
PROFESSOR PAUL E.H. HAIR (1926-2001)

Professor Paul Hair, who died on 13 August 2001 after a short illness, served the Society with distinction as founding chairman 1984–94, as vice-chairman 1999–2001, and as co-editor of the Society's Bulletin, *Medical Historian*, 1992–94 and from 2000 onwards.

Born in Amble, Northumberland, in 1926, Paul Hair was educated at Berwick-upon-Tweed Grammar School before winning an open major scholarship to St John's College, Cambridge. His undergraduate career was interrupted by National Service (serving as a Bevin Boy). Following graduation at Cambridge, he obtained his DPhil at Oxford with a thesis on 'The Social History of British Coalminers 1800-1845'. During most of the period 1952-65, he served successively on the staffs of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, Fourah Bay College, Freetown and the University of Sierra Leone, and the University of Khartoum (where he was Senior Lecturer in History). Returning to England and a lectureship in African History, to start the teaching of African history, at the University of Liverpool in 1965, he was successively promoted, holding a Chair in Modern History from 1979 until his retirement in 1990. His research output was considerable, reflecting his wide interests in British social history and in the history of Portuguese and British West Africa; an ethno-linguistic historian, he was also an expert on world exploration and encounter.

An historian of unusual breadth and originality, it was Paul Hair's concern that knowledge should not be fragmented and his belief that his own discipline, History, might in some respects afford a bridge, that led him actively to foster links between the Arts and Sciences. Discussions with like-minded individuals directly or indirectly connected with the Faculties of Medicine and Science of the University of Liverpool, and an essential input from scholars at Manchester who were already professionally involved in these fields of history, led to the founding of a Liverpool Society for the History of Science and Technology (and the inauguration of a MSc course in the History of Science and Technology at the University, on which he taught for many years) as well as the Liverpool Medical History Society. Professor Hair chaired the steering group which organised the one-day conference on 'Medicine and Society in the North West' held in the Faculty of Medicine in November 1983, which led directly to the organisation of further meetings and the formal foundation of the Society in June 1984. A former chairman of the Faculty of Arts and first head of a single University Department of History (following amalgamation of Mediaeval and Modern Departments), he brought a wealth of experience and

administrative expertise to the chairmanship. Very seldom missing a meeting of the Society, except when he held a Visiting Professorship at the University of California, his contributions, both as chairman and later as an 'ordinary' member of the Society, demonstrated the authority with which he could speak on a wide range of subjects, providing a fresh illumination.

Reflecting the range of his medico-historical interests, Professor Hair lectured to the Society on 'Measuring the Blood on the Coal: The Use and Abuse of Medical Statistics' (1987), 'Full Fathom Five: Deaths of Elizabethan Seamen' (1995), and 'The Health of the North in a Renaissance Encyclopaedia' (2000); all three papers were published in *Medical Historian*. He also contributed papers to *Medical Historian* on 'More Guinea surgeons (1600-1650)' (2000) and an account '59206 (RAMC): Malta 1917-1918' (1998), based on the diaries of his father. As General Editor of *Liverpool Historical Studies* and of many texts, he brought to the editorship of *Medical Historian* a wealth of editorial experience, besides his mastery of the production of computer-generated copy.

Individual members of the Society have cause to be grateful to Paul Hair for the practical advice and assistance he unobtrusively and willingly gave; this help included that which the late Mr John Shepherd (a founder member of the Society) gratefully acknowledged in the preface to his two volume study of *The Crimean Doctors* (Liverpool Historical Studies, 1991). Blessed with a kindly sense of humour, he is reported as having told a nurse during his last illness, 'I think I'll try that. I don't think I ever got my money's worth out of the NHS'. Many years previously he had composed an epitaph for an academic:

Asleep, in a dream I read The Times
obituaries and saw my name
but lo! I got a mere four lines
and promptly died of shame.

It is pleasing to report that, in the event, both *The Times* (30 October 2001) and *The Independent* (7 September 2001) carried full obituaries (from which, with due acknowledgements, some of this text has been drawn).