

OBITUARIES



DATO DR T SACHITHANANDAN

Sachi as he is affectionately known to all his friends was taken from us after an unsuccessful coronary by pass surgery in London on 28 May 1981. This came as a shock to all his friends for even though he had not been well the last few years with recurrent attacks of angina pectoris, we had hoped that he would be able to continue working for some more years to contribute to the practice of anaesthesia in the country.

He graduated with the M.B.B.S. from Calcutta in 1957 and joined the Medical Services of Malaysia on 23rd August 1959, his first posting being in Kedah. He was transferred to Kuala Lumpur in 1961 and later proceeded for postgraduate studies in anaesthesia; obtaining the F.F.A. from Dublin in 1964.



JOHN WILLIAM FIELD

Dr. John William Field was born in Birmingham in 1899. During the first world war he served as a private in the 2/4th Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry; he was wounded in action by a mortar shell resulting in chronic osteomyelitis of his right tibia. He married Elsie Dodd in 1921 and graduated in medicine and surgery at the Birmingham University three years later.

He joined the Federated Malay States Medical Service as a medical officer in 1925. Four years later he obtained a doctorate in medicine with honours from his alma mater; his thesis was on 'Vitamin A starvation among immigrant southern Indians in Malaya'. In 1931 he joined the Institute for Medical Research in Kuala Lumpur as Malaria Research Officer. Since then his studies in the chemotherapy of malaria and on the morphology of human malaria parasites established him as an international authority. In 1941 he successfully developed the first satisfactory rapid Romanowsky aqueous stain for malaria diagnosis now popularly known as Field's stain. A postage stamp commemorating this important achievement was issued by the Post-

He returned to Malaysia and was posted as anaesthetist to the Hospital Besar, Johor Baru in June 1965. He was in Johor Baru until 1972 when he was transferred to Ipoh. During his service in Johor Baru, he proved himself to be not only an exceptionally competent anaesthetist but also a person interested in the cause of postgraduate medical education. He was one of those who were closely associated with the Postgraduate Medical Centre at the Hospital Besar, Johor Baru and his support and involvement was very much appreciated. He was instrumental in proposing the establishment of the Intensive Care Unit at the General Hospital, Johor Bahru through the Johor Bahru Jaycees who obtained a donation which was matched by a dollar-to-dollar donation from the Government. He also actively involved himself in the activities of the Malaysian Medical Association all those years, and this interest and participation was to culminate in his election as President of the Malaysian Medical Association in 1972/73.

Those were the fruitful years for Sachi. He made friends easily, was well liked and did his best for the department and all those who worked with him. We always knew him as a gentle person, given to no histrionic behaviour, but always reasonable, friendly and immaculately dressed - his particular mark being the bow tie which made him stand out among a group of people even though he was not at all tall.

master-General of Malaysia in conjunction with the IMR Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1976.

After the fall of Singapore in February 1942 he was interned in Changi by the Japanese. He was awarded the Chalmers Medal for 1941 by the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine & Hygiene in 1948 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the studies of malaria, especially his work on atebirin chemoprophylaxis.

During his tenure of office as Director of IMR, 1949-56, was the publication of IMR Study Bo. 25, a Jubilee volume, in 1951 to commemorate the half-centenary of the Institute and the building of a central block of laboratories which were officially declared open in February 1954.

He retired after having served 31 years with the Malayan Medical Service in 1956. On the eve of his retirement he completed his second volume on the microscopical diagnosis of human malaria in thin blood films. On his return to England he took up the appointment of Medical Superintendent at the Salisbury Common Cold Research Unit. In 1958 he returned to Malaya to assume the post of Senior Medical Officer, Malacca Agricultural Medical Board until his final retirement from this country in 1964. During this period he actively collaborated with Dr. A.A. Sandosham and Mr. Yap Loy Fong in producing a second edition of the first volume on the microscopical diagnosis of human malaria in thick blood films. In 1963 he was appointed as a member of the Committee of Enquiry on the Outbreak of Cholera in Malacca by the Malaysian Government; subsequently he was awarded the Johan Mangku Negara by the Yang di Pertuan Agong in recognition of his invaluable service to the country. Two malaria parasites were named in his honour: *Hepatocystis fieldi* and *Plasmodium fieldi*.

We appreciated the way he enjoyed life particularly in the early years and his friends can recollect many occasions when he would let his 'hair' down - or whatever he had of it. After his marriage to his most charming and capable wife Puni (*Punithavathy*) who is the sister of well respected Prof. T.S. Sinnathuray of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department and now Dean of the Faculty of Medicine University of Malaya, he became a devoted husband and father. His happiness was complete when there were blessed with a daughter and a son.

His cardiac problem began about the time after he was President of the Malaysian Medical Association and his heavy smoking habit may have been one of the causes. He bore his tribulations with fortitude and was very much better for a time until the last few years when it became much more serious and incapacitated him to some extent. His last year was a severe trial but he continued working whenever he could and he finally proceeded to London the second time to see if he would benefit from surgery. He was a brave man carrying his burdens unobtrusively and we who remain can only wish his wife and children will be encouraged by the memory of what a fine person, a good friend and a good father he was. To those who wish to remember him by contribution to some charities - he was involved with the Ramakrishna Mission at Singapore, the Spastic Association of Johor Bahru and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade of Johor Bahru.

L.K.J.

He spent his retirement with his wife at 'The Knoll' in Whitchurch located in the scenic countryside of the Wye in Herefordshire, England. In 1966 he was called upon by the World Health Organisation to serve as a short-term consultant on the problem of malaria parasites with 4-aminoquinolines.

He was a member of the WHO Expert Advisory Panel on Malaria; Chairman of the Medical and Veterinary Committee, Pan-Malayan Scientific Advisory Council; Vice-Chairman of the Malaria Advisory Board, 1949-56; and a reviewer for the Tropical Diseases Bulletin.

Towards the evening of his life he devoted his time writing his memoir entitled 'To Live Again in Memory' for private circulation among members of his family; also he did some furniture making and gardening for leisure.

He succumbed to throat cancer at the ripe age of 81 on 15 April 1981 and is survived by his beloved wife, Elsie and children. To his beloved family we extend our deepest condolences and heartfelt sympathies. Although he is no longer with us but his memory still lives on and his achievements remain as a permanent monument of inspiration for generations to come.

To his many colleagues and friends he will be remembered as a brilliant scientist of rare calibre with a penetrating active mind, an able, humane administrator and talented planner, and a refined gentleman with a genial personality and characteristic modesty who always had an assuring smile and the old-world courtesy accorded to all those who had had the privilege of his association.

A.A. SANDOSHAM
YAP LOY FONG