William McIntyre

General Practitioner

(b. 1922 d. 2017), died from pneumonia following a stroke, on 8th February 2017

Bill was born William McIntyre on 10 May 1922 in the village of Gartsherrie, near Airdrie in North Lanarkshire. He was the only son of Sandy and Margaret McIntyre and he was brought up for the early part of his life in Airdrie. After attending Clarkson Primary School, and ending up as head boy, and then he went on to Airdrie Academy. He was only there for two terms, however, because his father got a job as Clerk of Works at Aberdeen University and the family moved north when Bill was eleven. Bill attended Robert Gordon’s College where he distinguished himself by winning the English prize every year, although in later life, he summed up his school career as ‘enjoyable but not distinguished’.

Having resisted pressure to study English, he was determined to study medicine and embarked on the medical course at Aberdeen University. For two years, all went well; he played football, rugby and golf; he also joined the Officer Training Corps, but the country was embroiled in the Second World War and at the end of his second year, twenty-nine students in his year joined up: remarkably, twenty-eight were to return eventually and complete their studies. After six months of training in Wales, Bill was commissioned, at his request, into the Gordon Highlanders. His duties were home-based to begin with – a year in Orkney and then seven months in Otley. But then things changed and Bill landed in Normandy on D-Day plus 3 and went straight into action. At the beginning of Operation Market Garden, he was wounded and was flown back to Swindon to recover. As soon as he was fit again, he returned to Europe, and when the war ended, he had to face the terrible task of moving the living survivors out of Belsen. That being so traumatic, had a deep effect on Bill, and he rarely spoke about the war.

He returned to Aberdeen and resumed his medical course. The twenty-eight students who returned from the war remained close. He graduated with distinction in obstetrics, the only student in his year to do so, and was under pressure to specialise in Obstetrics. However he had met Margaret Macpherson in Aberdeen, and within three days, he had decided that she was the girl for him. He found a job as a trainee GP in a practice in Drumore, in Dumfries and Galloway and had there, what he later described as one of the happiest years of his life. At the end of this preliminary period, Bill had two offers of partnership in a practice, one in the south of England and the other in Driffield – he took the one in Driffield.

After seven years of courtship interrupted by the war, Bill and Margaret were eventually married in Holy Trinity Church in St Andrews in 1951. Ann was born in Driffield in 1952 and Sandy in 1954.
Bill then joined a single handed practice in Driffield and found himself doing most of the work; the saving grace was the GP maternity ward at the Alfred Bean Hospital, and he poured his energies into that. However his frustration led to him look for a more rewarding job. He accepted the one from the Bridge Street practice in Driffield where he happily spent the rest of his GP career, in a large semirural developing practice.

As Bill’s career progressed, changes were inevitable. Following the closure of the local GP maternity unit, Bill embarked on a Postgraduate study course in psychiatry at Edinburgh, and he later took a second course in it. This additional expertise he put to good practice within the GP setting. He was appointed the GP representative on the NHS Beverley District Management Team, then, when he did retire at sixty, he became Vice Chairman of the newly formed East Yorkshire Health Authority, an appointment which enabled him to enjoy putting something back into the NHS which had given him such an enjoyable career.

Being keen on his sport, Bill had taken up golf in Aberdeen, rapidly becoming an excellent three handicap player, and after a spell as a member of Driffield Golf Club, he joined Ganton Golf Club in 1965. He was proud to be elected Club Captain in 1973, (as was Margaret to Lady Captain in the same year), and took on his role as President of Ganton from 1996-9 with great enthusiasm. He was elected to honorary life membership in 2007. Remarkably he was able to continue playing regular golf with friends until he was 90.

Bill was an avid reader and enjoyed watching football and golf on the television and he was a passionate supporter of Scottish rugby. But his greatest love was golf – the game and everything that went with it. Following his retirement he became a founder president of Driffield U3A and made many friends there.

Bill was a delightful companion, kind and compassionate and loved life, but he never sought the company of strangers. He was both a gentle man and a gentleman, and everyone he met respected him. He never dwelt on things that could not be changed but just accepted the situation, made the best of things. He was also a very independent and a stubborn man, and his determination to stay in his own home to the end, the home that he and Margaret had built together, and shared for so many years, was almost fulfilled.

Bill’s wife Margaret predeceased him, and he leaves his two children, Ann and Sandy, in-laws David and Carol, three grand-children and one great granddaughter.

David Wigglesworth