *General Anaesthesia* (1980) and a case report on malignant hypertension in anaesthesia. Then 'in 'retirement' he contributed six papers at meetings of the Society. Most notably, in 2007 Peter produced the Proceedings of the Sixth International Symposium on the History of Anaesthesia, which was held in Cambridge in 2005. And in 2013 Peter Drury was elected Honorary Member of the History of Anaesthesia Society.

Peter suffered a rupture of his aorta in 2005. He was resuscitated by our colleague Professor Jennie Hunter and made a wonderful recovery. However his health gradually declined in the past few years and he died peacefully on 5th April 2017, aged 84, at home, surrounded by his family.

Peter was a perfect gentleman and would have made a fine diplomat. He would however have been a great loss to Medicine. *Requiescat in pace.*

A A Gilbertson