

VARRIER-JONES, Sir PENDRILL CHARLES (1883 - 1941), physician

Name: Pendrill Charles Varrier-jones
Date of birth: 1883
Date of death: 1941
Parent: Charles Morgan Jones
Parent: Margaret Varrier Jones (née Jenkins)
Gender: Male
Occupation: physician
Area of activity: Medicine
Author: Lyn Owen

Pendrill Varrier-Jones was born at Glyn Taff House, Troedyrhiw, Merthyr Tydfil, on 24 February 1883, the son of Dr Charles Morgan Jones, a local doctor, and his wife Margaret Varrier (née Jenkins), whose family ran a coal mining business. (He changed his surname from Jones to Varrier-Jones in 1929). He had one sister.

He was educated at Epsom College and then Wycliffe College, Stonehouse. At nineteen he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, as a foundation scholar, graduating with first class honours in the natural sciences in 1905. He continued his studies at St. Bartholomew's Medical School in London, qualifying MRCS in 1910. After a junior house appointment there he returned to Cambridge as a research assistant, working on bovine tuberculosis under the supervision of Sir German Sims Woodhead and Sir Clifford Allbutt.

As he was not fit for military service in World War One, he accepted a temporary post as tuberculosis officer to Cambridgeshire Council in 1914. He soon realised that treatment of tuberculosis in those days was very poor. About two patients in every three who had the disease beyond the earliest stage died within five years despite treatment. A new approach was needed.

Varrier-Jones thought a more holistic system of support and care was the answer. With great energy he persuaded concerned people in medicine and the wider community in Cambridge to support a tuberculosis colony at the village of Bourne, set up in February 1916 with a single patient. By 1918, when the colony moved to the Papworth Hall estate, there were 25 patients and eventually over 500. The settlement provided medical care, housing and workshops. Varrier-Jones's motto for his patients was: 'Work produces hope and hope produces vitality'. He believed tuberculosis was an individual problem, where security and pride in self-support from productive work were essential to the future welfare of every treated sufferer. He lived in the community himself, and argued that the families of tuberculosis sufferers could live safely with the patient if high standards of hygiene were applied. None of the children of patients in the community contracted tuberculosis, so his view on their safety proved to be correct.

His work became widely known, and his village settlement was visited by tuberculosis workers from all over the world. He helped set up other communities, including those at Preston Hall for the British Legion, Enham Village Centre in Hampshire, and the Peamount Settlement in Dublin. In 1932 the International Union against Tuberculosis made him president of its sub-committee for occupational therapy and after-care. He was elected a member of the Royal College of Physicians in 1929, and a Fellow in 1934. In 1931 he received the honour of a knighthood.

Pendrill Varrier-Jones carried on his work with great energy until his sudden death from a heart attack at Papworth Hall on 30 January 1941. After his death the work was continued, but as treatment of tuberculosis was transformed, the community developed into what is today the Royal Papworth Hospital.

Author

Lyn Owen

Sources

Royal College of Physicians, [Sir Pendrill Charles Varrier-Jones](#), Munks Roll heritage website, [Inspiring Physicians](#)

Linda Bryder, [Jones, Sir Pendrill Charles Varrier \(1883–1941\)](#), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

Records of Epsom College

Further reading


Wikipedia Article: [Pendrill Charles Varrier-Jones](#)

Additional Links

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