

the same batch deteriorated appreciably during the same time. Since 1948 the *British Pharmacopoeia* has permitted the addition of up to 0.01% of a suitable preservative. Propyl gallate or hydroquinone are generally used.

In the Doncaster case it appears that the sample must have been at least five years old, and about 2 oz. (57 ml.) were stored in a 4-oz. (114-ml.) white glass bottle. Since the cork was badly corroded, the chances of oxidation were great. Subsequent analysis showed that 40% of acetic acid was present. The 2-drachm (7-ml.) dose of paraldehyde therefore contained about 48 minims (3 ml.) of acetic acid.

Glaister³ states that in glacial form acetic acid acts as a corrosive poison and in dilute form as an irritant. Parts with which the acid comes into contact are softened and rendered of a whitish or pale yellowish colour. Laryngeal complications, because of the volatility of the acid, are commonly found in such cases. The post-mortem appearances are those of a corrosive; the membrane of gullet and stomach will be found to be more or less attacked, and there may be appearances of corrosive action, certainly of inflammatory action, in the upper air passages. He considers the fatal period to be variable but rapid, and quotes a case of 1 fluid drachm (3.5 ml.) of glacial acid having killed a child, while an adult had recovered after having taken 6 fluid ounces (170 ml.).

Taylor⁴ refers to a case of suicide due to acetic acid in 1925 and states that he has encountered several accidental deaths due to drinking concentrated acetic acid by mistake. In 1896⁵ a 17-year-old girl died thirty hours after taking 1 ounce (28 ml.) of acetic acid and 30 grains (2 g.) of red mercury oxide. In this case inflammation of the larynx and trachea were observed as far as the bifurcation of the bronchi. In 1905⁶ a female child, aged 22 months, swallowed a single mouthful of strong acid (not glacial) used for making vinegar and died within 12½ hours. At necropsy the buccal cavity, pharynx, and oesophagus showed superficial necrosis; they were covered by a whitish membrane which in the oesophagus especially could easily be stripped off, leaving a raw hyperaemic surface. The stomach was not affected beyond a few white puncta present in the cardiac mucosa. Death was from shock due to local injuries rather than any absorption of the poison. In 1945⁷ a 9-months-old child died after being given a strong solution of acetic acid in mistake for gripe water. Here the dose could not have been much more than a teaspoonful (3.5 ml.). In 1948⁸ a 45-year-old man committed suicide by taking 3 ounces (85 ml.) of glacial acetic acid.

Preventive Measures

Several measures can be taken to prevent a recurrence of this tragedy. The instability of paraldehyde should be made known as widely as possible. The need for drugs to be under the control of a pharmacist, who is the only person with the necessary training and knowledge to ensure their safe storage, is clear. In those hospitals where a pharmacist is in charge of drugs he is legally obliged to inspect the ward drug cupboards every three months, whereas in smaller hospitals no inspection need be made. Since the advent of the Health Service practically every hospital group now has a pharmacist attached to one of the hospitals, and it should be made compulsory for all drugs in all hospitals to be subject to a routine check by pharmacists.

The Services

Colonel (Honorary Brigadier) J. G. Morgan, C.B.E., T.D., J.P., D.L., has been appointed Honorary Colonel of a T.A. Unit, in succession to Colonel J. P. J. Jenkins, O.B.E., T.D., D.L., whose tenure has expired.

Surgeon Commander H. D. Raffan, R.A.N.R., has been awarded the R.N.V.R. decoration.

The *London Gazette* has announced the following awards:

Third Clasp to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration.—Lieutenant-Colonel (Honorary Colonel) G. G. Talbot, O.B.E., T.D., R.A.M.C.

Second Clasp to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration.—Colonel J. L. Hamilton, M.C., T.D., and Major J. H. Richmond, T.D., R.A.M.C.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND VITAL STATISTICS

Summary for British Isles for week ending **October 16** (No. 41) and corresponding week 1953.

Figures of cases are for the countries shown and London administrative county. Figures of deaths and births are for the 160 great towns in England and Wales (London included), London administrative county, the 17 principal towns in Scotland, the 10 principal towns in Northern Ireland, and the 14 principal towns in Eire.

A blank space denotes disease not notifiable or no return available. The table is based on information supplied by the Registrars-General of England and Wales, Scotland, N. Ireland, and Eire, the Ministry of Health and Local Government of N. Ireland, and the Department of Health of Eire.

