

INSTITUTE OF AGEING & HEALTH – WEST MIDLANDS

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021



Welcome to the May 2021 IAH newsletter. This is an edition with a difference, appropriately dedicated to the memory of – and memories about – a much loved and respected colleague, Dr Rod Brooks. We never worked together, but our paths crossed through the British Geriatrics Society, and he's someone I always remember as astute, welcoming and encouraging to all. Peter Mayer has put together a wonderful tribute, and I'm sure you'll join me in sending our condolences and best wishes to Rod's widow, Gillian.

Two important pieces of IAH business; firstly, our AGM will be held on 15 July, but prior to the business part of the meeting, Professor Joanne Rybacka-Brooke will be leading a workshop titled "Aging in prison: how to support positive aging". More details are in the attached flyer, and I encourage you all to join us at 6pm for what will undoubtedly be a fascinating and important insight.

Secondly, the IAH needs a Vice-Chair – to work with myself and the Trustees to take the Institution into its next phase. Do you have strong opinions and ideas about the opportunities that are out there? How do we become a truly multi-disciplinary, research facilitating organisation? How do we connect with the brilliant work that is going on in the West Midlands and further afield? If you are interested, or would just like a conversation about the possibilities, then please contact me on drzoewyrko@gmail.com

Prof. Zoe Wyrko

Well-being Director, Riverstone Living

Goodbye to Dr Roderick William Somerville Brooks

IAH Chair Publications committee 6 June 1990 – 5 September 2007

IAH Chairman 22 June 1994 to 23 October 2002

My dear friend and colleague Geriatrician and a pioneer in stroke medicine. Having trained in Bristol where he was enthused by the opportunity to show that the most stubborn sows' ears can be turned into, at least, a serviceable silk purse when treated by someone who understood the complex relationship between an older person's illness, social setting, service and care network.

Roddy joined our local registrar training and was appointed a Consultant in Walsall in 1985 and Senior Lecturer at Keele University in 1995 including teaching and research activities. Not only was his knowledge outstanding his language and grasp of local dialects and "Oxford English"...perfect. He was loved by those he worked with and a leader in all he did.

He excelled professionally served nationally with the British Geriatrics Society and was their representative on the national pre-retirement association 1993-96 and on a number of regional committees.

He served as a Royal College regional tutor and Chair and editor for the regional Institute of Ageing and Health. He led a pioneering Stroke service for Walsall- which was Stroke Association service of the year 1995, but above all the service became a nationally recognised Beacon centre of excellence.

I was terrified to occasionally have to cover locally as circuit doctor in his passion for speedway where he also promoted FAST the stroke awareness message.



If I wanted to know anything but especially how to look after older and Stroke patients it was Roddy's wisdom I would tap. A wise man, a true friend and I was delighted that I could join Roddy and Gillian in Madeira just before this lockdown. We got the last airplane back to Birmingham.....

RODDY-extracts from Dr Peter Mayer's funeral eulogy

I worked for Rod Brooks as his Medical Secretary from 1988 to December, 2004 when he took early retirement. He was my boss and my friend and working for him at the Manor Hospital was the best time of my working life. I learnt so much from him. His command of the English language was outstanding and it was a pleasure to type his letters. We worked together in the Geriatric Unit, as it was called then and the Day Hospital, where he looked after patients who attended, seeing them in the clinic. He was very passionate about his work and patients and staff alike thought highly of him and he was so well respected. As well as having Out Patient clinics, 2 In Patient wards he also had In Patient rehabilitation wards at Goscote Hospital. He worked alongside Dr. Sinha and Dr. Zaman in a very well run Geriatric Service.

He was very passionate about starting a Stroke Service in Walsall and worked so hard to achieve this. He developed the Stroke Unit, TIA Service and Community Stroke clinics. Consulting with Mr. Amir Khan, Consultant Vascular Surgeon to run alongside his TIA service referring patients for carotid endarterectomy assessment. When he retired all of this was up and running and what an achievement it was.

He was a brilliant doctor who never lost sight of caring for his patients, his Team and all his Staff. His patients thought highly of him and even after he retired I would always get patients telling me how wonderful he had been to them. That was Dr. Brooks always had time to help with any problem and always went the extra mile.

I had the great privilege and honour to work for him for over 16 years and he will be missed.

Sandra Moore



Rod first came to Birmingham, as far as I know (I can't remember where he qualified or where his other junior jobs were) when he applied and was appointed as our Registrar at Dudley Road. He rode around the campus on a very old basic bike that he said was so tatty it would not be stolen, but he did not reckon with our locals and it was stolen fairly quickly. He had a beard at the time, but when he sat MRCP clinical he always shaved it off, as he didn't think examiners would take kindly to beards in those days.

When I set up a study to examine all emergency admissions to 'Part III' accommodation in Birmingham, Rod was not only an active participant, but thoroughly enjoyed doing it, collecting numerous anecdotes to entertain us later. He was lead author in the subsequent publication (Do Social Admissions Exist? A clinical study of emergency admissions into residential care in Birmingham, Health Trends, 1990). I don't know if that sparked his interest in 'geriatric medicine outside the hospital walls' or if it was there before, but he obviously, as you know used it greatly with his services to the Institute. It was there in the stroke services that he set up in Walsall where at the time his clinical commitments added up to the jobs of two consultants. He certainly never shirked doing work that he saw needing done no matter the cost to him. He has the reputation (I doubt that it's been done by anyone else) of being the only one to travel to a BGS Scientific Meeting by narrow boat.... in 2005.

