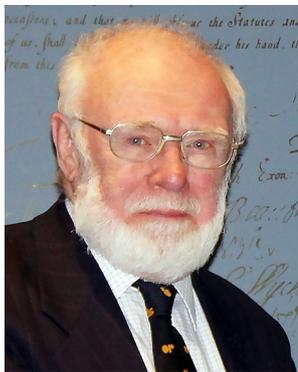




Obituary

K. BRIAN HALEY 1933–2016 (Editor, *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, 1971–1980, President of the OR Society, 1982–1983)

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The death of Brian Haley on Christmas Day at the age of 83, soon after a diagnosis of liver cancer, brought to an end over 60 years of substantial involvement and dedicated service to the OR Society and to the worldwide OR community. He was President of the OR Society from 1982 to 1983, and of the International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS), from 1992 to 1994. Only two other people have been President of both organizations. In addition to these leadership roles, his focus of service was publications. He was the first UK contributing editor to *International Abstracts in Operations Research* and Editor of the *Journal of the Operational Research Society (JORS)* from 1971 to 1980. In these roles, he was a member of the Society's Publications Committee for over 20 years. Brian edited the proceedings of two IFORS' conferences: those held in Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan (1975) and Toronto, Canada (1978). In a February 1981 *OR Newsletter* profile, written when Brian ceased being Journal editor, John Hough said that "whilst we may be saddened at his departure from Editorship of the Journal we can certainly anticipate years of future service from him in one of the few ORS roles which he has yet to play, that of President-elect, and subsequently, President of the OR Society". John's expectation was more than fulfilled. Following his retirement from

academic life in 1999, Brian continued to be involved in the OR Society's affairs, most notably as Chair of the Publications Committee, a position he held for a period of 11 years. During his time as Chair, the journals in the Society's portfolio flourished, and Brian oversaw the development of a variety of initiatives, including the birth of the *Journal of Simulation*.

Brian's predecessor as editor, Ray A. Cunningham-Green, introduced Brian to readers of what was then the *OR Quarterly*, as a person "well known to the Society as a teacher of Operational Research, as a member of Council and as an active figure in IFORS. I ... know that he will bring to the job of editing the *Quarterly* a diligent and creative intelligence". He did! In 2011, Brian published in *JORS* (Volume 61, 4–10) an article "The challenge of publications" which reviewed 60 years of publishing by the OR Society, concentrating on the problems faced by the editors of *JORS* and the evolution of its contents. Commenting on his own tenure, he referred to a steady flow of manuscripts from North America turning into an avalanche because American academics were being required to prove their scholarship. As a result, the referee base needed to be greatly expanded and a part-time paid assistant was required. A two-issue cushion of accepted papers became a potential 12-month backlog, so it was decided, in 1975, to double the total annual size by dividing each issue into two parts making an eight-issue Quarterly! When, in 1978, it was decided to move to twelve issues, the Publications Committee struggled to find a word beginning with Q to represent twelve and so the *ORQ* became *JORS*.

Brian also faced issues common to many of his successors. Writing a leader to celebrate the silver jubilee of the journal (Volume 25 Issue 2), he pleads that "members will, I hope, continue to be kind to the Editor and sympathize with his difficulties, especially when faced with referees' reports which read 'a first-class paper, publish', 'the worst paper I have read, reject' and a third ... 'I cannot make up my mind'". He comments that he has "been attempting to ensure that all papers contain a statement, by example, of how the theory can be used. The Operational Research Society has amongst its members at least two opposing factions. A significantly large group expect publications to be rigorous, correct and logically and concisely argued and to be concerned with valid and worthwhile 'mathematical argument'. The alternative view is that we should only publish papers which grow from and depend heavily on practical problems. If the

protagonists of this view would persuade their employers to give them permission to publish, or would even put pen to paper, we might be able to include a few more papers of this type. I have become almost immune to the criticism that we do not publish enough practical work—this almost invariably comes from those members who have never written a paper themselves”.

