

Trevor Thomas

Trevor was born and schooled in Bristol, before completing his medical degree at St Andrews, Fife. His post-graduate training was in Birmingham, with a stint at the Toronto Sick Children's Hospital, returning to Bristol for his consultant post at the United Bristol Hospital (Bristol Royal Infirmary). In 1965 he married Yvonne, who became his lifetime companion and friend.

He gravitated into obstetric anaesthesia at the birth of the specialty. Maternity hospitals in the UK were usually separate institutions from general hospitals, anaesthesia being provided with ancient and basic equipment by junior doctors arriving from their base hospital once a crisis had developed. Improved training, equipment, the development of 24-h epidural analgesia services, and intravenous general anaesthetic induction with tracheal intubation started to make inroads into maternal mortality and morbidity. This was a time when relatively small changes could lead to large improvements in safety, to which Trevor was always committed.

The modern approach to obstetric anaesthesia in central Bristol arrived with the transfer of maternity services from the isolated Bristol Maternity Hospital to St Michael's Hospital in 1975, adjacent to the Bristol Royal Infirmary. Trevor started an epidural service following the model of the one in Kingston. The unit was an early adopter of continuous infusions with dilute local anaesthetic plus opioid, a major advance on the practice of intermittent top-ups with plain local anaesthetic by the midwife. Research studies showed epidural diamorphine to be more effective than fentanyl, though eventually pragmatism led to the change to the latter.

Trevor also researched aspects of general anaesthesia for caesarean section, including overpressure of inhalational agents (the change to light general anaesthesia with muscle paralysis had brought the problem of maternal consciousness during surgery) and the optimum inspired oxygen fraction before delivery. Other topics in a wide-ranging portfolio included antacids, spinal needle design, and isoflurane analgesia for labour. His final push was into epidural simulators. He authored 'many' research papers (he never bothered to tally them up, but just moved on to the next project), seven book chapters and one book.

He joined the OAA in 1974, graduating to Honorary Secretary and then President from 1996-1999. He set up the structure of subcommittees, which led to a change in ethos of having more outreach. Grant-giving expanded, and national surveys of practice allowed comparisons between units. Most importantly, the 'Information for mothers' subcommittee produced detailed science-based documents, eventually developing into the Labourpains.com resource.

Trevor was involved with the Confidential Enquiry into Maternal Deaths for 24 years, initially as an anaesthetic regional assessor before becoming the central assessor, writing the report for the 1997-1999 triennium when there were only three maternal deaths.

He was involved in many management activities in the hospital, and was an examiner at the Royal College of Anaesthetists, and President of the Society of Anaesthetists of the South Western Region from 1996-1997.

Trevor was a person who would not be missed in a crowd. He was always perfectly dressed, often with a bow tie, and would always have the most resplendent waistcoat at any formal gathering.

He was a showman, a great lecturer and after-dinner speaker at a time when formal dinners were prominent at scientific meetings or academic society gatherings.

In retirement, Trevor and Yvonne spent extended periods of time at their villa in Spain. As intellectual inactivity was not an option, he researched historical topics and then gave lectures on these to the local expatriates group. In more recent years, they moved back to Bristol full-time. He developed progressive pulmonary fibrosis eight years ago, eventually requiring him to carry an oxygen concentrator when venturing out from home. However, in spite of this he presented an historical lecture to a local Bristol society last autumn. In 2019, the 50th anniversary of the OAA, he came to the annual meeting in Newcastle for the celebrations, and his final 'paper' was a look back at the early days of obstetric anaesthesia in *Anaesthesia News* (November 2019). A career retrospective of his can also be found in the history section of the website.

He was almost completely shielded during lockdown, though recently he had visits from family and friends. He died in his sleep. He leaves behind wife Yvonne, son and daughter-in-law Jeremy and Zerina, and grandchildren Imogen and Harry.

Trevor Anthony Thomas 16/3/1939 – 5/8/2020