Alistair Ritch

My memories of Roddy are mostly outside the professional sphere. Although we worked in the same city, our main professional contacts were through the Regional BGS and the Institute of Ageing. My fondest memories relate to two passionate hobbies of Roddy's - Speedway and Narrowboating. As the official medical attendant for Wolverhampton Speedway, Roddy took Jill and me to the occasional meeting and I can still remember the smell of the strange fuel mix, similar I was told to aircraft fuel.

On one occasion he phoned me from Walsall Manor Intensive Care Unit, where he was an in-patient suffering from severe diabetic ketoacidosis. His main concern was that without him as medical attendant the Wolverhampton Speedway meeting that evening would have to be cancelled, so I stood in as substitute, fortunate that my total ignorance of accident medicine was not exposed. He rarely missed a meeting and travelled all over Europe following his team. His other passion was 'Grendelia' his and Gilly's narrowboat and he gets the credit for turning us on to narrow boating and subsequently getting our own boat. I have always admired his gritty determination to pursue his hobbies despite substantial disability from peripheral vascular disease and neuropathy. He continued working much longer than anyone would have expected and Jill are sad he is now gone.

Alistair Main

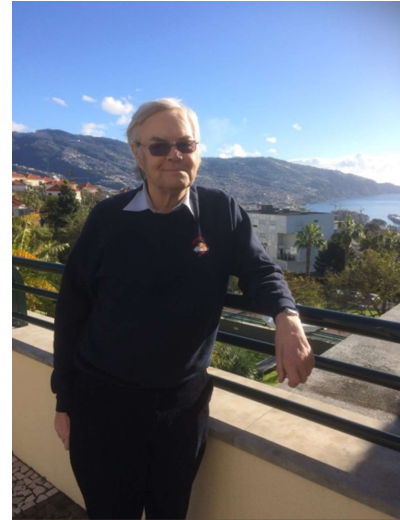
I remember their beautiful cats were well known in the neighbourhood! He was a brilliant colleague - always professional and friendly - but I also remember with gratitude the excellent care he gave my late mother when she was a patient at the Manor Hospital in her mid-nineties. She never forgot his kindness.

Alexandra Withnall

My memory is of canal ride in his barge on the Caldon Canal and the uncomplaining way he put up with his diabetic complications.

Professor Peter Crome

The aspect that stands out for me was the social side, he was great fun to be with, it was always guaranteed to be a very pleasant time of wide-ranging and funny conversations. We used to go out regularly to restaurants in the evenings with a group of colleagues, often in Stoke after the lectures that Peter Crome organised, and usually I sat next to him as it was so enjoyable. Also very memorable indeed were his canal boat trips that he organised on a number of occasions for his colleagues. I went twice, we started off in the morning, had a lovely time down the canals, stopped at nice pub for lunch, and returned in the evening. It was a wonderful time on the boat, great fun, and much drinking! He loved his boat and we often had conversations about it.



Dr Barnabas Panayiotou

I am so sorry to hear the sad passing of Rod. He was the epitome of the perfect gentleman, a compassionate and a very enthusiastic Geriatrician, who was an ardent supporter of the BGS and the Institute of Health and Ageing. I will always remember the strong support that he gave me first when I was the Treasurer and then later the Chairman of West Midland BGS

Dr Pijush Ray

How sad. He was a great character, and I will keep fond memories.

Prof.Christine Roffe

Another Poem That Doesn't Rhyme.....For Roddy

We never talked about politics or religion
We talked about everything else
Any subject any theme
Anything under the sun but these
We never talked about relationships or love
We talked about everything else
Love for his fellow man a given
Fondness thrown and received so it grew
We didn't talk about the negatives
We talked about everything else

Finding positives in everything
Making the world seem a better place
We never talked of chemistry
We talked about everything else
It was though..... there between us
Fusion that couldn't melt
We never spoke of decline
We talked of everything else
Even though we saw its coming
An unstoppable monster, stripping and slow
We never spoke of inevitability
We talked about everything else
Of Scotland and family and memories
geology and mountains
of cats, and Walsall, and boats and birds
of beer and curry and flowers and trees and people and places and history,
of speedway and life, trains and medicine and play, Oh and chickens
and what his dear Gilly's next project might be.
All with a deep forensic understanding.

Peter and I and all our family will miss the Roddy who could talk about anything and everything to anyone and everybody and who listened and who had the magic to make us ALL feel enriched by his friendship.

Rosie Mayer

There will be a special event to remember Dr Brooks

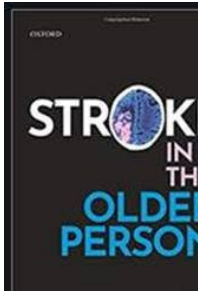
on 3 July 2021 in Walsall

If anyone would like to go to this, please let Dr Peter Mayer

know by emailing pmayer2@gmail.com

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'Dedicated to the thousands of stroke carers, the unsung heroes of stroke.....'



Stroke in the Older Person - Oxford University Press

We are delighted to announce that **Stroke in the Older Person** is published via Oxford University Press. It is released in North America and Far East and promises to be an excellent collection of chapters.

As you can see every aspect of the stroke journey is addressed. We have authors from North America (Prof Louis Caplan) and other places and we have done our best to maintain a very high standard of writing.

Its strength is that it traverses the whole stroke pathway – see the list of chapters below and please click on the website for further details.

I am confident you will find it an excellent read. Please share the information with colleagues and local stroke, geriatric and neurology teams.

On account of the high demand the book is shipped from the warehouse in 4-6 weeks and is available on Amazon as well.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/stroke-in-the-older-person-9780198747499?cc=gb&lang=en&>

***Dr Sunil K Munshi MD, Dip NBE, FRCP Ed, FESO
Consultant Physician, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust***

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