CASES in Countries and London	1954					1953				
	Eng. & Wales	Lond.	Scot.	N. Ire.	Eire	Eng. & Wales	Lond.	Scot.	N. Ire.	Eire
Diphtheria ..	13	2	11	0		29	2	3		
Dysentery ..	507	46	162	3	2	263	45	88	4	4
Encephalitis, acute..	1	0		1		5	0	0	1	
Enteric fever:										
Typhoid ..	8	1	0	0	4	6	2	0	1	2
Paratyphoid ..	9	13	(B)	1		13	6	2	(B)	0
Food-poisoning ..	270	25		1		274	20		2	
Infective enteritis or diarrhoea under 2 years ..				15	20				16	42
Measles* ..	2,801	185	376	68	110	492	13	76	15	32
Meningococcal infection ..	27	5	8	1	1	33	1	15	0	
Ophthalmia neonatorum ..	24	1	5	0		28	2	3	0	
Pneumonia† ..	346	20	139	1	1	245	13	122	1	1
Poliomyelitis, acute:										
Paralytic ..	50	2	25	3	2	119	8	21	28	12
Non-paralytic ..	21	0				99	7			
Puerperal fever§ ..	263	37	12	1		225	37	25	0	
Scarlet fever ..	777	55	140	25	23	786	42	176	32	39
Tuberculosis:										
Respiratory ..	736	91	131	19				110	15	
Non-respiratory..	99	8	25	3				24	3	
Whooping-cough ..	1,393	80	130	19	13	2,771	190	230	27	26

DEATHS in Great Towns	1954					1953				
	Eng. & Wales	Lond.	Scot.	N. Ire.	Eire	Eng. & Wales	Lond.	Scot.	N. Ire.	Eire
Diphtheria ..	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dysentery ..	0	0		0		0	0		0	0
Encephalitis, acute ..		0			0		0			
Enteric fever ..	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	
Infective enteritis or diarrhoea under 2 years ..	4	0	0	0	0	10	1	2	1	3
Influenza ..	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0
Measles ..		0	0	0	0		1	0	0	0
Meningococcal infection ..		1	0				0	0		
Pneumonia ..	158	39	20	4	2	120	15	16	4	5
Poliomyelitis, acute ..	0	0			0	7	0			0
Scarlet fever ..		0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Tuberculosis:										
Respiratory ..	65	11	10	4	2	78	9	14	3	4
Non-respiratory..		0	13	0	0		0	4	0	1
Whooping-cough ..	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Deaths 0-1 year ..	199	22	23	7	4	223	24	24	3	19
Deaths (excluding stillbirths) ..	4,804	731	504	93	145	4,318	566	502	87	141
LIVE BIRTHS ..	7,709	1,168	855	208	387	7,494	1,098	818	217	349
STILLBIRTHS ..	203	25	22			185	27	22		

* Measles not notifiable in Scotland, whence returns are approximate.

† Includes primary and influenza pneumonia.

§ Includes puerperal pyrexia.

COMING EVENTS

Tobruk Dinner.—Eighth "Tobruk 1941" Officers' Dinner at the Connaught Rooms, London, W.C.1, November 19, at 7 p.m. Tickets, 27s. 6d. (exclusive of drinks), from the Carpathian Brigade Association, 156, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

Nutrition Society.—A symposium will be held at the Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London, on November 20, on "The National Food Survey of Great Britain." Details from Dr. R. J. L. ALLEN, c/o Monkhouse and Glasscock Ltd., Snowfields, London, S.E.1.

Leeds Medical School Dinner.—On November 26 at 7 p.m. at the Metropole Hotel, Leeds, for past and present male students. Tickets (one guinea) from D. J. GODFREY, The School of Medicine, Leeds, 2.

The Hospitals Symphony Orchestra.—A symphony concert at the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields, November 27, at 7.30 p.m. Further details and tickets (price 10s., 7s. 6d., 5s., and 3s. 6d.) from the College or Miss N. WATTS, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, London, E.C.1.

Medical Staff Ball, Bethlem Royal and Maudsley Hospitals.—On December 2 at the Connaught Rooms, London, W.C.1. Tickets from Dr. BRIAN ACKNER, The Maudsley Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, S.E.5.

27th General Hospital Reunion.—At the Eccleston Hotel, near Victoria Station, London, on November 27 at 6.30 p.m. Tickets (£1, inclusive of wine) and further details from Dr. L. S. POTTER, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

Joint Meeting of British and Canadian Medical Associations.—Owing to cancellations a number of places are still available for the Joint Meeting in Toronto (June 20–24, 1955) for those requiring dollar exchange facilities. Full information from the Secretary of the Association, B.M.A. House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

SOCIETIES AND LECTURES

A fee is charged or a ticket is required for attending lectures marked ●. Application should be made first to the institution concerned.

Monday, November 8

INSTITUTE OF CARDIOLOGY.—9.30 a.m., Dr. R. E. Bonham-Carter: Endocardial Fibroelastosis.

●INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. Helen E. Dimsdale: Papilloedema and Papillitis.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—4 p.m., Professor J. Crichton Bramwell: Diagnosis of Rheumatic Valvular Disease.

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.—4.30 p.m., Dr. F. S. Cooksey: Conservative Management of Painful Arthritis; 5.45 p.m., Mr. H. Lyon-Campbell Wood: Surgery of Painful Arthritis.

Tuesday, November 9

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL FEDERATION.—At London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 5.30 p.m., Professor Graham M. Wilson: Electrolyte and Metabolic Response to Trauma.

CHELSEA CLINICAL SOCIETY.—At Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place, S.W., 8.30 p.m., discussion: Cancer and Quacks. To be opened by Mr. A. Lawrence Abel and Sir Stanford Cade.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Professor R. H. S. Thompson: Enzyme Systems in the Skin.

ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY, Edinburgh.—8 p.m., clinical meeting.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.—5 p.m., Mr. C. Scott Russell: Interpretation of Clinical Data.

WEST END HOSPITAL FOR NEUROLOGY AND NEUROSURGERY.—5.30 p.m., Mr. G. C. Knight: Diagnosis and Treatment of Spinal Compression.

Wednesday, November 10

HARVEIAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.—8.15 p.m., talk and film demonstration by Dr. Raymond Daley: Cardiac Valve Movement.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. H. Haber: Histopathology of Mesenchymal Tumours of the Skin.

INSTITUTE OF UROLOGY.—4.30 for 5 p.m., Mr. F. R. Kilpatrick: Tuberculosis of the Renal Tract.

LIVERPOOL MEDICAL INSTITUTION.—At St. Paul's Eye Hospital, Liverpool, 3 p.m., afternoon clinical demonstration.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—At Radcliffe Infirmary, 5 p.m., Litchfield Lecture by Professor Frederick Heat: Advantages and Disadvantages of B.C.G. Vaccination.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—2 p.m., Dr. Barbara E. Clayton: Laboratory Investigation in Endocrinology.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH.—5 p.m., Sydney Watson Smith Lecture by Dr. Adam Patrick: Enteric Fevers 1800–1920.

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HYGIENE.—3.30 p.m., Dr. Macdonald Critchley: Neurology of Old Age (Illustrated).

SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES OF LONDON.—4.30 p.m., Dr. E. R. Cullinan: Liver Disease and its Treatment; 5.45 p.m., Dr. C. J. C. Britton: Allergic Disorders.

Thursday, November 11

ALFRED ADLER MEDICAL SOCIETY.—At 11, Chandos Street, W., 8 p.m., Dr. E. N. Snowden: Prevention of Psychoneurosis on a National Scale.

BRITISH POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL FEDERATION.—At London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 5.30 p.m., Dr. J. D. Judah: Enzymes in Injury.

HONYMAN GILLESPIE LECTURE.—At University New Buildings, Edinburgh, 5 p.m., Dr. A. G. Macgregor: Radioactive Iodine in Medicine.

INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., Dr. R. W. Riddell: Significance of Yeasts in Skin Infection.

LIVERPOOL MEDICAL INSTITUTION.—8 p.m., Dr. R. Forbes: Recent Developments in Medical Litigation.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY.—At Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, 8.30 p.m., Professor J. Trueta: Clinical and Experimental Study on Growth of the Long Bones.

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL COLLEGE.—5 p.m., Sir William Penney, F.R.S.: Explosions (lantern slides and films).

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF LONDON.—5 p.m., Bradshaw Lecture by Dr. F. H. K. Green: Clinical Evaluation of Remedies.

ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.—5 p.m., Robert Jones Lecture by Professor R. M. d'Aubigné (Paris): Reconstruction of Joints by Grafts or Prostheses.

ROYAL EYE HOSPITAL.—5.30 p.m., Dr. T. H. Whittington: Factors Affecting Binocular Vision. Convergence. Heterophoria.

ST. ANDREWS UNIVERSITY.—At Physiology Department, Medical School, Small's Wynd, Dundee, 5 p.m., Professor B. L. McFarland: Congenital Dislocation of the Hip.

ST. GEORGE'S HOSPITAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.—5 p.m., Dr. Desmond Curran: psychiatry demonstration.

Friday, November 12

BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY.—At Department of Biochemistry, St. Bartholomew's Medical College, 2 p.m., scientific papers.

●INSTITUTE OF DERMATOLOGY.—5.30 p.m., clinical demonstration by Dr. B. F. Russell: Neurodermatitis.

INSTITUTE OF DISEASES OF THE CHEST.—5 p.m., clinical demonstration by Dr. N. C. Oswald.

