

IN MEMORIAM:

Macdonald Critchley, C.B.E., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.A.C.P.(Hon.)

(1900-1997)



Dr. Macdonald Critchley died on the 15th of October 1997. He was born in Bristol in 1900 and educated at the Christian Brothers College where he founded and edited the school magazine. He won a University place at age 15, but being too young spent another year in school learning Greek. The year after starting Bristol University at age 17 he volunteered for military service with the request to be attached to the Russian army. The October Revolution put an end to this and he then joined the Royal Flying Corps that shortly became the Royal Air Force. Meanwhile, the University requested he return, do his second MB, and then assume the rank of Surgeon-Probationer in the Royal Navy. However, to accomplish this he had to transfer to the

Wiltshire Regiment as a private and this in turn resulted in service in Dublin during the troubles.

In spite of experiencing this military legerdemain he volunteered again in the spring of 1939 and spent almost the next seven years as Surgeon Captain in the Royal Navy.

Neurologically, he had a reknowned reputation and was known world-wide for his interests, his lectures, papers, and textbooks. He upheld and continued the great tradition of The National Hospital in London's Queen Square. This institution, a mecca for neurologists around the world, was founded on the work of Hughlings Jackson, Sir William Gowers in the last century and further enhanced by Sir Gordon Holmes and Sir Francis Walsh. Critchley was almost, one might say, a logical successor to these giants. His interests, if one could put it in one sentence, were the functions of the brain. His writings include the subjects of Huntington's chorea, dyslexia and in this latter disorder he was a pioneer, the medical aspects of boxing, the medical aspects of the Black Hole of Calcutta, and shipwrecks. In the more common neurological arena his studies and publications included migraine, epilepsy, sleep, and old age. His textbook on disorders of the parietal lobe is an absolute classic and unfortunately never reached a second edition.

Dr. Critchley's career spanned more than 50 years of advances in neurology. He wrote more than a dozen textbooks and more than 200 papers. He served two four year terms as President of the World Federation of Neurology. He married, first, Edna Morris who died in 1974 and they had two sons. He married secondly, Eileen Hargreaves. One of his more recent projects was the writing of a book on the life of Hughlings Jackson. The loss of Dr. Critchley's vision was a major blow and the task was only finished with the help of Eileen Critchley. It is to be published by Oxford University Press and is a monument to both of the authors.

R.T. Ross, M.D.