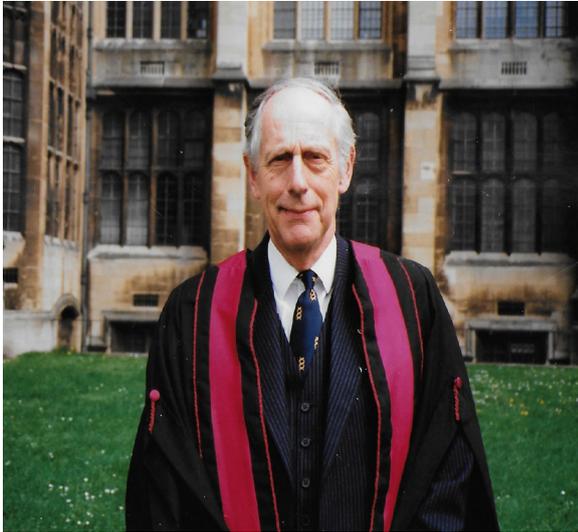


## Obituary

# Laurence Oldham 1931 - 2019, BDS, FDS



Laurence was the consultant who developed Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery services in Somerset. A gifted postgraduate educator, he passed away on 2nd October 2019.

Born in 1931, Laurence was the son of a headmaster, educated at Hinckley Grammar School and a borderer at Ashby Grammar School. He graduated from the University of Birmingham in 1955, followed by House Officer posts which included a resident post at Birmingham General Hospital, which awakened his enthusiasm for surgery.

His National Service was in the RAF, sharing rooms with John Rayne, who would remain a close colleague for many years.

He gained his FDS in 1958. He was awarded a Rotary Foundation Fellowship to the USA and spent 1959-60 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The Fellowship included a lecture tour of Rotary Clubs across the USA. This honed his skills as a lecturer and raconteur, which would remain a life-long activity for him.

Returning to the UK in 1960 he was appointed as a lecturer at the University of Manchester in Oral Surgery. Working with Gordon Ashcroft, who in the previous year had published a seminal paper on effective exodontia with Patrick Pawsey. In 1965 Laurence was seconded to the New Mulago

Hospital in Kampala, Uganda, working with Sir Ian McAdam and gained ten years' surgical experience of facial injuries and pathologies in two years.

He returned to Manchester in 1968, finding the department greatly changed. He was encouraged to apply for the newly created Oral Surgery Consultant's post in Taunton. He was appointed and over the next 25 years he built up the maxillofacial service. Latterly he was appointed to the Board of Somerset Health Authority and developed diplomatic skills as the bridge between clinicians and management. He retired in 1991. His retirement dinner was attended by over 85% of all the SHO's he had trained over the years.

Not one to rest on his laurels, Laurence was very active in the hospice movement. He chaired St Margaret's Hospice Trust in Taunton for 12 years, then became secretary to the UK Chairs of Independent Hospices and a vice-president. He developed and led the University of Bristol BUOLD Oral Surgery distance learning programme, with over 300 dentists gaining from his knowledge over the next twenty years. He was also on the governing body of Queens College, Taunton for 12 years and an active member of the Temple. Meanwhile he lectured on a wide range of topics to local groups, and was an active member of the Oral Surgery Travelling Club, going on study tours around the world. Not content with this, he was a pianist, motor cyclist, and regular attender of the Hay Literary Festival. He certainly made the most of life and gave so much to so many people. He will be greatly missed for his compassion, wisdom, and humour. He leaves a wife, Diana, of over 50 years, two sons, Mark, a Professor of Medical Physics in the USA, and James, an osteopath who taught medical and dental students at the University of Plymouth now living in Bulgaria, and a grandson Tej. To them we extend our condolences. Those of us who worked for Laurie felt very privileged to have known him.

A.G. Miller

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