Obituary – Nachruf – Nécrologie

Oscar Olbrich
M.D. (Prague and Vienna) Ph.D. (Edinburgh)
Dr. Olbrich passed away suddenly on the 22nd August, 1957, at the age of 56, from a coronary occlusion.

After graduating at Prague and Vienna, Dr. Olbrich went to Great Britain in 1939 and studied at Edinburgh. During the period of waiting for registration necessary in Great Britain, he worked at Queensferry House Hospital and began to develop his interest in Gerontology. During the early years in Great Britain he worked with Professor Sir Stanley Davidson at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, and with Dr. C. P. Stewart at the Department of Chemical Pathology, that work mainly relating to renal clearance.

In 1950, he was appointed physician to the Gerontological Department of the General Hospital at Sunderland and within a very short space of time had established an outstanding reputation not only as a clinician, but for his clinical researches into the electrolyte control, water balance, and cardiovascular problems, in relation to ageing. The Newcastle Regional Hospital Board gave him financial assistance for his researches and later the work was supported by the Nuffield Foundation. There gathered around him a devoted and competent group of workers and many consultants in Geriatrics in Great Britain have benefited from working in the Unit at Sunderland.

He was most zealous in advocating research in gerontology, took an active part in the work of the Medical Society for the Care of the Elderly, and particularly in the International Association of Gerontology. He was Secretary of the Biological Section of the Third International Congress in London, and attended all the meetings of the International Association, giving papers at Liège, St. Louis, London, Basle, and at the recent Congress at Merano. His enthusiasm, his tolerance, and his great sense of humour made him a welcome friend wherever he went. He enjoyed good living and it was always a treat to go out to dinner with him, preferably to a Hungarian restaurant where he would enthuse about the beauties of his native land and declaim with merit the poetry of his country, especially the beautiful poems of Ady, but always having an appropriate translation for his English friends.

He had a serious warning of his illness in 1955 but, with characteristic courage, not only returned to full duty, but lost none of his inspirational drive and succeeded in completing some of his researches. His knowledge of Europe and European languages was a great asset at the meetings of the International Association and it was fitting that at the last Congress in Merano this year, he should have been made Honorary Secretary of the newly formed Clinical Section.

All who knew Oscar Olbrich wish to express their deep sympathy to his wife and two young children in their grievous loss.