

OBITUARY

John Shepherd, who died on 4 March 1992, was a member of the founding committee of the Liverpool Medical History Society, a regular attender at our meetings, and the most prolific medical historian on Merseyside over the last forty years. Born on the Borders, he trained in Scotland, and after a period in Oxford held the post of Senior Lecturer in Surgery at Liverpool University between 1948 and his retirement in 1978. Many years of service in the Royal Navy Voluntary Reserve, up to his retirement as a Surgeon Captain in 1960, included his wartime service as P.M.O. aboard H.M.S. 'Eagle'. His various medical honours, his important publications in abdominal surgery, and his services to the Liverpool Medical Institution will be passed over here. His multifarious interests, enabled by the support of his wife, were refreshed by his patent enjoyment of family life. In his Merseyside home, he followed up earlier articles on aspects of the history of medicine by writing a series of well-received biographies of distinguished nineteenth-century surgeons - Spencer Wells (1965), Simpson and Syme (1969), Lawson Tait (1980). In these, the Edinburgh connections were carefully drawn out. However, his 1979 history of the Liverpool Medical Institution represented an outstanding contribution to our local history, as well as to medical history. Like all his writings it was based on a thorough knowledge of the printed sources, an exhaustive pursuit and analysis of archive sources, and a mass of correspondence with informants of all kinds - relevant institutions, surviving relatives, distant archivists.

My close acquaintance with John came through his *magnum opus*, his history of the British doctors involved in the Crimean War. This brought into play his naval interests - he took especial pleasure in discussing the medical services of the Royal Navy. He had collected information on the Crimean doctors over many decades and had drafted a very long text, which, at his age, he had feared would never be published. We worked together for two years, partly to reduce the text to publishable length. He was uncommonly patient with a younger man's nudging of what he had written. He remained in reasonable health to complete the publication in 1991 and see many favourable reviews. When his health deteriorated and he was bedbound, he took pleasure in new contacts with Crimean enthusiasts. But on my last visit, when he was very ill, he was deeply into a solid biography of a Borders worthy, and this, he announced, he hoped to complete. A tribute service held at his local church overflowed with those who acknowledged his professional competence, scholarly endeavour and personal qualities.

P.E.H. Hair