

JAMES ALEXANDER BARCLAY

James (Jimmy) Alexander Barclay was born in Milltown Campfield in the parish of Kincardine O'Neil in Aberdeenshire on December 19th 1909. He was the second youngest and only boy of four children. His parents were farmers, who were not wealthy. However, with the aid of financial support from The Carnegie Trust, Jimmy was able to enter Aberdeen University in 1925-6, only to find that he was too young to study Medicine. He took an MA in Classics, and at this time considered entering the church. Times were hard whilst at Aberdeen, and Jimmy supplemented his income by beating for the royal shoots on the Balmoral estate. This activity provided meals, a little extra money, and a ready supply of glow-worms to provide illumination for his evening studies!



After his MA, Jimmy remained in Aberdeen and studied Medicine including an intercalated BSc in Physiology. He graduated in 1937, and moved south to Leeds where he found employment in various locum positions. Here, he met and married Grizel Borthwick, a bacteriologist. Soon after, they both moved to Birmingham and to the University, where Jimmy entered the Department of Physiology then headed by Professor Guilding. Jimmy remained in the department for the whole of his professional career, and became a Reader in renal physiology. He also completed a spell as acting Head of Department. Jimmy belonged very much to the generation of "classical" whole animal renal physiologists. His research centred on mechanisms of acid secretion by the kidney. In later years, in collaboration with

the biochemists, Ken White and Michael Hickling his work shifted to concentrate on isolation of sodium-binding polypeptides from erythrocytes and cardiac muscle. In 1967, together with White, he published a successful monograph entitled "Elementary Calculations in Physiology & Biochemistry", written, said Jimmy to address the "lamentable innumeracy" of students in the life sciences. He retired in 1973.

Following Grizel's death in 1991, Jimmy moved to Bath to be closer to his family. In 1997 he married for a second time. His second wife, Beryl, a devout Christian and retired nurse, owned a car, which was especially useful in conveying the now poorly-sighted Jimmy on daily "quality control" missions to various hostleries in the Bath and Avon area on behalf of CAMRA, of which he was one of the early members.

Jimmy died just two weeks short of his ninetieth birthday in 1999. He was an extremely colourful character, who lived life to the full. He did not suffer fools gladly, and could display an acerbic manner with people he considered so to be. However, he was also capable of the greatest warmth and generosity to students and co-workers alike. He is survived by Beryl, and by his two sons Bruce and Donald from his first marriage.

Stan White
 Department of Biomedical Sciences
 University of Sheffield