

Obituary

KENNETH BRYN THOMAS, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., F.F.A., D.A.
(1916–1978)

The untimely death on 22 September 1978 at the age of sixty-two of Kenneth Bryn Thomas brought great sadness to his many friends in many countries. The high regard in which he was held was not only for his outstanding place in his professional activities both in anaesthetics and in medical history but for his unique qualities as a true and loyal friend, ever ready with advice and encouragement to further the ambitions of students young and older alike. His presence was welcomed as a member of many societies where he enhanced the proceedings by his apt comments as well as his learned contributions in which he gave the audience the benefit of his own original investigations especially of less well-known aspects and personalities in the history of medicine. His publications are marked by good judgement combined with profound knowledge and an enthusiasm for his subject. He generously spared time in his busy life to undertake a share in the administration in many of the organizations to which he belonged, serving as Secretary and as President of the Section of the History of Medicine of the Royal Society of Medicine, President of the Osler Club of London and of the Reading Pathological Society, of which he was also the Honorary Librarian. Many of the books belonging to the Society were presented by him or purchased on his advice, so that it became a library of much distinction and the meetings held in its rooms in the Royal Berkshire Hospital attracted audiences from a wide area to hear the lectures by specialist workers in various branches of medicine which he arranged. For several years he was a member of the Editorial Board for *Medical History* and also served on the Museum Committee of the Hunterian Society as well as being one of the Honorary Curators of its collection of Hunteriana. His interest in museum crafts was extended to the Charles King collection of apparatus belonging to the Association of Anaesthetists for which he prepared the catalogue.

Dr. Bryn Thomas was born in Sutton, Surrey, of Welsh parents and received his education at Swansea Grammar School and Swansea University before completing his medical studies at King's College and Charing Cross Hospitals, qualifying M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. in 1939 (28 April) and taking his Diploma in Anaesthetics in 1941. During the war he served as Squadron Leader in the R.A.F.V.R., and afterwards was appointed Chief Assistant in Anaesthetics at Ashford Hospital (Middlesex), before taking the post of Anaesthetist at the Royal Berkshire Hospital where at the time of his death he was due to retire after thirty years' service. In 1977 he was elected to the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. He was the author of a most important series of works on the history of medicine, including two books published in 1964: *Curare, its history and usage*; and *James Douglas and his pupil, William Hunter*; and his *History of anaesthetics* in 1975. The wideness of his interests in the history of medicine is reflected in the large number of shorter works and articles which he published, including many articles in *Medical History*.

JESSIE DOBSON



Dr. Kenneth Bryn Thomas