

**DR RUTH EVELYN MANSFIELD, MBE FFARCS 1902-1994
AN APPRECIATION**

Dr D Howat

Dr Mansfield died at her home near Haslemere, Surrey, on 10 December, aged 92. A few hours before, she had attended the celebratory symposium recorded in these Proceedings where she spoke from the floor to give a brief account of seeing McKesson's technique of secondary saturation used at the Royal Dental Hospital over fifty years ago.

Ruth Webster was born on 1 August 1902. After attending Streatham Hill and Clapham High School for Girls, she studied medicine at King's College, London, and the Westminster Hospital, one of the few women accepted there immediately after the first world war. She married Leonard, an accountant, the year before she qualified in 1926 and it is reported that she was pregnant when she passed her finals. She spent the next seven years bringing up her children, working for a time as a clinical assistant at the Belgrave Hospital for Children in South London. She became house anaesthetist at the Westminster Hospital in 1935 and obtained the DA in 1936. Inspired by the late Sir Ivan Magill, she decided to make her career in anaesthetics.

Dr Mansfield worked in the Emergency Medical Service during World War II, at the Mayday Hospital, Croydon, and the Chest Unit at Horton Hospital near Epsom. In 1946 she became Assistant Anaesthetist at the Brompton Hospital and was made a Consultant when the National Health Service was introduced in 1948. In the same year she was awarded the Fellowship of the new Faculty of Anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons.

She had considerable expertise in local anaesthesia for thoracoplasty, and had sessions at Milford Sanatorium, King George V Hospital, Godalming, King Edward VII Hospital Midhurst, and also visited Sully Hospital near Cardiff. In those days thoracic anaesthetists were not many in number and in great demand. She covered the whole field of lung, oesophageal and later intracardiac surgery, working with Lord Brock, Sir Clement Price-Thomas, and many other well-known surgeons.

Dr Mansfield wrote several papers on the control of secretions in lung surgery and designed a bronchoscope for endotracheal intubation. In 1967, she was co-editor of a textbook *Practical Anaesthesia for Lung Surgery*. She worked voluntarily for six-month periods at the Lady Templar Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and at the Nazareth Mission Hospital in Israel.

After retiring from the Health Service in 1967, she spent ten years at the Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, in South India, introducing anaesthesia for intracardiac surgery there and making only brief trips home; for this work she was awarded the MBE in 1977. In 1979, at the age of 77, she went for two years to the Miraj Medical Centre, Maharashtra. In 1986 she was awarded the Pask Medical of the Association of Anaesthetists.

Dr Mansfield was a person who did good work unobtrusively. She and her husband were Nonconformists and did not drink or smoke, but never inflicted their views on others. They were kind and generous hosts, especially to junior colleagues and their families. 'Mrs.M', as she was known to all her colleagues, enjoyed playing tennis, gardening and swimming; the last two she pursued into her eighties. She always kept her interest in anaesthesia and was a regular attender at the meetings of the History of Anaesthesia Society, of which she was an honorary member and to which she gave two papers recounting her reminiscences.

Dr Mansfield's husband died in 1958. She is survived by her son Charles, a doctor, and her daughter Mary, an artist, as well as by seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.