

Obituary

BRUCE HOSEGOOD BURNS, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Hollymoor Hospital, Northfield, Birmingham

Dr Bruce Burns died on 26 September 1986 after a short illness at the age of 54. Born in Bristol in 1931, he was educated at the City of Norwich School and graduated in medicine from Bristol University Medical School in 1956. In the early days of his career he was interested in obstetrics and gynaecology and obtained the D(Obst)RCOG qualification in 1959. However, after having fulfilled his National Service obligation as clinical officer in obstetrics he commenced psychiatric training as registrar at Barrow and Glenside Hospitals, Bristol and was later senior registrar in the University Department of Psychiatry in Manchester. He was appointed consultant psychiatrist at Hollymoor Hospital, Birmingham in 1968 and thereafter worked at that hospital, and later also at the Lyndon Clinic in Solihull, where he fulfilled the duties of Medical Director for many years. He soon gained a high reputation for his excellence as a clinician and as an extremely able and enthusiastic teacher whose skills were enhanced by an extensive and authoritative knowledge of the literature. He was for many years postgraduate clinical tutor at his hospital and his contribution to its academic and teaching activities were held in great respect and esteem by his colleagues.

Bruce was active in research and in contributing to the literature of his speciality throughout his career. He was awarded the doctorate in medicine by Bristol University in 1967 for work on psychogenic breathlessness, and other research interests were concerned with sedation threshold, evaluation of new antidepressant drugs, and with lithium prophylactic therapy in the management of affective disorder.

An active and valued involvement with the administrative aspect of the service was reflected in his membership of many local and regional medical committees. During 1976 he was president of the psychiatric section of Birmingham Medical Institute. He was elected to Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1986.

Bruce was always ready to share his extensive knowledge of the specialty with his junior colleagues, and he will be remembered with gratitude by the many psychiatrists he helped to train. His colleagues will treasure the memory of a dedicated, learned and caring doctor whose high reputation was justly deserved. He had the gift of inspiring friendship, affection and goodwill, and his enthusiasm and commitment were an inspiration to those associated with him. These qualities won him a wide circle of friends who will grieve over the loss of a loyal and generous companion. He is survived by his wife, Lynn, and the daughter and three sons of his first marriage.

TWF

JAMES ROBERTSON MATHERS, formerly Medical Superintendent, Rubery Hill Hospital, Birmingham.

Dr James Mathers, a retired psychiatrist, died suddenly on 15 November 1986 aged 70 years.

James was born in 1916. His parents were missionaries in the Belgian Congo and they both died during his childhood. He was brought up by his aunt who lived at Kinross in Fife. He was educated at the Blue Coat School at Horsham and went to St Andrew's University where he graduated MB ChB in 1938.

During the last war he served in the RAMC where he met his wife Margaret who was a nurse. They married in 1944 at Poona. After leaving the army he specialised in psychiatry and took his DPM in 1949. He joined the consultant staff at Hollymoor Hospital in 1950 and became deputy superintendent there. In 1960 he became superintendent at Rubery Hill Hospital until he retired in 1971.

In 1962 he joined the Institute of Religion and Medicine and became increasingly interested in this aspect of his work. He ran a doctor-clergy discussion group and initiated courses in pastoral studies. He was appointed honorary lecturer in pastoral studies at the University from 1964 to 1983 when he retired to spend more time with his wife who was ill.

He retired from Rubery Hill Hospital in 1971 when he was 55 years old so that he could devote more time to lecturing and writing. He moved to Hay on Wye but returned to lecture in Birmingham every week. He was much in demand as a public speaker to doctors, clergy, nurses and social workers. He published several papers and articles in pastoral care and the relationship between medicine and religion and the work of the hospital chaplain. His opinion was sought by working parties on exorcism and medical ethics. He was essentially a transdisciplinary thinker involving medicine, religion, social and biological aspects of medicine.

James was a very quiet and unassuming man. He was very patient and always ready to listen to people. He had many friends among his students and colleagues. He had a very happy married life but sadly had to look after his wife who died before him in July 1986. He is survived by one son, Peter and one daughter, Alison.

The University of Birmingham celebrated his life work on Friday, 27 March 1987 with a thanksgiving service at St Frances Hall followed by a memorial lecture given by Professor Tony Dyson of Manchester University.

GES

REGINALD WARREN MEDLICOTT, Emeritus Professor, 11 Kew Grove, Raumati Beach, New Zealand

Professor Reg Medlicott died at New Plymouth on 9 September 1986. He was 73.

