

OBITUARY

Prof. Helen Carty (1944–2017)

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Forty years ago, in 1977, Helen Carty attended her first European Society of Paediatric Radiology (ESPR) congress in Luzern, Switzerland. The president was Andres Gideon. The abiding memory was one of people speaking in tongues, flicking from one international language to another, like trains speeding through points. Colleagues were good friends. It was probably then that she decided that the rest of her professional life would be devoted to paediatric radiology.

She had been appointed consultant radiologist to Broadgreen Hospital (for adults) and Alder Hey Children's Hospital (paediatrics), both in Liverpool, in 1975 and was fully expected to return to full-time adult work at the first opportunity. But the style of work at Alder Hey was new and refreshing. Imaging, primitive as it was by today's standards, was factored in immediately, supported by dialogue between radiologist and clinician. Helen had no problem doing an examination forthwith. No need to book an appointment on Tuesday; do it now! Being involved in real time was exciting.

She was convinced that all the new modalities had to be on site at the dedicated children's hospital. By a combination of lobbying, fundraising and even charm she procured the equipment she needed and set to work putting dedicated paediatric imaging on her map.

It was the era of opening the Eastern Bloc countries after decades of stagnation. Not only was equipment needed, but staff had to learn how to use it. Western European radiologists formed themselves into educational wolf packs. They found themselves teaching eager and lovely people in beautiful places. It was a time of great fulfilment. Late into the night was the best time for brainstorming, and one idea that survived the challenge of the next day was the need for a textbook in a European idiom. The editorial quartet of Brunelle, Carty, Kendall and Shaw recruited the



best contributors. *Imaging Children* was brought to birth in 1994 [1] with a second edition in 2004. Many of the folk encountered on these educational trips were invited to Liverpool as honorary trainees on attachment at Alder Hey. Lasting friendships were forged. Helen's cooking soothed the homesick.

Helen was elected to honorary membership of the ESPR in 2003. She was never president. She was involved with the European Congress of Radiology (ECR) from 1991, the year it made its home in Vienna, Austria. She became ECR

president in 2004. It was a glorious crescendo to her career. She retired from all medical practice 3 months later, at the end of June 2004.

Within a year she was appointed deputy lieutenant in the County of Merseyside and became high sheriff in 2011–2012. She had a special interest in supporting voluntary groups that were little known. All forms of sport attracted her, especially when Liverpool was playing. She developed considerable skills in wood carving and turning.

Helen was a kingpin of love to her family, a glorious granny, an inspiration to her friends and colleagues and an

outstanding paediatric radiologist. For many years she was in and out of right heart failure because of cardiomyopathy. It got much worse early this year and she died peacefully at home on 23 April 2017.

Reference

1. Carty H, Brunelle F, Shaw D, Kendall B (1994) *Imaging children*. Churchill Livingstone, London