

*The Members of the British Cardiac Society dedicate this number to Crichton Bramwell on the occasion of his election as an Honorary Member of the Society.*

## CRIGHTON BRAMWELL

BY  
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Crichton Bramwell has been a prominent member of the Cardiac Society and its predecessor, the Cardiac Club, for more than thirty years. He was the first member elected in 1923 to join the original fifteen who had started the Cardiac Club in 1922, and was Secretary from 1928–32. He was Chairman in 1931 and in 1936–37, when it fell to him to preside at the special meeting that changed the small Cardiac Club into the larger Cardiac Society, and again in 1955–56.

After resident appointments, Bramwell was appointed Medical Registrar at the Manchester Royal Infirmary—the only one in those days—and in 1926 he was appointed to the staff, a position he held till 1954. In his early days he worked with A. V. Hill, McSwiney, Downing, and McDowall on the pulse wave velocity and arterial elasticity, and the results were published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society* (B93, 298 and B94, 450, 1921–23), in *Heart* (10, 233 and 289, 1923), and in the *Quarterly Journal of Medicine* (17, 225, 1924). He found that the pulse wave velocity was about 6 metres a second in young adults, and more in older patients and in those with a raised diastolic pressure because of the decreased arterial elasticity. This work is extended using different methods by Shirley Smith and Conway in the present number.

In 1928 he wrote on aneurysmal dilatation of the left auricle (*Quart. J. Med.*, 21, 187) commenting on the fibrosis and loss of muscle in the auricular wall and on the amount these patients were able to do in spite of the large heart, and with Ellis on quinidine therapy in auricular fibrillation (*Lancet*, 2, 960). For some years he worked on the mechanics of the circulation in athletes. The final paper (*Quart. J. Med.*, 24, 329, 1931) is still interesting to read but difficult to summarize: many of the marathon runners had hearts that were large by ordinary standards, and he thought this was partly because of training and partly because a naturally large heart might be useful for severe efforts.

He has always been interested in the treatment and prognosis of patients with heart disease during pregnancy (*Lancet*, 1, 629, 1935, and *Brit. med. J.*, 1, 897, 1953) and his conclusions were expressed in 1938 in his book with Longson, *Heart Disease and Pregnancy*. In 1939 he wrote in this journal with Morgan Jones on the alcoholic beri-beri heart, and in 1941 on the collateral circulation in coarctation of the aorta, one of the classic descriptions of this that has not been bettered. He discussed the clinical features and prognosis of coarctation in his St. Cyres lecture (*Brit. Heart J.*, 9, 100, 1947).

With Morgan Jones again (*Brit. Heart J.*, 6, 129, 1944) he wrote about acute left auricular failure in mitral stenosis—a concept that had been put forward by Gallavardin but neglected for several years though it has now taken the important place it deserves in the symptomatology of mitral stenosis.

He has always been interested in physical signs and has written on gallop rhythm and on the pulse: his Lumleian lectures dealt with *The Arterial Pulse in Health and Disease* (1937). But he has dealt with a wider field also, as is well shown by his book with King—*The Principles and Practice of Cardiology*.

Bramwell has been a great clinical teacher and a fine example of the physician with a speciality who has maintained his interest in general medicine. His good judgment and wide, balanced knowledge have led to a great demand for his services as an examiner and special lecturer. In the

Carey Coombs Memorial lecture at the University of Bristol he reviewed in masterly fashion the subject of rheumatic heart disease, 1924–54 (*Lancet*, 1, 214, 1955).

During his time at the Manchester Royal, his department grew from a small one for taking electrocardiograms to a larger one with its own patients and research workers and laboratories. In 1940 Bramwell became part-time Professor of Systemic Medicine and in 1946, when the post became a whole-time one, he gave this up to become part-time Professor of Cardiology—the first such appointment in this country. His department became the University Department of Cardiology and its present buildings were opened in 1949. These achievements have taken place in close liaison with other departments and without friction and show something of his character. An excellent colleague and chief, he has been reasonable and fair in discussion, ready to give advice, and wise and quick in making decisions when they are needed.

Dr. Fergus R. Ferguson in the *Manchester University Medical School Gazette* wrote as follows. “Thirty-six years ago I first met Crichton Bramwell. Following his service in the First World War he had spent a month fishing in far north Melvich before joining us as a resident at the Manchester Royal. Melvich was to have very happy associations for him, for it was there he met his wife, Elsa, whose wisdom and companionship have meant so much to him.

“Bramwell was house physician to George Murray, who discovered the thyroid treatment for myxœdema, and I was with that delightful little man and wise clinician Albert Ramsbottom. Bramwell had the greatest respect and affection for both these men. At that time, the first cases of epidemic encephalitis were appearing in this country and Jack Bramwell and I had many consultations on these strange and new clinical pictures. . . .

“And what of the man himself, always courteous, always controlled: even under provocation his voice is firm but never raised. In appearance, cultured and distinguished, with his tall rather willowy body, a little stooped, advancing a little sideways with the forefoot going down well after the heel—we shall always remember him and welcome him at the Manchester Royal.”

His work always came first, but two great interests survived and occupied most of his spare time. Fishing was one of these, which he has sometimes managed to combine with his outside examining. Before the war he had a lovely old house at Baguley, outside Manchester, with a large garden, where he could always be found as soon as his work was finished. During the war he began spending more weekends in the Lake District and has now settled there in a cottage near Ambleside, where he is enthusiastically making a new rockery and garden.

From its beginning to the present day Crichton Bramwell has been an active and valuable member of the British Cardiac Society. His influence has been directed to its scientific aims and to maintaining the good fellowship essential to its healthy growth. He is admired and greatly liked by his fellow members who, this year, elected him with acclamation as an Honorary Member.