

## Gwen Barton (q Royal Free 1940; d 29 June 2005)



Gwen's early career was in the pathology laboratory at the Royal Free Hospital, which was evacuated to Arlesey, Beds, during the Blitz. Here she met her future husband Major (later Lieut-Col) Cecil Barton, and they were married in 1943. The couple moved to Carmarthenshire, where their three children were born. Gwen worked as a GP in Wales,

later returning to pathology. Research into cholinesterases led to her gaining her MD in 1957, and she was made a consultant pathologist a few years later. A respected specialist in chemical pathology, Gwen was a founder Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists.

After retiring in 1976 she continued to work in general practice, occupational health at Odstock Hospital and, most notably, as the first medical director of the Salisbury Hospice. Her final retirement did not come until her 80th birthday. Gwen played an active role in her village of West Grimstead. Particularly good with children, she ran clubs and organised events in the community. She was church organist and choir mistress for over 30 years. She was greatly loved by colleagues, friends and her large family. Particularly touching were letters received after her death from young people who had attended the Sunday club she ran. Here she not only taught them about Jesus and their responsibility to others but ensured they had fun at the same time.

(Rex Barton)

## Robin Burkitt (q Dublin 1938; d 19 April 2005)



Robin Burkitt considered the most rewarding part of his professional career was from 1954 to 1963 when he was senior registrar at Upton Hospital, Slough. During this time he was proud to have played a major role in transforming the reputation of the hospital.

Robin was born in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. At Trinity College, Dublin he studied modern languages then changed to medicine. His brother Denis carried out pioneering research into cancer (Burkitt's lymphoma) for which he achieved worldwide recognition.

After qualifying Robin took a post in the Royal Cornwall Infirmary where he met his future wife, Violet. They were married shortly after war broke out. Robin joined the Army and was sent to France until the German advance forced a retreat in haste. He was later posted to West Africa where he worked in the Gambia and Nigeria. He returned to England in 1944 to train as a surgeon.

Subsequently he joined Ashford Hospital, Middlesex, as a surgical registrar and gained his FRCS. He joined a medical practice in Nairobi, Kenya. However, the time in Kenya was not a great success and after three years the family returned to UK. In 1963 Robin took up a consultant post at Ashford Hospital. He was highly regarded, not only because of professional skills as a surgeon, but also for his great gifts of communication. He worked tirelessly for the Slough Branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Right to the end he visited local people offering sympathetic advice and comfort drawing from his great knowledge and experience. Robin had a very strong faith. He worshipped at the United Reform Church in Beaconsfield for many years. His wife died in 1997, having suffered poor health since the early 1970s. He will be greatly missed by his three children and their families as well as the many people who had enjoyed his friendship.

(Robin Burkitt - son)

## Ruth Crookes (q Queen's, Belfast 1992; d 5 July 2004)

Ruth did junior and senior house officer jobs at the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald and then went into general practice. She became a partner at Kerrsland Surgery, Belfast, in 1999. Ruth was very involved in the life of her local church and had a vibrant faith. She was a witness to God's faithfulness during her short, final illness. She leaves a husband, Jim.

(Taken from obituary in BMI)

## George Smith (q St George's, 1950; d 1 August 2005)



Dr George Smith died after a short illness aged 79. After more than 30 years as a Buckinghamshire GP, he was still working as a dermatologist when he became ill. His ready smile and gentle personality endeared him to many. He was also a man of strong belief, dogged determination, wisdom and perseverance. George's first

wife, Sylvia, died in 1981; for the last 16 years he has been married to Helen, the other half of the inseparable George and Helen duo.

George was a Christian first and foremost who loved Jesus above all else and saw medicine as a place where God had called him as his primary ministry. As well as being a CMF member, George was involved from the early 1980s in *Caring Professions Concern*, and for many years was part of the *Christians in Caring Professions* (CiCP) leadership team.

George was always concerned for truth, that people should not be misled by things which seemed good but could ultimately lead to error and a weakening of faith. For this reason, in later life he started exploring the world of alternative therapies, especially their spiritual roots and the influences they could bring to bear. He was fearless in the talks and writing he did for CiCP and CMF. In particular, CMF is thankful for the hundreds of hours both he and Helen dedicated over the last three years, researching and writing the recently completed series in *Triple Helix* on alternative therapies.

George's greatest gift to others was simply who he was. He loved the Lord and he cared for others, both in this country and abroad. At his funeral celebration – it could not simply be called a funeral – Rev Jim Graham referred to three words that, for him, summed up George: integrity, perseverance and graciousness.

(Derek Munday & Rachael Pickering)

This is a new column in *Triple Helix*. We have previously carried brief obituary notes in *CMF News* but here are able to give more details. We try to commission obituaries but are limited by the information we have to hand, which explains the variable length of reports. We welcome 200 word submissions in the above format and particularly value personal reflections.