OBITUARY

DAVID LLOYD GRIFFITHS
1908 – 1997

I was born in 1908 in Wales, of Welsh parents, and brought up as monoglot English, which I remedied as soon as possible. In 1917 we moved to Manchester, and I was educated at William Hulme's Grammar School of which I eventually became Chairman of the Governors. I graduated from Manchester University in 1932 and became FRCS (England) in 1935; I was a Hunterian professor in 1940.

After chance meetings with Robert Jones I was determined to become an orthopaedic surgeon and joined the orthopaedic unit of Manchester Royal Infirmary, where I came under the influence of Harry Platt and Henry Osmond-Clarke. From 1942 to 1946 I served in the RAMC as an orthopaedic specialist, and in 1945 I was appointed MBE (Military), an honour which, as a Welsh nationalist, I tried to refuse, only to find that refusal of military 'honours' is, apparently, impossible.

After demobilisation John Charnley and I were appointed honorary orthopaedic surgeons to Manchester Royal Infirmary. I also joined the staff of the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital in Oswestry. In 1952 I was appointed director of the University Department of Orthopaedic Surgery in Manchester Royal Infirmary. I retained this office and my post at Oswestry until 1973 when I retired to the village of Eglwysbach, where I have been able to pursue my interests in Welsh culture with great happiness.

My career in Manchester was a partial failure. I had hoped to re-establish a first-class academic department but did not succeed in so doing, although I served on or chaired all the appropriate committees. My unhappiness in Manchester, however, was fully compensated for by my great pleasure in working in Oswestry and the North Welsh clinics. There I had splendid colleagues and excellent facilities.

I published widely and a monograph on Pott's paraplegia (Oxford University Press, 1956), written in collaboration with my old school-fellow Herbert Seddon and my Oswestry colleague Robert Roaf, led to my becoming honorary secretary of the MRC subcommittee on the treatment of spinal tuberculosis. After Seddon's retirement I became chairman in 1974 and my duties involved regular travel in Africa and the Far East until 1981.

I was fortunate to be a visiting professor, guest lecturer

or examiner in many countries, particularly in the Far East, and was the President's guest lecturer at the meeting of the American Orthopaedic Association in 1972.

I was fortunate to have no interest in or talent for sport, and was able to devote my time to work, the Welsh language and literature, chamber music and opera. I was delighted to become a member of the Court of the Royal National Eisteddfod of Wales.

I was considered, by my friends, to be a good surgeon but enjoyed a vastly overrated reputation as a teacher. I was also a good after-dinner speaker, another rather valueless accomplishment.

In 1939 I married Nancy Mary Webb, my dearly loved and unfailing supporter. We had three children. I have enjoyed my life and, given the chance, would do the same again.

DLG

David Lloyd Griffiths (Lloyd to his colleagues) was a remarkable person with his own firm views on matters orthopaedic and general. He expressed these with clarity and honesty, sometimes with ascerbic intensity, but was a stickler for accuracy of expression.

His 'auto-obituary' infers that his career in Manchester left him unfulfilled, although one must doubt that assessment. He certainly had a deep attachment to Oswestry as a senior member of the 'Welsh Firm' in harness with Sir

Reginald Watson-Jones, Rowland Hughes, Gruff Roberts, Arwyn Evans and others. His contact with rural Welsh life in peripheral clinics led to a valiant struggle with the intricacies of the Welsh tongue. The respect of his patients was reinforced by his deep knowledge of Welsh and Celtic culture and music.

He did not aspire to high office in the British Orthopaedic Association but he commanded great respect internationally as a teacher, lecturer and writer. His contribution to the management of spinal tuberculosis in developing countries is a notable memorial.

His occasional eccentricity was legendary: I have seen him meandering to the operating theatre from the Doctor's

mess dressed in a colourful kimono emblazoned with a red dragon (Welsh presumably).

He retired with Nancy to Eglwysbach in the idyllic Conwy Valley for a very happy period of vigorous community and academic activities. After he lost his beloved Nancy he reluctantly left Wales for Cheshire. Despite deteriorating eyesight and general ill health, his spirit remained indomitable to the end.

We mourn the passing of a notable personality in British orthopaedics. He was on occasions a stormy petrel, but a most faithful friend to his close companions.

ROBERT OWEN