

## The James Spence Medal

At the suggestion of the Academic Board of the British Paediatric Association, the *Archives* will in future mark the award of the Association's James Spence Medal by publishing a photograph of the recipient, the text of the citation given by the President of the BPA, and a brief biographical note. It caused some embarrassment to the present senior Editor of the *Archives*, but great pleasure to the junior Editor, that the first Medallist to be recorded in this way should be Dr. Douglas Gairdner. An admirable, brief pen-portrait of Sir James Spence (1892–1954) is given in the *Looking back* article by Donald Court (*Archives*, 1975, **50**, 85). Below we list the James Spence medallists to date.

R.J.R.

1960 Professor A. A. Moncrieff  
1961 Professor R. A. McCance  
1963 Sir F. Macfarlane Burnet  
1964 Professor L. S. Penrose  
1965 Dr. Cicely D. Williams  
1967 Professor R. R. A. Coombs  
1968 Dr. Mary D. Sheridan  
Dr. D. W. Winnicott

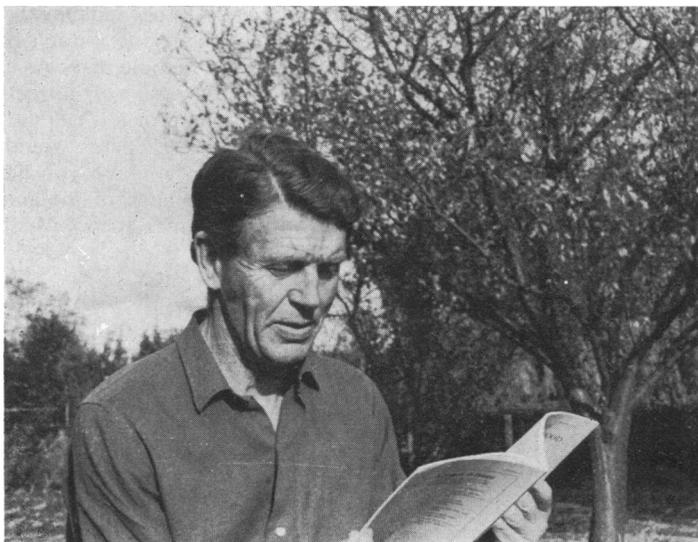
1969 Dr. G. S. Dawes  
1970 Professor D. V. Hubble  
1971 Dr. W. W. Payne  
1972 Dr. R. C. Mac Keith  
1973 Professor C. A. Clarke  
1974 Dr. J. Bowlby  
1976 Dr. D. M. T. Gairdner

### James Spence Medallist, 1976 Douglas Montagu Temple Gairdner

Douglas Gairdner was educated at Gresham's School, Holt, Trinity College, Oxford, and the Middlesex Hospital Medical School. After resident appointments at The Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, he worked in 1939 as fellow in paediatrics at the Bellevue Hospital, New York.

During World War II he served in the RAMC with the rank of Major. In 1945 he was appointed as first assistant in the paediatric department at Newcastle and worked under Professor J. C. Spence for the next 3 years. In 1948 he became consultant paediatrician at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, and associate lecturer in paediatrics in the university, continuing to work in Cambridge until retirement in 1975. Since 1964 he has been an Editor of the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*.

In presenting the medal to Dr. Gairdner on 9



April 1976, during the Annual General Meeting of the British Paediatric Association, the President, Professor Donald Court, spoke the following citation:

‘The Spence Medal is the highest distinction this Association can give. This year, Council, in your name, has awarded it to Douglas Gairdner.

‘The award is made for outstanding contributions to the advancement or clarification of paediatric knowledge. How has Douglas Gairdner fulfilled the conditions?

‘First as a paediatrician: a fine paediatrician and a regional paediatrician; the first paediatrician in Cambridge where he has worked for 27 years.

‘By never letting go of research.

‘As a writer: joining Schönlein and Henoch in an enlarging account of their disease: pursuing his fascination with the newborn; with their haematology in the anaemia of prematurity; with respiratory distress syndrome, especially the farseeing article on the Principles of Treatment in 1962; and recently with nutrition and growth in the Fatty Acid Composition of Infant Fat in Relation to Feeding. And *The Fate of the Foreskin*, written with Spence’s encouragement, remains a model of perceptive and pungent writing on the frontier of fact and fashion which is familiar territory in medicine.

‘As an editor: First, lest we forget, as the editor of *Recent Advances in Paediatrics*. Then magnificently, for the last 13 years as editor of the *Archives of Disease in Childhood*. He would stress the contribution of his colleagues: I will simply quote the views of one reader well qualified to judge: “The *Archives* is now a world paediatric journal. It is respected for its ability to combine biological research with clinical problems; its concern for the ethics of research and experiment; and for the humanity which underlines them all.” Under his guidance the *Archives* has become the rational, humane voice of British paediatrics and this Association is stronger because of it. We should not forget the cost: of time with his fellow editor, dealing with 500 papers a

year, seeking always the fair yet well-considered decision, making sure they go to press in a clear and intelligible form—and all in his spare time.

‘What am I describing—a legend or a man? Certainly a man: A young man who has just retired after being 25 for the last forty years. A man for all seasons with a catholic taste for enjoyment: A sailor whose first boat was named the “Merry Thought”. A musician too; which is not surprising when at school there was in his dormitory a boy who preferred reading scores to detective stories; a promising boy whose name was Benjamin Britten. Douglas started at 15 with jazz and a ukelele, changed at 18 to Bach and the flute, 15 years ago took up the tuba, and is now a member of the Royston Town Band. Legend has it that his most memorable performance occurred when, after a muffled opening phrase, a missing family hamster jumped out of the bell of the tuba.

‘The intervals are filled with tennis, carpentry, and gardening; and those who have enjoyed it know the open hospitality of the Gairdner home. A strong sense of social responsibility means that he has always taken politics seriously. A radical by temperament he has, like others among us, found it difficult to combine his feel for tradition with the need for change. A perceptive observation on this was made by a student in his Newcastle days. A competent painter he had been drafted by Sister to decorate the ward for Christmas. The portrait of Douglas on the glass door of the cubicle, with the characteristic smile and a large red bow tie, had written beneath it “True Blue Socialist”.

‘A strong, resilient man, with a quality of caring in his professional life enlarged by a personal sorrow mercifully beyond the experience of most of us.

‘Although he is one, I don’t think he would want to be called a humble man. As a man born in Scotland he would say of himself and his fellows, “A man’s a man for a’ that”.

‘Douglas, James Spence would have approved our choice because he chose you before we did. In his name, and the name of the Association, I present you with the James Spence Medal.’