Brian was born on 17th November 1933 in Smethwick, near Birmingham where he spent nearly all his life. He attended King Edward’s School, Five Ways, before starting at the University of Birmingham in 1950 to study mathematics. On graduating in 1953, he became a research assistant in the University’s Department of Engineering Production, obtaining his doctorate in 1956 for a thesis on industrial applications of linear programming. His subsequent work always involved OR applied to a wide variety of real problems. As Brian’s period as research assistant came towards a close in 1957, he was faced with the prospect of National Service. However, the National Coal Board OR Group (called FIG—Field Investigation Group) was one of very few acceptable alternatives to the Army and offered an outlet for his OR ambitions. In 1958, Birmingham University established the UK’s first MSc Course in OR in the Department of Engineering Production, and in 1959, after two years at the NCB, this attracted Brian back to his home city to become the UK’s first designated lecturer in Operational Research. In 1968, he became Professor of Operational Research. Brian’s involvement with the OR Society dates from 1954 when he became an associate member. In 1959, he became a full member and founded, with Neil Jessop, the Midlands OR Society, becoming its first Secretary. Brian report of the first meeting stated that “about one-third of the membership is actively engaged in operational research work and the other two-thirds are interested people from other professions”.

Brian attended the first international OR conference, held in Oxford, UK, in September 1957. His paper, jointly authored with John Stringer, on the application of linear programming to a large-scale transportation problem, followed one from George Dantzig. Exalted company indeed! The paper discusses solving transportation problems of size 32×130 by hand, and also presents a photograph of an analogue computer consisting of pulleys and strings to solve 4×3 problems. The authors point out that the application of this analogue is subject to difficulties with friction and extension of the string, and say that “a second machine is being constructed which incorporates a low-friction polythene (Fluon) as bearings and

pulleys, and braided Terelyne for the strings, which are kept taut by graduated spring-loaded reels”. In the published discussion, George Dantzig remarks that “analogue machines were useful for the solution of special types of linear programming problems, but that for more general types, digital computers probably would be required, from the point of view of both speed and accuracy.” How perceptive!

The Oxford conference led to the creation of IFORS on 1st January 1959. Later, Brian became successively Vice-President (1983–1985), Chairman of the Publications Committee and, from 1992 to 1994, President. Brian took pride in having attended the first 14 IFORS conferences, usually accompanied by his wife Diana. At the fifteenth conference, held in Beijing, China (1999), Brian did not arrive through illness at the last minute. Brian did attend further IFORS conferences, with Diana, as was the case in 2008, when the conference was in South Africa. Diana died in March last year and, no longer having to worry about caring for her, Brian had intended to attend the IFORS conference this year in Quebec, accompanied by his son, but sadly that will not happen.

He met Diana at Birmingham University, where she was a secretary and typed work for him. They were married at St Germain’s Church, Birmingham on 2nd April 1960. They had one son, Alan, and two granddaughters, Frances and Emma. Brian played many sports, in particular rugby, as a prop, at school and for Five Ways Old Boys 1st XV. He was very involved in church life. As treasurer of his local Church, he was able to exercise his OR talents. A time-series analysis of weekly collections was developed to decide the optimum timing of special appeals for donations. For a time, he was a deacon at Carters Lane Baptist Church and occasional lay preacher. Another major activity for nearly 40 years was as a governor of Bromsgrove School, for whom he created an L.P. model to evaluate alternative fee-structures.

Not surprisingly, the OR Society bestowed honours on him, first with the Companionship of Operational Research in 1996, and, in 2010, the Beale Medal. Only three other Presidents have received both these honours. In recent years, he regularly attended the Blakett lecture and was very disappointed on the few such occasions he missed. In future years, he will be greatly missed by all those who knew him and appreciated his wisdom, the warmth of his friendship and his willingness to help.

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