



OBITUARY

Dr Fay Hutchinson

MBBS, FFSRH, MBE

1 December 1926 – 5 June 2009

Dr Fay Hutchinson was the much loved and respected Medical Director of Brook for nearly 30 years. A warm, larger than life character with a great empathy for colleagues and patients alike, she is sadly missed by those of us who knew her.

Fay qualified in medicine from Kings College Hospital in 1950, and after house jobs went to Canada for 5 years to work in paediatrics and general practice. Happily for the future of UK family planning, Fay returned in 1956 and worked as a general practitioner and family planning doctor.

In 1964 she opened a Youth Advisory Centre for the FPA (Family Planning Association) in Ilford and then Leytonstone in London, developing her interest in young people, and in 1975 she became Medical Spokesperson for the Brook Advisory Centres and Medical Officer in charge of London Brook Advisory Centre, which grew and developed under her expertise. She retired from the senior doctor role in 1994 and stayed on to work for Brook as a sessional doctor. She was exactly the right person to represent Brook through the difficult days of Mrs Gillick and onwards through the expansion and boundary-breaking initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s.

Her elegance was legendary and many have valued her advice on shopping when at various meetings abroad! She was known for her timekeeping, but this was accepted by those who worked with her and when Fay arrived in the clinic she gave 110% and stayed as late as was necessary to sort out the problems for our young clients at Brook. All her clients felt valued by her and she empowered young people in aspects of their own care – even handing them the speculum, to use for themselves – if they were anxious about an examination.

Fay's other interest was psychosexual medicine and she was a founder member of the Institute of Psychosexual Medicine (IPM) in 1974, and worked for many years as treasurer and programme secretary. She took a great part in training other doctors in the IPM seminar groups and when I expressed an interest in the speciality in the early 1980s Fay did everything within her power to help me and I will always be grateful for her generosity of spirit in sharing her knowledge and her patients with me.

In the early 1990s Fay was invited to Russia to develop women's health, where she did a great deal of training for the doctors and nurses and was held in very high esteem. I was greatly impressed by her dedication to learning Russian: she passed GCSE Russian, when she must have been well into her 60s.

Her extensive work in family planning was rewarded with an MBE, which made us all so proud of her and about which she remained so modest.

She was a great wife, mother and grandmother, with plenty of time for her family, and also her great love of the arts in the form of music, opera and ballet.

Fay gave so much to us all and to the speciality and will remain in my thoughts forever.

Submitted by **Dr Gillian Vanhegan**, FFSRH, *Medical Spokesperson, Brook*

As a new family planning nurse in the early 1970s, I had a heroine – Fay Hutchinson – and my ambition was one day to work with her at the Brook Advisory Centre for Young People. It's not very often one achieves one's ambition, and even more unusual not to feel some sense of disappointment or anticlimax when one gets there, but not so with Fay.

She was larger than life in all senses of the word. She was an inspiration to those who worked with her, a great teacher who always listened to others and didn't preach. She treated everyone as an equal, and was never patronising. Her sense of humour was infectious, which was a great asset on our travels in Russia, training rural midwives and doctors. She loved the good things in life – food, wine, travel and culture in the widest sense – and was a great colleague, companion and friend.

Unfortunately, poor health slowed her down a little in latter years, but never dulled her enthusiasm. She even decided to wake up on one occasion when the life-support system was switched off!

I'm sure there are many young people today who don't know how much they owe to Fay's early pioneering days in the field of sexual health. She will be greatly missed by her multitude of colleagues, friends and her wonderful family.

Submitted by **Mary Moseley**, *Brook Nurse and Senior Nurse, Brook, London, UK (1989–2003)*