

Kolorful (b. 5 Dec 1952, Alberta, Canada). Her 95 per cent body suit took 10 years to complete and cost \$15 000. Britain's most decorated woman is Rusty Field (b. 1944) of Norfolk, who after 12 years under the needle of Bill Skuse has come to 85 per cent of totality. Both the 1980 and 1981 World's Most Beautiful Tattooed Lady Contest in the USA were won by Britain's Susan James (b. 1959).

## OPERATIONS

### Longest

The most protracted reported operation, for surgical as opposed to medical control purposes, has been one of 96 hr performed on Mrs Gertrude Levandowski (see also p. 10) during the period 4–8 Feb 1951 in Chicago, Illinois, USA. The patient suffered from a weak heart and surgeons had to exercise the utmost caution during the operation. The 'most delayed' operation on record is one on the feet of Mrs Doreen Scott of Derby, England on 20 Nov 1981. She had been waiting since 10 March 1952—19 years 8 months.

### Most

Padmabhushan Dr M. C. Modi, a pioneer of mass eye surgery in India since 1943, has performed as many as 833 cataract operations in one day and a total of 564 834 to January 1987.

Dr Robert B. McClure (b. 1901) of Toronto performed a career total of 20 423 major operations in 1924–78.

Joseph Ascough (b. 1935 d. 26 Sept 1987) of Nottingham, underwent his 341st operation (for the removal of papillomas from his wind pipe) in September 1987. These wart-like growths which impede breathing first formed when he was 18 months old. On 2 Mar 1977 Mr Jens Kjaer Jenson (b. 1914) of Hoven, Denmark, was discharged from a local hospital after having had 32 131 thorns removed from his body over a period of six years and 248 visits. In 1967 he had tripped and fallen into a pile of spiky berberry cuttings in his garden and was rushed unconscious to hospital. Even today he is still troubled by thorns working their way out through the skin of his legs.

### Oldest subject

The greatest recorded age at which anyone has undergone an operation is 111 years 105 days in the case of James Henry Brett, Jr (b. 25 July 1849, d. 10 Feb 1961) of Houston, Texas, USA. He underwent a hip operation on 7 Nov 1960. The oldest age established in Britain was the case of Miss Mary Wright (b. 28 Feb 1862) who died during a thigh operation at Boston, Lincolnshire on 22 Apr 1971 aged 109 years 53 days.

### Transplant Heart

The first human heart transplant operation was performed on Louis Washkansky, aged 55, at the Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, South Africa, between 1.00 a.m. and 6 a.m., on 3 Dec 1967, by a team of 30 headed by Professor Christiaan Neethling Barnard (b. Beaufort West, 8 Oct 1922). The donor was Miss Denise Ann Darvall, aged 25. Washkansky lived for 18 days. The longest surviving heart transplantee has been Emmanuel Vitria, of Marseilles, France (b. 24 Jan 1920) who received the heart of Pierre Ponson, 20, on 27 Nov 1968, and died on 9 May 1987. The surgeon, Edmon Herring, died of a heart attack in 1972 aged 61.

Britain's longest-surviving heart transplant patient is Nigel Olney (b. 1944) who underwent surgery at Papworth Hospital, Cambridge on 29 Jan 1980.

The first transplantee to give birth was Betsy Sneith, 23, with a baby girl Sierra (3.45 kg 7 lb 10 oz) at Stanford University, California on 17 Sept 1984. She had received a donor heart in February 1980.

Paul Holt of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada underwent a heart transplant at Loma Linda Hospital, in California, USA on 16 Oct 1987 aged 2 hrs 34 min. He was born 6 weeks premature at 2.9 kg 6 lb 6 oz.

The youngest transplant patient in the UK was Hollie Roffey who received a new heart when aged only 10

days at the National Heart Hospital in London in July 1984, but she survived only 18 days.

### Heart—lung—liver

The first triple transplant took place on 17 Dec 1986 at Papworth Hospital, Cambridge, when Mrs Davina Thompson (b. 28 Feb 1951) of Rawmarsh, South Yorkshire, underwent surgery for 7 hours by a team of 15 headed by chest surgeon Mr John Wallwork and Professor Sir Roy Calne.

### Kidney

R. H. Lawler (b. 1895) (USA) performed the first transplant of the kidney in the human in 1950. The longest survival, being between identical twins, has been 20 years.

### Artificial heart

On 1–2 Dec 1982 at the Utah Medical Center, Salt Lake City, Dr Barney B. Clark, 61, of Des Moines, Iowa, USA, was the first recipient of an artificial heart. The surgeon responsible was Dr William C. DeVries. The heart was a Jarvik 7 designed by Dr Robert K. Jarvik (b. Midland, Michigan, USA, 11 May 1946). Dr Clark died on 23 Mar 1983, 112 days later. William J. Schroeder survived 620 days in Louisville, Kentucky, USA from 25 Nov 1984 to 7 Aug 1986.

