

## Biography of Hugh Graham Stack 1915 - 1992

Graham Stack was born on 7th December 1915 in Bristol, the third son of an eye surgeon. He gained a scholarship from Clifton College to Bristol University where he studied physics and chemistry before starting medical training in London at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, afterwards holding house appointments at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital. He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1945-1947 and obtained the English FRCS in 1951. While training at the Central Middlesex Hospital, London, in 1955 he met and married Lorna, a medical colleague. In 1956 he was appointed as orthopaedic surgeon to Albert Dock Orthopaedic and Fracture Hospital, London, later moving to Harold Wood and other hospitals in the Brentwood area north of London. He retired from the National Health Service in 1980 and died on 28th May 1992.



The turning point in his career came in 1955, after his return from North America where he had studied Hand Surgery, mainly in Chicago. Intent on pursuing this interest he found the only available outlet in the UK closed to him. He resolved to start an alternative group and wrote to several interested surgeons of his own seniority; thus was born the Second Hand Club. With single-minded purpose he was secretary and treasurer, recorded the proceedings and circulated the members. With Lorna's help he organised twice yearly meetings in the UK or abroad. Most orthopaedic and plastic surgeons with a major interest in the hand joined the club and so started that fruitful co-operation between the two specialties which grew into the British Society for Surgery of the Hand, collecting on the way anatomists, rheumatologists and specialists in rehabilitation who could contribute their own expertise. Graham was its President in 1973. Hand surgeons world-wide and especially from the countries of Europe were invited to join the Second Hand Club and were regular attendees at its meetings.

International federations were a subject for discussion in the 1960's. Graham was the second secretary of the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand in 1972, its President in 1978, and he was recognised as one of the pioneers at a ceremony in Tokyo in 1986. All this is sufficient for one career, but Graham Stack's greatest achievements were as a writer and editor. His first publication was a paper in Nature on the subject of killing cockroaches in submarines; his best known were his studies on the anatomy and function of the intrinsic muscles of the hand, for which he was made Arris and Gale lecturer in 1962 and his work on the palmar fascia and Dupuytren's contracture, for which he was appointed Hunterian Professor at The Royal College of Surgeons in 1970. His film on muscle function in the fingers was awarded the a gold medal by the British Medical Association in 1963

The proceedings of the Second Hand Club grew into a specialist journal, The Hand. Graham's role as editor, production manager and supervisor of the printing, all on a shoe-string budget without personal remuneration, continued until the journal's very success forced an expansion of its staff, culminating in affiliation with the American Society to become the British volume (now the European volume) of the Journal of Hand Surgery.

Graham Stack's achievements were to build a framework in which Hand Surgery in Britain could develop within a wider geographical context and to provide the means of dissemination of knowledge through the written word which alone has kept this country in the forefront of the specialty. His work was his life, but beyond that and the interests of his family he was a skilled wood carver and a loyal liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Barbers, which afforded him much pleasure in his retirement. His concern was always for others and through his introductions he was the common factor in many friendships.

R. H. C. Robins FRCS

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