

**WILLIAM BASHALL GABRIEL (1893-1976). M.B., M.S. (Lond.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), F.R.C.S. (Eng.).**  
- Surgeon with an International Reputation.

*"He was a large man with an imposing presence and great physical and moral strength. His operating lists were long...and were conducted with a military precision."*

*British Medical Journal (1976).*

William Bashall Gabriel (1893-1976) [Epsom College 1908-1912] was the son of E. E. Gabriel, engineer of Oulton Broad, Suffolk. He entered Epsom College from Monkton Combe School and was a prefect, a member of the Rugby XV, and winner of the Watts Science Prize. In 1912, he won the Freer Lucas Entrance Scholarship to the Middlesex Hospital, where he was awarded the John Murray Gold Medal and Scholarship. During the First World War he joined the Royal Navy in 1916 and served as a surgeon lieutenant on a destroyer in the Mediterranean. After the War he returned to the Middlesex Hospital as a surgical and cancer registrar, and took the F.R.C.S. in 1918 and the M.S. of London University the next year. He was then appointed Honorary Assistant Surgeon at St Mark's Hospital where he joined the eminent surgeons Sir Gordon Gordon-Watson and Mr J.P. Lockhart-Mummery. In 1931, he was appointed Consultant Surgeon to the Royal Northern and St Mark's Hospitals, and Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, London. It was at St Mark's Hospital that he won an international reputation for the surgical treatment of diseases of the rectum and colon. One of his first and most outstanding contributions was the establishment of a cancer follow-up department (1922), the first such department in the United Kingdom. It was from the wealth of information obtained from these records that the results of treatment of cancer of the rectum at St Mark's Hospital have been assessed. In 1928 he developed a technique for excision of the rectum in cases of carcinoma. By 1952 he had performed one thousand such operations and seen the mortality rate for the operation drop from 17% to 2%. In 1932 he published his *Principles and Practice of Rectal Surgery* with four subsequent editions up to 1963. In his obituary it was written: "An austere and unbending manner was the expression of the way he disciplined his own life and the discipline he expected from those who worked with him. He was, and will remain, a legend for his wonderful example in total patient care. He inspired a great devotion and loyalty in generations of assistants who will be for ever grateful for the time, patience, and trouble he took to instruct and help them."

