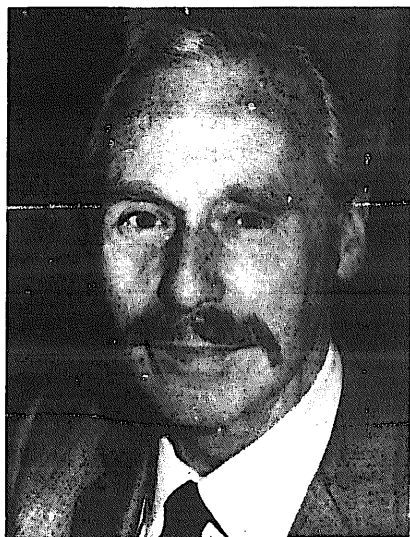


OBITUARY FOR DENNIS BUTLER FRY



Dennis Butler Fry 1907-1983.

The death of Professor Dennis B. FRY at the age of 75 on March 21, 1983 was a great blow to his colleagues, his many good friends, his wife Chrystobel, and his three children.

Dennis FRY was born the third of November 1907 in Stockbridge, Hampshire, England. After five years of teaching French, first at Tewkesbury Grammar School and then at Kilburn Grammar School, in 1934 he was appointed Assistant Lecturer in Phonetics at University College London, where he also became Superintendent of the Phonetics Laboratory in 1937. In 1938 he was promoted to Lecturer in Experimental Phonetics. In 1948, the year after the award of his Ph.D. degree, he became Reader in Experimental Phonetics. From 1958 until his retirement in 1975, he was Professor of Experimental Phonetics, the first one to hold the title in Britain.

The Department of Phonetics of University College London owed much to Dennis FRY's benevolent yet, I think, firm headship from 1949 to 1971. Indeed, he played an important role in the

later absorption of the newly fledged program in linguistics to form the present Department of Phonetics and Linguistics.

Dennis FRY's phonetic interests were broad and included such topics as automatic speech recognition, the perception of lexical stress, children's acquisition of phonology, categorical perception, and the relevance of experimental phonetics for linguistics. He also did much important work on the problems of the deaf, especially deaf children; furthermore, he worked on problems of hearing in aviation during his wartime service (1941-45) with the acoustics laboratory of the RAF Central Medical Establishment. His extensive publications up to the beginning of 1979 are listed in "Essays on the Production and Perception of Speech in Honour of Dennis B. Fry", a special issue of *Language and Speech* (Vol. 21, Part 4, 1978).

From 1961, the time of the Fourth International Congress of Phonetic Sciences in Helsinki, until his death, FRY served diligently as the President of the Permanent Council for the Organization of International Congresses of Phonetic Sciences. I know that our many excellent congresses regularly gave him pleasure over the successful outcomes of the negotiations that the Council, under his leadership, has been able to carry out with dedicated scholars and scientists in so many places. In his last year he began talking to some of us about encouraging able people in untried parts of the world to mount equally good congresses.

In 1958 Dennis FRY founded the journal *Language and Speech* as an important outlet for broadly interdisciplinary work. He was Editor until 1975 when he persuaded me to join him as Co-Editor; he left the editorship altogether at the end of 1978, three years after his retirement from his professorship.

His talent as a singer, a talent much enjoyed by operatic groups in his region, went with a seri-

ous technical interest in music and the singing voice. A very recent example of his publications in that field is his article "The Singer and the Auditorium" in the 1980 volume of the *Journal of Sound Vibration*.

I should like to end with a personal note. From 1960 on, Dennis FRY's humane and good-humored approach to people and problems gave me

a role model that I fear I shall never match. The sudden loss of his warm, caring friendship was hard to take.

Arthur S. ABRAMSON
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