

## **RUPERT VAUGHAN HUDSON (1895-1967). L.R.C.P. (Lond.),**

### **F.R.C.S. (Eng.) – Pioneer of Thyroid Surgery.**

Rupert Vaughan Hudson (1895-1967) [Epsom College 1906-1912] was the son of T. W. Hudson, surgeon of Bootle, Lancashire [Epsom College 1878-1882]. At Epsom College he was a prefect, and captain of the Rugby XV and Captain of Cricket XI. He received his medical training at the Middlesex Hospital. During the First World War he served with the Hertfordshire Yeomanry and Cavalry Reserve (1914-1918), attaining commissioned rank. After the War he was appointed lecturer in operative surgery and Honorary Consultant Surgeon at the Middlesex Hospital; and Consulting Surgeon to the Connaught Hospital, and St Saviour's Hospital. He was an Examiner for the Universities of London and Cambridge, and a member of the committee for therapeutic trials of penicillin and streptomycin. On his appointment to the surgical staff at the Middlesex Hospital he was at first junior surgeon on Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor's firm, where: "Gordon-Taylor made no secret of the fact that he regarded him as the most brilliant of his young men." Rupert Vaughan Hudson specialised in thyroid surgery "He developed more delicate and refined techniques for thyroidectomy than were then current in this country, inventing in the process instruments which are still a joy to handle." At that time Sir Charles Dodds established at the Middlesex Hospital a unit to develop therapeutic possibilities for thyrotoxicosis [overactive thyroid disease]. Britain lagged behind the United States in the treatment of this condition and Rupert Vaughan Hudson and Douglas Robertson confirmed the American work on the necessity for an objective test to supplement clinical assessment if surgery for thyrotoxicosis was to be safe, and he gradually converted the sceptics. But Hudson's major contribution to medicine did not come until after the Second World War. This was the publication, in 1956, of a paper which demonstrated the importance of autoimmune factors in Hashimoto's thyroiditis – a paper which opened the gates for a flood of new investigations which profoundly influenced our understanding of disease processes. Hudson deserves his full share of credit for first seeing that an obscure and uncommon condition of apparently minor importance was worthy of intensive investigation. This achievement was not fortuitous but "the logical culmination of an attitude of a professional lifetime." As a student at the Middlesex Hospital he had been a member of the cricket team which won the Inter Hospitals Cup in 1919 and of the hockey team which won the Cup in 1920, when he scored the winning goal. "He was a superb centre three-quarter at rugby and Vice-Captain of the United Hospitals Rugby team."

