

# Ronald E Church

Died 02.06.2007, Suffolk

Ronald Edward Church MD, FRCP, died aged 84 years on the 2nd June 2007 shortly after the death of his wife Monica, who he had been married to for nearly 62 years.

Ronald was born on 19th December 1922 at Havant in Hampshire and when his father retired from the Navy the family moved to Cambridge where he won a scholarship to The Perse School. He then went on to study medicine at Gonville and Caius, Cambridge and St Bartholomew's Hospital qualifying MB, B.Chir in 1945.

Following service as a medical officer in the Army in Palestine and Cyprus, he then started his training in dermatology in 1948 initially as a registrar at the Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge and later in 1951 as a senior registrar in Sheffield. In those days the training for a consultant post in the UK was very lengthy and the competition intense. His teachers in Sheffield were Renwick Vickers and Ian Sneddon, both superb clinicians, as was Ronald their trainee. It was not surprising that when Renwick Vickers moved to Oxford in 1957 Ronald, who had just started as a consultant at Grimsby, went back to Sheffield as consultant dermatologist to The United Sheffield Hospitals and Rotherham Hospitals. It was many years later that he gave up his sessions in Rotherham when a full time dermatologist was appointed and did a session at The Children's Hospital in Sheffield. In addition to a busy private practice he was involved in medico-legal work.

Ronald was an excellent teacher of medical students and postgraduates. He was co-author with Ian Sneddon

of Practical Dermatology which was for a long time a very popular textbook aimed at students and general practitioners. For many years he, with others in the department, was involved in running a weeks course on dermatology for general practitioners that was always oversubscribed. One of his interests was on occupational dermatology and a course that he ran for several years was on industrial dermatology. In addition to lectures this course had trips to coal mines, steelworks and factories. On this course quite a number of senior dermatologists have crawled on hands and knees underground out to the pit face in a working coal mine.

Over the years he made many new clinical and scientific contributions and was the first to describe the cutaneous manifestations of the islet cell tumour of the pancreas, the glucagonoma syndrome. He was very keen to support research within the department and to foster links with other departments in the University of Sheffield. The registrars were encouraged to undertake research and to present cases at clinical meetings. He was particularly helpful to me when I was appointed a consultant in Sheffield in 1971 in obtaining funds to equip research laboratories. Ronald was a wonderful colleague and he and his wife were our friends.

Ronald was involved in various hospital and local medical committees and was the founder of the Aesculapian Society in Sheffield. This was a dining club for doctors and has been a great success. In 1966-7 he was president of the North of England Dermatological Society. He



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was a bon viveur and I learnt a lot about good restaurants, fine wines and comfortable hotels. I thought that it was most appropriate when he was President of the BAD 1985-6 at an Anglo-French reunion in Bordeaux at a grand ceremony he was made a Chevalier des Vins. In 1986 a successful summer meeting was held in Sheffield under his presidency that was fortunate in having very good weather. He was an excellent chairman of committees though sometimes his dry and often self-deprecating humour may not have been always appreciated.

In December 1986 he retired to his home facing the sea on the cliff in Southwold. He had always enjoyed boats and the sea and both he and Monica liked walking and cycling in the countryside of Suffolk. He was also a busy, efficient and dedicated secretary of the Southwold Archaeological Society.

Ronald was a great family man and will be missed by his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and by the many who knew him.

**Professor S S Bleehen**