

#SundayWiMIN23 Week 21: Dr Olivia Constant

“Dr Olivia Christine Anne O'Connor Constant was appointed director of radiology at King Edward VII Hospital Midhurst in 1991. As the first in-house director she used her drive and enthusiasm to transform the department. She expanded the imaging facilities and insisted on all the staff maintaining the same very high standards she set herself. She did not do this without ruffling a few feathers. "I believe in telling it as it is," she said of herself, and she did. She never bore a grudge, however, and she built around herself a happy and loyal team.

She was a clinician's radiologist. She did not believe in locking herself away in a reporting room and was always available for advice. She set up weekly chest radiology meetings with the clinicians to discuss difficult problems. She enjoyed the clinical feedback and the clinicians benefited from her excellent advice.

She qualified from University College Cork in 1973. This was her home town and she retained a soft Cork accent throughout her life. Initially she trained as a physician working through her SHO posts mainly in London, ending as a registrar in chest medicine at Northwick Park Hospital. Here her lifelong interest in respiratory disease started. She obtained her membership of the College in 1978.

She changed to radiology in 1983 and completed her training posts at Northwick Park and the Royal National Orthopaedic hospitals before doing the senior registrar rotation at the Marsden, Brompton and Westminster hospitals. She was appointed as consultant to Harefield Hospital in 1990.

She had many talents. She was passionate about ballet and had trained as a ballet dancer and teacher and in Cork danced at a semi-professional level both at school and at university. In London she continued her teaching at the Pineapple Dance Centre. At Midhurst she ran regular aerobics classes, maintaining herself at a very high level of physical fitness. She was also a highly accomplished singer and had won national awards, singing with her sister in a group in Ireland.

She had a great Christian faith and was a loyal member of her local church. She was a devoted mother and wife. She leaves her husband Andrew and two children, Jenny and Michael.”

Andrew Hopkirk

[*BMJ*, 2001,323, 811. Taken from <https://history.rcplondon.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/olivia-christine-anne-oconnor-constant>]