

***Notable Names in Anaesthesia*, edited by J. Roger Maltby
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More monographs have been published on the history of anesthesia than on the history of any other specialty in medical science. I find the reason for this inexplicable; however, it supposedly emanated from the unfortunate and tragic contention among William Thomas G. Morton, Thomas Jackson, and Horace Wells over the priority of ether anesthesia in the very beginning of the history of anesthesiology. Since then the subject has interested medical historians as well as anesthesiologists. This is clearly substantiated by the fact that an international symposium on the history of anesthesia has been held every 4 years since the spring of 1982, when the first such meeting was held in Rotterdam. I have no knowledge of any other such international meeting held solely for the history of a medical subspecialty.

Notable Names in Anaesthesia, under the editorship of Dr. R. Maltby, has been published by the Royal Society of Medicine Press, London. Dr. Maltby is Professor of Anesthesia at the University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada) and Staff Anesthesiologist at the Foothills Medical Centre, Calgary. A leading historian in our specialty, Prof. Maltby states in the preface that “although this book is historical, it is not a history of anaesthesia. Its purpose is to bring to life the people behind the names—who they were; when and where they worked; why and how they invented equipment or scoring systems; and why some are recognized as great leaders.” In the book, brief biographies and academic histories of seventy-six notable figures closely associated with anesthesiology are given in alphabetical entries. Readers can enjoy reading interesting accounts of these individuals which cannot be found in any current

textbooks. Twenty-seven authors contributed the seventy-six biographical sketches, fifty-seven of which are by Prof. Maltby. It is worthy of attention that among the notables included are some who are living today and have written their own biographies and accounts of their work for inclusion in the book. This was the unique idea of the editor, who enlisted Tony Aldrete (b. 1937), A.I.J. Brain (b. 1942), Robert A. Berman (1914–99), Phillip R. Bromage (b. 1920), John R. Lehane (b. 1945), Michael Denborough (b. 1929), Hans G. Epstein (b. 1909), Cecil Gray (b. 1913), Rao Mallampati (b. 1941), William Mapleson (b. 1926), Ronald Melzack (b. 1929), Wallace Ring (b. 1932), Leslie Rendell-Baker (b. 1917), John Severinghaus (b. 1922), and H.J.C. Swan (b. 1922). For Dr. Brain there is an interesting historical account of his development of the laryngeal mask airway. He mentions that he was born in Japan in 1942 and that he has a gift for linguistics and literature. Tuohy is a very familiar name for us as we use the epidural needle named after him in daily practice, but unfortunately we know little about him. In this book, the reader can find newly available information about Dr. Tuohy, who passed away in 1999.

The editor noted that the names of Frederic William Hewitt (prevention of anesthetic death), Charles Waterton (introduction of curare to Europe), and Richard Douglas Sanders (development of the non-kinking tube) will be familiar to British and North American anesthetists who are currently practicing or are in training, or who practiced in the second half of the twentieth century; but they are quite unfamiliar to us, particularly to Asian anesthesiologists, and we should take their names to heart. Among the seventy-six names are those of Cecil Roe and Albert Wooley, who were neither physicians nor investigators, but anesthetic patients, the victims of spinal anesthesia administered in 1947 at Chesterfield, England. Prof. Maltby was a resident at the hospital there, and he has carried out a long investigation of the case. Because these accidents

occurred, the number of spinal anesthetics decreased greatly in the United Kingdom. The names of these gentlemen had scarcely been known to us before; however, we should keep them in mind with the intention of

avoiding medical mishaps and malpractice. This book is valuable from the point of education for qualified anesthesiologists as well as for medical students and residents.