Britain's first artificial heart patient was Raymond Cook of Hucknall, Notts who temporarily received a Jarvik 7 on 2 Nov 1986 at Papworth Hospital, Cambridge.

### Earliest appendicectomy

The earliest recorded successful appendix operation was performed in 1736 by Claudius Amyand (1680–1740). He was Serjeant Surgeon to King George II (reigned 1727–60).

### Earliest anaesthesia

The earliest recorded operation under general anaesthesia was for the removal of a cyst from the neck of James Venable by Dr Crawford Williamson Long (1815–78), using diethyl ether (C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>5</sub>)<sub>2</sub>O, in Jefferson, Georgia, on 30 Mar 1842.

The earliest amputation under an anaesthetic in Great Britain was by Dr William Scott and Dr James McLaughlan at the Dumfries and Galloway Infirmary, Scotland on 19 Dec 1846.



**Most haunted village?** ● Pluckley in Kent is generally thought to be the most haunted village in England boasting at least twelve spiritous inhabitants. These include both a White and a Red Lady at St Nicholas Church, a Highwayman at Fright Corner, a Screaming Man at the brickworks and a spectral Coach and Horses at various locations. Both pubs cater for more than one kind of spirit. Dancing round the Devil's Bush three times is supposed to guarantee the personal appearance of its namesake—provided the dancer is naked of course. (Photo: D L Roberts)

### Most durable cancer patient

The most extreme recorded case of survival from diagnosed cancer is that of Mrs Winona Mildred Melick (*née* Douglass) (b. 22 Oct 1876) of Long Beach, California. She had four cancer operations in 1918, 1933, 1966 and 1968 but died from pneumonia on 28 Dec 1981, 67 days after her 105th birthday.

### Laryngectomy

On 24 July 1924 John I. Poole of Plymouth, Devon after diagnosis of carcinoma, then aged 33, underwent total laryngectomy in Edinburgh. He died on 19 June 1979 after surviving nearly 55 years as a 'neck-breather'. Mr F. B. Harvey also of Plymouth has been a neck-breather since 1929.

### Munchausen's syndrome

The most extreme recorded case of the rare and incurable condition known as 'Munchausen's syndrome' (a continual desire to have medical treatment) was William McIlroy (b. 1906), who cost the National Health Service an estimated £2.5 million during his 50-year career as a hospital patient. During that time he had 400 major and minor operations, and stayed at 100 different hospitals using 22 separate aliases. The longest unbroken period for which he was ever out of hospital was only six months. In 1979 the Irishman hung up his bedpan for the last time, saying he was sick of hospitals, and retired to an old people's home in Birmingham, where he died in 1983.

### Fastest amputation

The shortest time recorded for a leg amputation in the pre-anaesthetic era was 13–15 sec by Napoleon's chief surgeon Dominique Larrey. There could have been no ligation.

### Largest tumour

The largest tumour ever recorded was Spohn's case of an ovarian cyst weighing 148.7 kg 328 lb (23 st 6 lb) taken from a woman in Texas, in 1905. She made a full recovery.

The most extreme case reported in Britain was of a cyst weighing 135 kg 298 lb (21 st 4 lb) removed from a woman in England in 1846. This time the patient did not survive.

### Surgical instruments

The largest surgical instruments are robot retractors used in abdominal surgery, introduced by Abbey Surgical Instruments of Chingford, Essex in 1968 and weighing 5 kg 11 lb. Some bronchoscopic forceps measure 60 cm 23½ in in length. The smallest are Elliot's eye trephine, which has a blade 0.20 cm 0.078 in in diameter and 'straight' stapes picks with a needle-type tip or blade of 0.3 mm 0.013 in long.

## PSYCHIC FORCES

### Extra-sensory perception

The two most extreme published examples of ESP in scientific literature have been those of the Reiss case of a 26-year-old female at Hunter College, New York State, in 1936 and of Pavel Stepánek (Czechoslovakia) in 1967–68. Any importance which might be attached to their cases was diminished by subsequent developments. The Reiss subject refused to undergo any further tests under stricter conditions. When Stepánek was retested at Edinburgh University with plastic cards he 'failed to display any clairvoyant ability'. Much smaller departures from the laws of probability have however been displayed in less extreme cases carried out under strict conditions.

### Most durable ghosts

Ghosts are not immortal and seem to deteriorate after 400 years. The most outstanding exception to their normal 'half-life' would be the ghosts of Roman soldiers thrice reported still marching through the cellars of the Treasurer's House, York Minster, after nearly 19 centuries.