Reginald Warren Medlicott was born in Waimate in 1913. He was educated at Waitaki Boys' High School before qualifying at the University of Otago Medical School in 1938. He gained his MRACP in 1947 and was elected FRACP in 1958, FRANZCP in 1963 and FRCPsych in

1972. After a year as House Surgeon at Palmerston North Hospital he joined the staff at Porirua Psychiatric Hospital. In 1947 he was appointed Director of Ashburn Hall and here he was to remain until retirement in 1978. Ashburn Hall is a private psychiatric hospital on the outskirts of Dunedin and Reg made it into a centre of excellence. He brought to it his own personal qualities of strength and integrity and coupled these with his ability to set goals and achieve them.

In 1949 he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. Here his interest and knowledge of dynamic psychiatry deepened and he made friends with many of the leaders of American psychiatry. Under his guidance Ashburn Hall developed into a therapeutic community receiving patients from throughout New Zealand and providing training for undergraduate and post graduate students.

In 1969 he was honoured by being appointed to a personal chair of post graduate studies in psychological medicine at the University of Otago and later, on retirement, he was granted emeritus status.

From the beginning he worked strongly for an Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and it was a tribute to the regard with which he was held that he was elected the foundation president in 1963 and later (1969–72) to the Board of Censors. In 1972 he was elected to the Medical Council. Here his psychiatric expertise and wisdom proved invaluable in dealing with the many difficult decisions that have to be made. Forensic psychiatry was a particular interest in which he had an international reputation. He revelled in the challenge of presenting to a Court of Law the origins of the disturbed behaviour shown by the person in the dock.

His publications evidence another major pursuit, the study of myth and legend and its relationship with psychoanalytic theory. He sometimes used his interest in art and the paintings of patients to amplify this and one can remember memorable case presentations in which he developed the theme.

Gardening was a major relaxation for him and together with his wife Nan he developed a beautiful rhododendron and birch tree dell at Ashburn Hall. After retirement they moved to Raumati Beach where he continued with forensic and consultancy work before finally shifting in 1986 to New Plymouth because of his deteriorating health.

The memories will remain. Reg tall, and always immaculately dressed, presiding over the Friday lunch time meetings; the slight stammer; the half questioning raise of the eye brows when things were not quite right; the warm hospitality of the Medicotts in their gracious home; the cultivated mind; the quiet authority. He believed in standards; high standards. He expected the best and because he gave of his best, he obtained it from others.

It was a privilege to have known him. New Zealand psychiatry has lost its senior and most respected figure. Now we share the grief of Nan, Patrick and Bron.

PAMcK

JACK MORRISON WHITE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Stanley Royd Hospital, Wakefield.

Dr J. M. White, for many years consultant psychiatrist at Stanley Royd Hospital, Wakefield, and St James's Hospital, Leeds, died recently.

Jack White was a Scot. He studied at Glasgow University where he graduated BSc in 1938 and MB ChB in 1941. After service as a psychiatrist in the RAF, he took the DPM, London, in 1949 and proceeded to the MD in 1956.

He held appointments as a senior medical officer in Cardiff and as a senior registrar in psychiatry in the neurological department of the Sheffield teaching hospitals prior to his appointment to Stanley Royd Hospital in 1955.

White was then faced with putting his sophisticated ideas into practice in the context of a large, gloomy and forbidding hospital dating back to 1818. In spite of all the inherent handicaps Jack succeeded in developing first of all specialised and superior admission facilities and subsequent day care. If in his pursuit of these aims he was excessively single minded, there can be no doubt that his motivation was entirely that of the welfare of his patients, and the honour of the speciality of which he was so proud. The road was not an easy one, and the time and efforts spent on it left little opportunity for more academic pursuits, for which his natural gifts might well have fitted him, but he was an enthusiastic teacher of junior medical officers. Although his teaching was unassuming, one emerged from an engagement with him always slightly surprised to discover just how much one had learned.

Outwardly an affable and outgoing man he was, in fact, of a somewhat reserved and retiring disposition and his social appearances were few. He was sustained primarily, one felt, by a warm and total family life, sadly curtailed by the premature death of his wife, from which, it has been said, he probably never completely recovered. He retired at the end of 1981 and it is sad to think that he had so few years to enjoy his retirement. He is one of the diminishing band of brothers who are sadly missed by those who were privileged to bear many of the burdens with them in those difficult days of the late fifties and the early sixties.

JSH

The deaths of the following have also been reported:

JOHN EDWARD EDWARDS, Consultant Psychiatrist, 201 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

GEORGE MIDDLETON GIBB, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Lancaster Moor Hospital, Lancaster.

FRANKLIN KLAF, Consultant Psychiatrist, Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn, New York, USA.

STANLEY LEIGH, 187 High Street, Yelling, Hunts, Cambridgeshire.

EDITH EKRON MUNRO, Consultant Psychiatrist, HM Prison Service, Bullwood Hall, Hockley, Essex.

NANCY KATHLEEN PEARS, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Wonford House Hospital, Wonford, Exeter, Devon.