



OBITUARY

J.N. "Ginger" WILSON

by Mike Laurence

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It is appropriate at this juncture, to pay tribute to one of our number whose connection with Bangladesh was largely instrumental in galvanising interest in that great country, during its period of development, "**Ginger**" **Wilson**, who died after a brief illness in April 2006. On

Thursday, May 25th 2006, the little Church of All Saints, Watford, just north of London, was packed to standing room, with a crowd of colleagues, friends, fellow parishioners and patients, who joined his family, to pay their respects. His was a remarkable life. In the eulogy from the pulpit, time did not allow mention of his distinguished War record, his Orthopaedic 'baptism of fire' in the aerial bombing of Birmingham, where he was a student, his day and night surgery as a newly qualified doctor, his enlistment in the army towards the end of the war, or his parachute drop into Norway. His specialist training was classical, through Oswestry and Cardiff, but it was at The Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital at Stanmore that he made his reputation. It was an age of developing subspecialties, but to Ginger a subspecialty was something to add to a full general commitment, not to replace it. He was the ultimate team man always willing to take on the extra and the unorthodox. His contributions to orthopaedic surgery are various. They included his simplification of surgery for Hallux Valgus; his part in the development and successful implantation of the one of the pioneer replacement prostheses for the hip (the Stanmore) and his opening of the Trauma Unit at Stanmore, which had not previously provided an emergency service. He was the surgeon for the Tumour Service and implanted the massive metallic replacements for the Limb Preservation Unit. But even all these did

not constitute his most important contribution, his pioneer work leading surgical teams to parts of the less advanced surgical world and taking with him trainee registrars who contributed hugely to the service for crippled children in Kano, (Northern Nigeria). After he “retired” (a word which is completely inappropriate in Ginger’s case), he visited Dhaka, in Bangladesh, and Addis in Ethiopia, not just as a visitor, but a working, teaching surgeon. His influence as advisor on the board of the Impact Foundation did much to guide that philanthropic body into funding Orthopaedic work in the Indian Subcontinent. His leadership was through quiet example; his unstinting and tireless donation of time and energy has inspired a generation of, may I say, *ourselves*. His leadership from Presidential positions throughout WOC, and even the inauguration of this Newsletter, will always be the living Memorial to a man of vision and heart.

These and many similar expressions of appreciation were expressed verbally at the Memorial, or read out to the assembled company, from every part of the world. The overall conviction of all present, that this had been a great life, was enriched by the profusion of happy anecdotes, exchanged over tea.

We owe this Newsletter to his initiative, and here express our earnest wish that its distribution can be funded, for the benefit of all who applaud the work of World Orthopaedic Concern.

M. Laurence