Dennis Deuchar

Dennis Deuchar had been Associate Editor of the *Journal* since 1972, when Kenneth Shirley Smith, in his last year as editor, detected his particular abilities. Deuchar's editorial attitude had been shaped by his admiration of clarity. He regarded too many adjectives with suspicion and complex punctuation with irritation. Flowery manuscripts emerged from his attentions pruned of verbosity and with the message clear and easy to follow. The idea of technical editorial perfection delighted him; simplified punctuation, no complicated expressions, easily understood Tables, double-checked statistics, extravagant acknowledgments watered down . . . then a detailed point-by-point report to the author chiding him, complimenting him for original thought, and promising further help, promises he never forgot.

I recall my years with Deuchar with pleasure and gratitude. He was a dedicated editor with a vocational concern for the *Journal*. He had the talent to ease editorial tensions and to foster an atmosphere of relaxed diligence. All of us concerned with the production of the *Journal* remember him with affection.

W. S.

The following tribute was submitted by a colleague and friend:

Dr. Dennis Deuchar, senior physician to the cardiac department at Guy's Hospital, London, died at home on 19 May at the age of 52.

Dennis Deuchar was educated at Bexhill-on-Sea Grammar School and entered Guy's Hospital Medical School in 1943. During his student career his academic brilliance was rewarded by several

prizes including those in physiology, anatomy, pathology, and the Treasurer's medal for medicine. He qualified MB BS in 1948 and subsequently MRCP in 1951 and MD in 1952.

After house appointments he joined the cardiac department as research student and quickly became active in this rapidly expanding specialty. In parallel with the evolving surgical techniques being established by Russell Brock, Dennis Deuchar—along with Edward Holling and George Zak—was responsible for developing the cardiac catheterisation laboratory at Guy's. This was a time of exciting developments and originality, and Guy's was fortunate that Dennis decided to commit his considerable talents to cardiology.

In 1953 he went to the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore as the Howard Hughes Foundation research fellow, initiating further original cardiological investigations especially in the development of ballistocardiography, his continued work in this subject later being recognised by his election as president of the Ballistocardiographic Society in 1967. He was the rare true combination of scientist and clinician, and was a founder member of the Biological Engineering Society in 1961. He spent several years as registrar in general medicine and one year as neurological registrar before being appointed to the staff of Guy's Hospital in 1958, joining Charles Baker as consultant cardiologist. He succeeded Dr. Charles Baker and Dr. Ralph Kauntze as physician-in-charge in 1971.

His research work encompassed all aspects of cardiology, and his extensive publications were noted for their clarity of content; they are indeed an accurate record of his outstanding scientific and clinical acumen. Included among his many valuable contributions was his book *Clinical Phonocardiography* published in 1964, which has become a standard work. In addition he was a prominent author in the earliest publications in pacemaking,

and electrocardiography, and subsequently investigation of the normal and operated history of congenital heart malformations.

Throughout his career his inquiring mind combined with his mental ability kept him aware of all cardiological and cardiac surgical developments and, more importantly, allowed accurate evaluation of their worth. These were valuable assets in his work as a member of the editorial committee and later as associate editor of the *British Heart Journal* and also editor of *Guy's Hospital Reports*.

I was particularly fortunate in coming under his influence in my training years and later working with him as a colleague. His consistently high clinical standards were, for me, a constant source of professional guidance and reliability.

As a person Dennis was characterised by his optimistic attitude and unobtrusive but keen sense of humour. He naturally responded to enthusiasm but immediately recognised and disliked any form of egotism. Outside medicine he enjoyed London's artistic amenities, particularly classical music and the theatre, and he was also a keen philatelist.

Incredibly, throughout the whole of his medical career from the age of 18, Dennis Deuchar had to cope with serious ill-health, undergoing several courses of radiotherapy and major operations. His character was such that he repeatedly overcame these setbacks with outstanding courage and determination, such that he reached the zenith of his specialty. He was truly the compleat cardiologist, and he will be missed especially at his own hospital where he was admired and respected.

He had a happy and stable family life and is survived by his wife Daphne, and his two sons Ian and Neil, who were all a source of strength to him.

We mourn our loss, but all of us who had the pleasure and advantage of working with him will remember him with affection and pleasure.

ALAN YATES