

Obituary David Anthony (Tony) Nightingale

23.08.1931-17.10.2019

From a humble start as a caretaker's son Tony won scholarships to Whitgift school and subsequently Queens' College Cambridge and the London Hospital Medical College (qual. 1957). His initial ambition was to study botany, however National service made him realise he would better serve humanity by studying medicine. Notwithstanding, he retained his interest in plants and birds throughout his life.

He spent 2 1/2 years at St. Bartholomew's in the early days of cardiac anaesthesia. He met Iris, then an A and E staff nurse, in 1957 during his cardio-thoracic house job at The London. They were married at St. Bartholomew's the Less in 1959 and lived in a flat in Vallance road from which he was allowed to do his on call, it being closer to theatre than the doctors residences. The local police kindly provided an escort back to the flat at night! He became a fellow in the faculty of anaesthetists of the Royal College of Surgeons (FFARCS) in 1961. In May 1963, following study leave at The Alder Hey learning "the Liverpool Technique" of paediatric anaesthesia, he and Iris took their Morris Minor traveller from Liverpool to Philadelphia on the SS United States. Tony took up a fellowship of anaesthesia at The Childrens' Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) headed by Dr Leonard Bachman, sharing with them the Liverpool technique and being involved in many projects including commencing his career-long study of the effect of muscle relaxants on neonates. He was able to work with pioneers of paediatric surgery, including C Everett Koop, Eugene Spitz and Julian Johnson.

Having learned from a technician at The London, he assembled their first Astrop blood CO₂ analyser which took 20 minutes to measure CO₂, but no O₂! After 18 months at CHOP, he returned to work at The London as a senior registrar.

In 1966 he commenced as the fourth consultant paediatric anaesthetist at the Alder Hey joining the prestigious team of Jackson Rees, Alan Stead and Gordon Bush.

He and Dr Gordon Bush worked mainly at Alder Hey, while Drs Rees and Stead worked mainly at RLCH at Myrtle Street. Liverpool was a happening place in paediatric anaesthesia; a large grant (£10,000!) from the British Oxygen Corporation helped in the setting up of an Intensive Care Unit, there was a steady production of publications and lectures to promulgate the safety and utility of muscle relaxants and the 'Liverpool Technique'. A stream of visiting fellows (among them Peter Morris-Manchester, Gordon Patterson-Oxford, John Lunn-Cardiff) helped to spread the technique.

Tony (or 'DAN' as the Consultants were referred to by their initials) was a meticulous anaesthetist, organized, thorough, master of the 27G needle and scourge of waste in any form, but particularly of unnecessarily expensive adhesive tape.

Preparation was everything. Patients, whether a neonate with a tracheo-oesophageal fistula or a teenager with an ingrowing toenail, were treated with equal respect. He was a founder of the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists and was subsequently made a life member.

Tony was one of the first to raise concerns regarding junior doctors' hours, he published a survey of workload at The London Hospital (BMJ 1966) suggesting suitable levels of supervision for training, and that resident on call anaesthetists should be paid for all the time spent in hospital regardless of caseload. His study on emergency work (BJA 1969) made

several recommendations regarding having dedicated anaesthetists for emergency work in order to ensure a timely response. He taught and supported trainees visiting the Alder Hey from all over the world. He and Iris were always ready to provide a warm and welcoming environment with good food for homesick overseas visitors. His atracurium research allowed international lecture tours and a chance to catch up with his wide circle of international friends.

Tony was always interested in breathing systems, publishing work on the fresh gas flow required for the Ayres T piece and lecturing on the use of the Ruben circle for paediatrics. This naturally led him to involvement with Anaesthetic Standards Committees - from the 'Safety and Pollution Working Party of the Association of Anaesthetists' he went on to represent UK anaesthetists at the British Standards Institute and later the International Standards Organisation tirelessly writing the standards on breathing equipment and gas supplies that were right for practicing anaesthetists and their patients. He did much of this at his own expense and well into his retirement because he felt so passionately about safety (and no funding was available anyway). He followed Jackson Rees as Director of Studies for the University, served as College Regional Adviser in Anaesthesia for many years and was an examiner for the RCoA, but it was the hospital, and clinical work that had 'first dibs' on his time. He was given the Association of Anaesthetists Pask award in 2008 for his safety and standards work.

Tony was a good clinical teacher, and an inveterate tinkerer - making his own amplification devices for use with precordial stethoscopes. As a self-confessed frustrated central heating engineer, when the Alder Hey theatres were refurbished in the 1980s he took it upon himself to help design the air conditioning system. This resulted in him being one of the few people who understood how it worked.

Tony was a great enthusiast, his love and knowledge of engines never failed to impress. At a vintage car rally in Melbourne he could describe the mechanics of each car in detail. At the science museum he would explain the nuances of each type of steam engine to any grandchild willing to listen. He did his own car maintenance and re-wired his Victorian home. Growing up in the war made it impossible for him to discard anything without trying to fix it first.

Mentally active until the very end, he had frequent correspondence with the House of Commons with suggestions for tax reform, transport policy, and voicing his concerns over BREXIT.

Married to Iris for 60 years he was delighted to receive an anniversary card from the Queen a week before he died. He died of urological sepsis and aortic stenosis in Yeovil ICU. He leaves Iris, his three daughters Claire, Sarah and Jen and eight grandchildren of whom he was enormously proud.

Dr Frank Potter

Dr Claire Nightingale