

**DR. J.H. BOTTING: 6 January
1932—12 July 2012**

Jack died last July after a prolonged illness resulting from cancer of the prostate and with his passing the British Pharmacological Society has lost one of its finest teachers. He inspired generations of young pharmacologists, many of who went to senior positions in academia, medicine and industry. Many of his students also pursued successful careers outside science and it is notable that these students have remarked how Jack maintained his interest in their non-pharmacological careers and was always ready to proffer advice and assistance when asked.



Jack Howard Botting was born in Croydon, London and attended Selhurst Grammar School where he developed his lifelong passion for Rugby and captained the School First Fifteen. He graduated B.Pharm at Chelsea College in 1954 and immediately commenced postgraduate research under the supervision of Professor Mary Lockett. Jack refined his surgical skills under Lockett, who was an inveterate smoker, and Jack used to regale his students with the stories of ether pad fires ignited by Lockett's cigarette stubs tossed casually into the operating theatre waste bin. Incredible as it may seem now, both students and staff smoked in the laboratories at that time and Jack could often be seen demonstrating arterial cannulation with a pipe firmly clenched in his jaw.

On completing his Ph.D. in 1957, Jack entered National Service in the Royal Army Medical Corps and was posted to Army Operational Research Group. Seconded to the MRC Laboratories at Holly Hill, London he carried out research on acclimatization to heat and the assessment of stress in human subjects under the supervision of Professor, later Sir, John Butterfield. In 1959 Jack returned to Chelsea as Lecturer in Pharmacology at a time when pharmacology was entering a golden age of drug research and discovery. Chelsea had recognised the need to train a new breed of pharmacologist taught specifically in the discipline rather as an adjunct to medicine or pharmacy. Jack's impact on this course was far reaching; Chelsea had many fine and dedicated teachers but Jack was exceptional in his eye for detail and in the pastoral care of his students. Liaison with industrial and government research centres was an important part of his responsibilities which allowed him to secure places for students in their third year intercalated research course. Many former students have spoken warmly of how Jack helped them obtain positions after graduating and how he would keep track of their careers.

Jack himself had a year's sabbatical at the Sandoz Laboratories in Basel (1969-70) and returned as Senior Lecturer to Chelsea until 1989 when he became acting Head of Department prior and during the merger of Kings and Chelsea College. In 1990 he decided to retire from academic life and took the position of Scientific Director of the Research Defence Society until he finally retired in 1995. Thereafter he enjoyed meeting old students for lunch whilst still closely interested in their careers and lives.

Heavy teaching loads and pastoral duties precluded a large research output but he contributed to five books with Sir John Vane and he published over twenty original research and review papers. Jack held many influential positions on academic committees in the University of London (as it was) including the chairmanship of the Board of Studies in Pharmacology. His major contributions to teaching pharmacology were recognized by the Society by the award of the Rang Prize in 2011; unfortunately Jack was too ill by that time to receive the award in person.

Jack married Renia Botting, a fellow Chelsea student, in 1958 and Renia was still at his side when he left us in July 2012. I have received many touching tributes to Jack from his former students and colleagues and I can only echo the sentiment of this former student:

A man of inner beauty, gentle soul, high integrity, and sharp humour, Jack Botting was also a great pharmacologist leaving behind a legacy of training so many outstanding scientists. Jack was the first catalyst that made me love pharmacology and rooted in me this beautiful discipline. He played an instrumental role in my life as a scientist and human being. Although painful having to write these lines and realizing how much I will miss him I was privileged to have had him as my tutor, teacher, mentor and friend of 29 years. Thanks for everything Jack."

John Hughes