

Obituary

Mr Victor Dix, MRCP, FRCS

Victor Dix died on 29 June 1992, aged 93. He had been one of the founders of BAUS and was its President in 1962. Although he remained a general surgeon, he created one of the first dedicated urological departments in Britain at the London Hospital and laid the plans which made it possible for his successors to have a "pure" urological firm within a few years of his retirement.

He entered the London Hospital Medical College in October 1921, qualified with the conjoint in 1923, the Cambridge MB, ChB in 1925, and took the MRCP and FRCS in 1926, was house surgeon to James Sherren, and First Assistant to Russell Howard and George Neligan, who kindled his interest in urology. Dix was appointed to the staff of the London Hospital as Assistant Surgeon in November 1930, joining Frank Kidd (who had founded this Journal the previous year) in his private practice.

Dix had been sent to Berlin to learn the new method of intravenous pyelography, then being developed by von Lichtenberg. The new technique made it possible to diagnose hydronephrosis at an earlier stage, and this in turn led Dix to improve von Lichtenberg's method of pyeloplasty. In the diagnosis of ureteric stones he developed a simple but certain method of stereoradiography, while his operation for ureterolithotomy was unrivalled for speed and simplicity. The end of the war found Dix in Malaya, where he received an invitation to become Professor of Surgery at the London.

Dix was a very rapid and sure operator but difficult to assist because he habitually wore a headlamp, which became exceedingly hot—a constant hazard to his assistants. He wrote on hydro-nephrosis and torsion of the appendix testis, but the work of which he was most proud was the technique of open cystodiathermy and radon seed technique for carcinoma of the bladder. In the last 5 years before his retirement he put immense effort into editing the vast Springer Encyclopaedia of Urology.

When Neligan retired in 1950, Dix and his younger colleague Gerald Tresidder set up a new out-patient urological department at the London Hospital, with its own X-ray unit. Here intravenous



and retrograde urograms were done in large numbers and every variety of endoscopic operation was performed.

It was the era of retrograde urography, and the Howard and Stamey tests for renal hypertension and measurement of renal blood flow with radioactive rubidium.

Victor Dix was President of the Section of Urology of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1954; he served on the Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons. He was a member of the American Association of Genitourinary Surgeons. He had a striking appearance—tall and handsome; he was always polite and courteous. His hobbies included tennis, mountaineering and photography, but his passion was for opera, at which those who knew him best were sometimes surprised to see this unruffled olympian moved to tears. Troubled by a knee injured in a mountaineering accident, and plagued from time to time by recurrent bouts of infection with *Psittacosis bedsonii* (ironically Bedson was one of his close friends and colleagues), he remained fit until quite recently, and died at the age of 93, leaving a widow, two daughters and a son.

J.P.B.