

Nigel Rusted

Surgeon who worked aboard hospital ships in the 1930s

Nigel Francis Scarth Rusted (b 1907; q 1933, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada), died on 18 March 2012 from sequelae following a fall

Nigel Rusted was a general surgeon who also worked aboard clinic ships sailing the remote and rugged Canadian coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. He was the first and sole medical officer for a clinic service on board the *MV Lady Anderson*, on which he sailed from Burnt Islands to Coombs Cove, visiting about 75 communities along Newfoundland's southern coast.

Isolated coastal communities

Rusted studied medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. (Newfoundland did not have a medical school until 1967, when Rusted's younger brother Ian was the founding dean of Memorial University's faculty of medicine.) During medical school, he spent the summers of 1930-1 travelling to isolated coastal communities in Labrador as health officer on board the 220 foot (67 metres) steam ship and icebreaker *SS Kyle*. Known as the "bulldog of the north," the *Kyle* transported fishermen to and from Labrador and visited more than 50 communities along its wild coast. Owned by the Newfoundland Railway and often the only link between Labrador and the outside world, the *Kyle* also provided Labrador's residents with supplies, transportation, and mail services as well as medical care. Rusted provided desperately needed medical services to hundreds of patients in the "hospital" on board the *Kyle*, which was two small cabins with hospital beds, and in coastal communities during 12 return trips to Labrador from St John's. He treated patients with many common ailments, infections, fractures, and injuries.

"Tuberculosis was ravaging our province," said his friend and family physician Roger Butler at Rusted's funeral. "There were no antibiotics and we were in the midst of the great depression. What was a daunting task for most was a challenging adventure for Nigel."

Rusted received his medical degree in 1933 and interned at the tuberculosis sanatorium in Kentville, Nova Scotia, and the Aberdeen Hospital in Glasgow, Nova Scotia. He was later known for diagnosing lung cancer from the sound of a cough, and pulmonary tuberculosis from chest auscultation, without a need for chest radiography.

In 1933-4 Rusted worked as a junior surgeon at St John's General Hospital and began

what was to become a successful career as a general surgeon. In 1935-6 Rusted took a year away from the hospital and began work as the first and sole medical officer for a floating clinic service onboard the 90 foot *MV Lady Anderson*, which had a crew of seven as well as the medical officer and two nurses.

"We were there the whole year and had a very tough time," Rusted told Malcolm Macleod, author of *Crossroads Country*. "There were about 11 000-12 000 people I was responsible for. We made trips up and down the coast. I saw people aboard the boat, whereas the senior nurse would go ashore, visit the people and the children, and determine any cases I should go ashore and see. I had to handle these wireless messages, which were pretty difficult at times to do because some would say come quick, emergency. If you were a hundred miles away, you couldn't be jumping around running for that . . . I had to teach them to give me more details in their messages."

Once during this year the whole island of Newfoundland was laid under quarantine by Canadian immigration officials because of a case of suspected smallpox on a schooner. Rusted visited every home in the community that the schooner had departed from and diagnosed a severe epidemic of chickenpox. He vaccinated most residents for smallpox and the quarantine was lifted.

Working on the *Lady Anderson* Rusted saw 3000 patients, performed 59 minor operations, gave 761 local anaesthetics and five general anaesthetics, extracted almost 2500 teeth, gave 112 inoculations for typhoid and countless smallpox vaccinations, and identified 62 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and 17 cases of tuberculosis of the bone and glands (*CMAJ* 2011;183:E361-5).

Cleft lip and palate repairs

Rusted was chief of surgery at St John's from 1954 to 1968. In 1968 he was appointed clinical professor of surgery at Memorial Univer-

sity's new medical school. He retired from surgery in 1982 aged 75. He retired from clinical practice in 1987 aged 80. In all he performed about 9000 surgical procedures, including about 1500 for no payment. Rusted was the first doctor in Newfoundland and Labrador to perform several operations, including partial gastrectomy; pedicle graft from abdomen to neck; adrenalectomy; and cleft lip and palate repair, performing about 560 surgical reconstructions. For many years he was the only doctor undertaking cleft lip repairs in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Rusted provided desperately needed medical services to hundreds of patients in the "hospital" on board the *Kyle*, which was two small cabins with hospital beds

In January Rusted was described as "an icon of the healthcare profession in Newfoundland and Labrador" by the governor general of Canada's office, in an announcement about his investment into the order of Canada. He had been invested into the order of Newfoundland and Labrador in 2007.

Nigel Francis Scarth Rusted was born in Salvage, Newfoundland, on 1 July 1907, the son of Reverend Canon Ernest Rusted and Faith Hollands Rusted. Rusted outlived Florence, his wife of 67 years; five younger siblings; and many close relatives, friends, and patients.

Rusted was a proud Newfoundlander. He kept diaries about his practice and meticulous records about his patients. He wrote a memoir, *It's Devil Deep Down There*, using his diary entries and a historical survey. Rusted's wife of 67 years, Florence (née Anderson), died in 2007. He leaves three children.

Barbara Kermode-Scott

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Edwina Elsie Green



Former general practitioner (b 1923; q Leeds 1948; MRCS, DObst RCOG, DMJ), d 5 February 2012.