INSTITUTE OF LARYNGOLOGY AND OTOLGY.—3.30 p.m., Mr. G. H. Howells: Malignant Disease of the Nose and Nasal Sinuses.

INSTITUTE OF NEUROLOGY.—5 p.m., Dr. Noel Peron (Paris): Familial Ulcerous and Mutilating Acropathies.

OSLER CLUB OF LONDON.—At 11, Chandos Street, W., 7.45 p.m., Opium Evening. Speakers, Dr. J. R. Nicholls, D.Sc.: The History of Opium;

Dr. A. E. Clark-Kennedy: Opium in Clinical Medicine; Dr. Douglas Hubble: Opium and Literary Genius; Sir Harry Greenfield, Chairman, Permanent Central Opium Board.

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF LONDON.—2 p.m., Mr. Guy Blackburn: Pancreatitis.

●ROYAL FACULTY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW.—5 p.m., Dr. Gavin B. Shaw: Management of Hypertension.

ROYAL MEDICAL SOCIETY, Edinburgh.—8 p.m., Dissertation by Mr. E. W. Horton, B.Sc.: Some Aspects of Cellular Pharmacology.

Saturday, November 13

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL.—10.30 a.m., Symposium: Rheumatism and Allied Diseases.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS

BIRTHS

Cross.—On October 8, 1954, at St. Giles Hospital, London, S.E., to Margaret, wife of David J. Cross, M.B., Ch.B., of Auckland, New Zealand, a son—Colin James.

Hirst.—On October 14, 1954, at Point-a-Pierre Staff Hospital, Trinidad, British West Indies, to Dr. Anne (formerly Jordan), wife of Major David Hirst, a daughter—Diana Marcia Joan.

DEATHS

Adams.—On October 16, 1954, Evelyn Lancelot Adams, M.B., B.S., of 171, St. James Road, Croydon, Surrey, aged 85.

Banham.—On October 9, 1954, at "Rockley Dene," Worsborough Bridge, near Barnsley, Yorks, Herbert Arthur Luke Banham, L.R.C.P.&S.Ed., L.R.F.P.S., aged 83.

Bastard.—On October 5, 1954, at Fair Park, Bow, Devon, Herbert Rowse Bastard, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., aged 70.

Bennett.—On October 10, 1954, at Montreux, Switzerland, Hugh Bennett, M.B., F.R.C.S.Ed., Lieutenant-Colonel, I.M.S., retired, aged 88.

Brodie.—On October 10, 1954, at Invercargill, New Zealand, William Hugh Brodie, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., formerly of Penang, Malaya.

Fisher.—On October 15, 1954, at Flat C4, Archers, Archers Road, Southampton, Hants, Victor Laurence Fisher, O.B.E., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., aged 57.

Golding.—On October 6, 1954, at 29, Dawson Place, London, W., Marks Golding, L.R.C.P.&S.I. & L.M., D.P.H., aged 66.

Hemingway-Rees.—On October 4, 1954, Mary Isabel Hemingway-Rees, M.B., Ch.B., of 116, Bickenhall Mansions, London, W.

Jackson.—On October 13, 1954, at Hindhead, Surrey, Arthur Ivan Jackson, L.R.C.P.&S.Ed., L.R.F.P.S., D.T.M., formerly of Madras, India, and British Columbia, Canada.

McAllister.—On October 5, 1954, at Rosebank, Dunbar, East Lothian, William Malcolm McAllister, O.B.E., M.B., F.R.C.P.Ed.

Madgwick.—On October 11, 1954, at Johannesburg, South Africa, George Alexander Sheridan Madgwick, M.D., D.T.M.&H.

Merrall.—On October 17, 1954, at 55, Glen Eldon Road, St. Annes-on-Sea, Lancs, Frederic Crompton Merrall, M.B., Ch.B.

Middlemiss.—On October 7, 1954, in the North Staffordshire Royal Infirmary, Stoke-on-Trent, James Ernest Middlemiss, F.R.F.P.S., of Bedale, Sandbach Road, Alsager, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, late of Leeds, Yorks.

Murphy.—On October 16, 1954, at his home, 72, Redlands Road, Reading, Berks, Michael Francis Murphy, L.R.C.P.&S.I. & L.M., aged 64.

Park.—On October 15, 1954, at 2, Mansfield Place, Moffat, Dumfriesshire, William Park, M.D., aged 85.

Robertson.—On October 13, 1954, David Robertson, M.B., Ch.B., of Echo Gate, Saltford, near Bristol, Somerset.

Smith.—On October 1, 1954, at 343, Hagley Road, Birmingham, John Hope Robertson Smith, M.B., Ch.B., formerly of Kilchoan, Ardnarmurchan, Argyllshire, aged 63.