

In Memoriam: Some Personal Recollections of Dr Geoffrey Norman Marsh MBE (38-40, 44-48), died 1 February 2021 Aged 90



Geoffrey attended the RGS from 1938 until evacuation to Penrith in 1940. He was unhappy away from home so he returned to attend school in Heaton until 1944 when he re-joined the RGS until 1948. He enjoyed writing throughout his medical career

and afterwards in retirement. His collection of creative writings began with a poem "The Sea" which was his first published work in 1939 aged 8 in the junior school magazine "The Jovo". He praised his English teachers, M.G. Robinson and Larry Watson, in encouraging his writing and his headmaster, Dr E.R. "Eb" Thomas. With Brian Redhead he was a Plender Librarian and was Chairman of the Science Society bemoaning in the Novo that he couldn't get many of the Arts 6th form to attend presentations. He was proud of having won the Addison Prize for Intending Medical Students in 1947 named after Thomas Addison (1793-1860) who attended the RGS before giving his name to Addison's disease and Addisonian anaemia at Guy's Hospital.

In 1948 he entered Newcastle Medical School, then a part of Durham University, which led to a 34 year career as a GP in Norton, Stockton on Tees during which he took a national role in helping to transform General Practice from its 1950s pattern of doctors working independently to its current pattern of multidisciplinary teams and targeted preventive work.

In the 1970s a sabbatical in Burlington, Ontario followed by Visiting Professorial posts at the University of Iowa and McGill University, Montreal gave him the opportunity to study primary care organisation in Canada and America stimulated his work in researching and developing British general practice. In thirty papers in the BMJ and three books he contributed to many developments including the adoption of targets in 1990 as a means of raising the standard of preventive care, including vaccination, provided to more deprived communities.

His published writings ranged over primary care teams, changing patterns of home visiting, deprivation and health, GP obstetrics and paediatrics, telephone consulting, counselling and nurse practitioners.

He was on the editorial board of the British Medical Journal and Oxford University Press.

In 1989 he was appointed MBE for services to medicine.

He liked to play the controversialist and challenge accepted ideas, never more so than in his 1991

book "Efficient Care in General Practice or How to look after even more patients."

On retirement in 1994, he and Jean moved to Darlington where he pursued his life-long enthusiasms for gardening, exhibiting Old Roses, the theatre, travelling, learnt Italian, and published a collection of poetry and memoirs.

Geoffrey leaves his wife, Jean, two daughters, a son and six grandchildren.

Chris Marsh, David White (65-74)