Edwina Elsie Green initially worked at Leeds Royal Infirmary and St Anthony's (Essex) before moving into general practice in Fulham. In 1954 she established her own practice in Streatham; during this period she also worked as a medical officer at Tooting's Springfield Mental Hospital, worked part time in accident and emergency medicine at St James's Hospital in Balham, and was a police surgeon for the southwest London area for many years. She retired in 1998 but continued to do locum work. She received a diagnosis of adenocarcinoma of the oesophagus in February 2011 and wanted only palliative care. At her request her body was left to medical science, thus ensuring she will still continue to play her part in progressing the knowledge of the profession that she loved and worked in for 60 years.

Mary Prickett

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Gawin J S Herdman

Former general practitioner (b 1923; q Bristol 1946; DRCOG), d 28 January 2012.

Gawin J S Herdman was born in Newquay, Cornwall. He did his National Service in East Africa in 1947-8. He loved obstetrics, but after the war it was difficult to become a specialist. After taking his DRCOG, he went into general practice, and in 1952 came to Crickhowell, Powys, where he was a GP for 34 years. In the early years, he had plenty of opportunity to do obstetrics, delivering babies in outlying farms and in the district hospital. After retiring at 62, he enthusiastically took up a new career as local then county councillor. Gawin J S Herdman had generalised

cardiovascular disease and died in his sleep. He leaves his wife, three daughters, and four granddaughters.

Gillian Biddulph Ackermann

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Helen Clare Kelsey



Consultant haematologist, Kettering General Hospital (b 1960; q 1985; FRCP, FRCPath), died from breast cancer on 23 May 2011

Helen Kelsey was consultant haematologist at Kettering General Hospital from 2001 until 2008, when she retired early owing to breast cancer, from which she later died. She was previously consultant haematologist at Watford General Hospital from 1997. She received her undergraduate training at the Middlesex Hospital and did haematology specialist training at University College Hospital, including a period as haemostasis and thrombosis research fellow. Helen inspired all around her with her warmth and enthusiasm, never more so than when she first returned to work after her breast cancer had returned in 2005. Helen is survived by her husband, Tim Reilly, and their daughter, Harriet.

Matthew Lyttelton

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Geoffrey Nixon Morris

Consultant anaesthetist Southmead Hospital, Bristol (b 1957; q London Hospital 1981) d 25 May 2011.

After house jobs Geoffrey Nixon Morris ("Geoff") was accepted on to the Plymouth vocational training scheme and, among other posts, went to Newfoundland to do paediatrics and did several stints on the Operation Mobilisation Mercy Ships. He then worked as a general practitioner before realising that he was missing the bustle of hospital life. Geoff successfully secured a place



on the anaesthetic rotation in Bristol. He had surgery for colon cancer while still a trainee but subsequently returned to full health. In 1997, Geoff was appointed consultant anaesthetist at Southmead Hospital. Later in his career he was anaesthetic lead for the Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine and helped set up its anaesthetic services. His cancer returned in the summer of 2010. He leaves his siblings, extended family, godchildren, and many friends.

Stephen Morris

Kathryn Holder

Fiona Donald

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2012;344:e1433

Constance A C Ross

Consultant microbiologist with special interest in virology, Glasgow and Ayrshire (b 1919; q Glasgow 1942; MD, FRCPath), d 26 December 2011.

While still a medical student Constance A C Ross obtained a wartime assistant post at Knightswood Fever Hospital Glasgow, which prompted her interest in infections and influenced her whole subsequent career. After qualifying she returned to Knightswood, trained in investigative methods, and obtained her MD with a study of sulfonamide treatment in lobar pneumonia. After serving in the army from 1945 to 1947 she returned to Knightswood Hospital as a research fellow in infantile gastroenteritis. From 1952 to 1955 she was a research fellow in diseases of malabsorption at Birmingham Children's Hospital, studying coeliac disease and cystic fibrosis. In 1955 she became a senior registrar in bacteriology at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, with duties at the new Vale of Leven Hospital, Dunbartonshire. In 1958 she took a senior registrar post in virology at the regional virus laboratory and worked there

as a consultant virologist from 1965 to 1974. She was involved in developing viral diagnostic facilities and was coauthor of a standard medical textbook. In 1974 she became consultant microbiologist for Ayrshire and Arran and analysed microbiological findings for a whole health board area until her retirement in 1982. This not only yielded valuable epidemiological information but formed a rational basis for antibiotic policies.

Constance A C Ross

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Andrew Dennis Smalley



General practitioner, Liskeard, Cornwall (b 1963; q Guy's 1977; FRCGP), died of glioblastoma multiforme on 25 December 2011.

Andrew Smalley was discovered to have a frontal brain tumour at age 16 but still achieved the necessary A level grades to enter medical school at Guy's. After house jobs at Guy's and Greenwich, he joined the Plymouth vocational training scheme, completed his training at Rosedean Surgery in Liskeard in 1991, and joined as a full time partner. In 2001, he was awarded fellowship by assessment of the RCGP, and in 2007 he achieved the postgraduate diploma in therapeutics, with distinction. In late 2011 he was found to have a further brain tumour. He leaves his wife, Catriona, and two children.

David Smalley

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