

## OBITUARY

**Reginald Austin Binning MA, FCAnaes, FFARCS, MRCS, LRCP, DA**

The sudden death of Dr 'Rex' Binning on 19 November 1988 in his eighty first year deprived the History of Anaesthesia Society of one of its most eminent founder members. He was a distinguished member of a generation which saw the historical development of anaesthesia in the United Kingdom from a part-time general practitioner specialty to full collegiate consultant status and he contributed to the metamorphosis at every stage.

Dr Binning was born in Southampton and went to school in that city at King Edward's Grammar School and later at Wycliffe College in Gloucestershire. He qualified in medicine from St John's College, Cambridge and St George's Hospital in 1934. Rex had an interest in anaesthesia from the start of his career but, as was the case with the majority of contemporary anaesthetists, economic pressures compelled him to combine it with general practice. He resided in Hove and was appointed as Honorary Anaesthetist to the Hospital for Sick Children and to the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton in 1937.

Major Binning had a distinguished military career in the Second World War. He served as an anaesthetist with field surgical units from the earliest days with the British Expeditionary Force before Dunkirk, later in the North African Italian campaigns and again in Europe after D-Day. His services were recognised by a mention in dispatches. The advent of the National Health Service after the War enabled him to devote himself entirely to the practice of anaesthesia as a consultant, and thereafter he worked tirelessly to develop the Department in Brighton into a widely acknowledged clinical and postgraduate teaching centre of considerable excellence.

These are the important facts of Dr Binning's medical career which have been more fully reported in the *British Medical Journal* (1989; 298: 43) and elsewhere, but they do not do justice to him as a man. His interests were very wide and included sailing, travel, civic affairs, photography, antiques and history (general, general medical and anaesthetic) as well as an epicure's knowledge of food and wine. He was a loyal and contributory member or officer of many organisations, both medical and lay, and a keen protagonist of the formation of the History of Anaesthesia Society.

There was however still more to Rex Binning than all this. He was kind and considerate to contemporaries and junior colleagues alike and an attentive listener to their accounts of their aspirations and problems, an interesting and likeable companion on social occasions, and an excellent host. He is survived by this third wife Geraldine and four children; we mourn with them but at the same time give thanks for the full life of a friend who devoted himself to solicitude and care for others.

T.B.B.