

GERALD WISEMAN MB BS MD PhD

born 12 December 1923 – died 8 December 2000

Gerry was born in London in 1923. He started his 2nd MB at University College London in 1942 and graduated from University College Hospital with an MB BS in 1947. He applied for, and was speedily given, a position as Lecturer in Physiology in 1948. He retired as Reader in Physiology in 1989 and until his death, was an Honorary Lecturer in the Department of Biomedical Science.



As a medical student, he had thought that the current mechanisms for the intestinal absorption of nutrients were unlikely, and so embarked upon his life's work to attempt to elucidate the real mechanism. In 1949 research workers in the Department of Biochemistry, in which Gerry spent much of his time, were estimating amino acids with bacterial enzymes so that, with the appropriate preparation, amino acid transfer could be studied. The preparation he devised, a small segment of rodent intestine turned inside out and formed into a small sac, was destined to place Sheffield on the intestinal transfer map and would make the Department of Physiology into the mecca for intestinal transfer for the next two decades. Gerry showed that the transfer of amino acids across the intestinal cells into the

blood stream was actually an active process rather than simple diffusion relying on a carrier-mediated transfer mechanism i.e. a pump.

Gerry was a nice man and very easy to get on with but was the archetypal loner. He could be very difficult to know but if you succeeded in breaking through

his barrier, you were treated to a person with a considerable intellect and, on rare occasions, a surprising sense of humour. In a biting but surprisingly perceptive article written about him for the Sheffield University medical student magazine *NorthWing*, Gerry was described as “a low-sized enigmatic man who achieved the gravity and maturity of an adult at the age of 2 and saw no good reason to change it”. Indeed Gerry had the ability to sustain a physical appearance which was virtually unchanged, until near the end, over the four decades that I had the privilege to know him.

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