

# Patrick Kinmont

## 1916 – 2002

Patrick Kinmont was born in Newark, Nottinghamshire, the son of a local general practitioner. Educated at Epsom College and King's College London, he excelled at rugby and cricket. Qualifying in 1938, his early medical career was dictated by the needs of a country facing war. It was not until after discharge from the RAMC that he was able to restart his studies and fulfil his ambition to become a dermatologist.

Patrick told an engaging story of his membership examination viva in 1946. Several distinguished physicians examined him and one unwittingly asked him how he would manage a case of typhoid. Patrick went into great detail but his interrogator, with other examiners, began some hostile questioning. The chairman called a halt pronouncing "Gentlemen there is only one person in this room who has looked after an outbreak of typhoid and that is Dr Kinmont. You have passed". He alone was aware of Patrick's achievements. With the outbreak of war Patrick joined the RAMC. He saw service in Scotland, Egypt and Palestine before being captured in Greece in 1941, becoming one of thousands of prisoners of war. Many died on the forced walk through the length of Greece and Germany and Patrick antagonised his captors by attributing a majority of the deaths to starvation. They ended up at Stalag 18a where at the age of twenty five Dr Kinmont became the senior medical officer for 250,000 prisoners. In 1943 he

had to deal with an epidemic of typhoid. The skill with which he did so saved many thousands of lives. For this he was awarded an MBE and, as it turned out, the MRCP. In all he spent 4 1/2 years in the prisoner of war camp; an experience which made him declare that never in his life did he want to play another hand of bridge. In May 1945 the camp was liberated and the fact that the camp commandant was allowed to walk was attributed to Patrick's firm intervention and humanitarianism. Despite the adversity of those years he also developed a life long friendship with his German medical counterpart. Perhaps influenced by these wartime experiences Patrick was an excellent linguist and was fluent in German, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and later Irish and Arabic.

Back in civilian life Patrick started training as a dermatologist and was awarded MD in 1949. He married Elizabeth and took her to the West of Ireland to introduce her to the pleasures of fly fishing, a lifelong hobby. He was appointed consultant in Derby and had a son, John and a daughter Pippa. Despite a severe heart attack, he undertook a world lecture tour in 1967 and in 1973 moved to the new medical school in Nottingham. I joined him there shortly afterwards and had the very great pleasure of working with Patrick until his retirement in 1979. We worked closely in the run up to his BAD presidency in 1977-78 when I was local secretary.



In the field of dermatology he will be most remembered for his work on pruritus, the cutaneous manifestations of Crohn's disease and carcinoma of the eyelid margins. After retirement he became involved with a children's charity now known as "EveryChild" which supports over 3000 underprivileged families worldwide. A tireless worker, he was organising charity and parish activities until the day before his death. Patrick's charm never failed. Whatever the difficulties he appeared unflappable and his patients never ceased to be won over by his quiet authoritative manner. He will be greatly missed by all his family and friends of whom I have the honour to have been one. Patrick David Clifford Kinmont born 28th February 1916 died 29th March 2002.

Dr Roger Allen

Nottingham