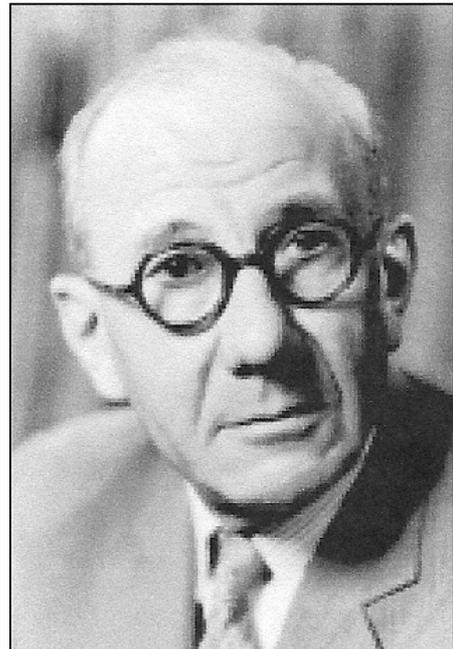


DAVIS EVAN BEDFORD (1898-1978). C.B.E., M.B., B.S. (Lond.), M.R.C.S. (Eng.), M.D. (Lond.), F.R.C.P. (Lond.), F.A.C.P., Hon. M.D. (Cairo). - Distinguished Cardiologist and Bibliophile.

"I was cured by 'M & B,' - Moran and Bedford."

Sir Winston Churchill. (1943).

When one of his patients asked Dr Davis Evan Bedford (1898-1978) [Epsom College 1913-1916] whether his heart attack could be cured, he quickly responded: "Cured ? If you lose your foot under a bus you don't ask to be cured. You've lost the foot of your 'heart.'" Blunt, honest, possessing a deadpan humour, Evan Bedford was a highly literate man who wore tortoiseshell glasses and spoke while a cigarette stub dangled from his lower lip. He was the son of William Bedford, J.P., a flour miller from Boston, Lincolnshire. He received his medical training at the Middlesex Hospital, but the onset of the First World War meant that he had to curtail his studies. He joined the R.N.V.R. as a sub-lieutenant in destroyers and after the war returned to complete his medical studies. Two years later he was appointed as registrar to Sir Robert Arthur Young and Dr George Beaumont and it was at that time that he developed his lifelong interest in heart disease. After that he travelled to Paris where he underwent a period of study with Laubry and Gallavardin, the great French cardiologists. On his return to England he was awarded a research scholarship at the London Hospital under the eminent cardiologist Sir John Parkinson. This marked an association which later was to make the names of Parkinson and Bedford one of the best known combinations in the contemporary literature of cardiology. Together, they published a series of papers which became internationally acclaimed classics. This was at a time when cardiology was regarded as part of general medicine rather than a specialty in its own right. From his French experience Evan Bedford had learned the importance of documenting the findings on his patients and personally conducting autopsies to make clinical correlations. He was once informed that one of his patients had died the previous night. "I know," replied Bedford, "Thank you, I know, I have his heart in my bag."



In 1926, Evan Bedford was appointed Physician at the Middlesex Hospital and the National Heart Hospital, and at that time he was one of the first cardiologists in England to study myocardial infarction (heart attacks) which had previously been thought of as infrequent and fatal. His study in 1928 of 100 cases of coronary thrombosis was a landmark contribution to cardiology. He worked closely with the eminent heart surgeons Sir Thomas Holmes Sellors and Sir Russell Brock, and spent long periods in the operating theatre witnessing the surgical treatment of heart lesions that he had correctly diagnosed. His ability to select suitable patients for operation was legendary, and many of the successful results in such conditions as mitral valvotomy and the closure of septal defects ('hole in the heart defects') were due to his skills and accuracy.

In December 1943, he was summoned by Lord Moran to attend Sir Winston Churchill who had developed pneumonia with cardiac complications. "[Bedford's] presence," wrote Lord Moran, "will keep the people at home quiet." It also provided the Prime Minister with the idea that M & B 693, one of the new sulphonamide drugs used to treat him should be renamed 'Moran and Bedford.' After the war Bedford returned to his hospital duties at the Middlesex and National Heart Hospitals. His private practice soon became the largest and most distinguished in his specialty. He was at his prime and acknowledged as an international authority on the new cardiology. He was elected

President of the British Cardiac Society, of which he was a co-founder, and of the European Society of Cardiology. He was Chairman of the Council of the British Heart Foundation, and Vice-President of the International Society of Cardiology. He was Consultant in Cardiology to both the Army and the R.A.F. He received an honorary M.D. from Cairo University in 1944, and was appointed *C.B.E.* in 1963. He edited the *British Heart Journal* and received honorary membership of numerous foreign cardiological societies. He delivered all the relevant, distinguished named lectures including the Harveian Oration (1968), and the Bradshaw and Lumleian Lectures.

Evan Bedford's unique and internationally acclaimed library of rare medical books is now housed in the Harveian Library of the Royal College of Physicians. It contained almost every important book on cardiology that had ever been published. To the students Bedford was always known as the 'the Old Top.' He was encyclopaedic and his innate shyness was hidden behind a frosty and forbidding exterior. Many found him an awesome figure, and he suffered neither fools nor knaves. Colleagues and junior staff were careful to handle him with tact. Hospital noise, traffic congestion and hospital administrators were well known to set him off. There were many interesting student tales about the great man. When road works outside the Middlesex Hospital produced such deafening noises from pneumatic drills and other machinery that auscultation of a patient's heart was well nigh impossible, Bedford contacted the local council and had such works stopped between the hours of 10 and 12 on Tuesdays and Thursday while he conducted his ward rounds. It was said of him that: "He played an important role in developing cardiology into more of a science than it had ever been before, being at the forefront of the improvements in the electrical recordings and radiological techniques which were being developed. He insisted on undertaking a meticulous post-mortem examination of the heart of any of his patients who died." In his younger days he was an excellent hockey player and a good cricketer. He was one of the greatest names in twentieth century cardiology.