

## Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

**ALFRED WILLIAM BEARD, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Middlesex Hospital, London**



William (Bill) Beard was born in Derby on 8 April 1920. He was the only child of a 'working class' family with no advantages of wealth or academic tradition behind him. He went to Bemrose School, Derby where he had an undistinguished career leaving at the age of 17, having matriculated, but left before High School Certificate. He spent a little time in the Civil Service and in 1939 joined the Royal Air Force where he served until demobilised in 1945.

He conceived the ambition of reading medicine at Cambridge, spent a few months at the local polytechnic studying physics and chemistry and in this very short period achieved the entry qualification. Entirely against the odds he went up to Magdalene College, Cambridge, in October 1945 to begin his medical studies. He was a late developer, but at that point demonstrated the energy, high intelligence and brio that were a feature of his subsequent career. He did well in his Tripos and went on to a Part II in Psychology in which he achieved a First. He moved to Oxford for his clinical course and qualified as a doctor from both Universities. After qualification he worked for Professor Witts and then in the Department of Neurosurgery. He also had the good fortune to meet his future wife, Wendy, who was working at the Radcliffe Infirmary at that time.

Thus admirably prepared for psychiatry, he worked as a Senior House Officer in Psychiatry at the Middlesex Hospital, London, for Noel Harris and Jack Hobson. Two years later, after gaining the Diploma in Psychological Medicine, he was appointed as Senior Registrar by Eliot Slater at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases. There were many others more senior and experienced than Bill who had applied, but with characteristic flair and independence of mind, Slater chose Bill and neither regretted the choice. There was a chemistry between the brilliant older and the brilliant younger man that made it a very productive time for both. Over four years there, first as Senior Registrar and then as Senior Fellow of the Mental Health Research

Fund, he developed as a clinician and carried out most of the work for their classic studies on the schizophrenia-like psychoses of epilepsy. During this time he became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians and was awarded the Gaskell Gold Medal and Prize of 1955. Thereafter he always took great pleasure in attending the Annual Dinner for Medallists, finding there, among others, Jack Hobson, Eliot Slater and his future colleague of the Middlesex, Dennis Hill.

From 1959 he worked as a Senior Hospital Medical Officer at the Middlesex Hospital and in 1961, soon after the arrival of Denis Hill as founding Professor of Psychiatry at the Middlesex, Bill was appointed as Consultant Psychiatrist at the Middlesex Hospital and its associated in-patient unit at St Luke's Woodside Hospital. He continued in this post until his retirement in 1985. His career there spanned a time of great change. In its long history from its foundation in the 18th century, St Luke's had passed through many phases. Having moved to its present site from the City to Muswell Hill in 1930s, it had given distinguished service in the 1940s dealing with the psychiatric casualties of the war. Thereafter, Jack Hobson pioneered modified ECT there but the hospital then entered a relatively dormant phase to emerge again in the 1960s with the founding of an intensive care unit, one of the earliest to have accommodation for mothers and babies. Increasing priority was given to admitting patients from the catchment area around the Middlesex, formally served by the Horton Hospital, Epsom, changing the nature and increasing the intensity of the work at St Luke's. Bill helped to manage these changes. His wide experience and decisive mind were invaluable through this time. He could always be relied on to take a quick but complete group of situations and to produce practical solutions. He induced great loyalty in those who worked with him and in his turn took great pains to assist them in their careers. He was a shrewd and stimulating colleague, but he did not have much time for committees.

He continued his research interests of which the best known, carried out in collaboration with his then Senior Registrar, Coin McEvedy, were the iconoclastic studies of Royal Free Disease, still controversial but an early important contribution to the debate on the mystery of myalgic encephalopathy.

He was much in demand in his private work. Latterly he was particularly interested in alcoholism and drug addiction. He continued in private work

after retirement and also as a member of Mental Health Tribunals.

Outside psychiatry he had wide interests. He was a great collector of all manner of objects having at one time amassed 12 old Rolls Royces which regrettably he had to sell when he moved to Upper Wimpole Street but there found an increased amount of wall space for paintings and antique furniture. He was a skilled plumber having installed the whole central heating system in his large house. He loved music and was widely read.

He had a happy home life with his wife Wendy who retired soon after him from her work as a Chest Physician. There are three children, one of whom (Poppy) is also a doctor.

OSCAR HILL

#### Dr Seymour Spencer writes:

Bill Beard started his actual psychiatric career, while a medical student, at the Warneford Hospital, Oxford, when Robin McInnes, Medical Director, decided to invite two medical students to free board and lodgings at the Warneford in exchange for some clerking and learning about psychiatry. The first two students we had in 1949/50 were Professor Roy Acheson, now of Churchill College, Cambridge, and Bill who had come to our medical school after being qualified as a psychologist and after his First in a Natural Science Tripos, both at Cambridge. Our first

choices then of medical students – and it may have been our last, as I don't remember further ones coming – were of two extremely distinguished men. Both were an asset to our unit. There was no obligation on the students to become psychiatrists, but Bill duly did, while Roy entered a cognate field with equal distinction.

#### The deaths of the following have also been reported:

MICHAEL WILLIAM ATKINSON, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Flat 37, Highfield, Dene Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 5ST.

ROBERT DALZIEL BUCKNER, Broad Cove, RR/2, Mill Village, Nova Scotia, B0J 2HO, Canada.

JOHN PETO CHILD, formerly Physician Superintendent, St Nicholas Hospital, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE3 3XT.

CHARLES FRIEDMAN, 137 Harley Street, London W1N 1DJ.

JUAN JOSE LOPEZ IBOR, Clinica Lopez Ibor, Av Nueva Zelanda 44, E-28075, Madrid, Spain.

DAYANANAD NAIDOO, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Farnborough Hospital, Kent.

GERALD BERNARD SIMON, Professor of Psychiatry, Field House, Dunsley Kinver, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY7 6LT.

ROBERT JESSE STOLLER, Professor of Psychiatry, UCLA School of Medicine, Los Angeles, California 90024, USA.

*Psychiatric Bulletin* (1992), 16, 64

## Miscellany

### Appointment



Dr Greg Wilkinson has been appointed Professor of Psychiatry at The London Hospital Medical College, Whitechapel, London E1 2AD, and took up his duties on 1 January 1992.

### Honour

Dr F. W. Graham, a Fellow of the College, was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his contributions to psychiatry and psychotherapy in the

recent Australia Day Honours. Professor Issy Pilowsky has also received this honour.

### The Mental Health Foundation

The Trustees of the Foundation have announced that its Director-General, Mr Peter Searle, is leaving the Foundation by mutual consent.

### New publications

*Tranquillisers: The MIND Guide to Where to Get Help* is available from MIND Mail Order Service, 4th Floor, 24–32 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD, price £5.00 (plus 50p postage and packaging).

The fully updated 1992 edition of *Holiday Ideas from Cruse* is primarily for people who are bereaved or who are holidaying alone for whatever reason. It is obtainable from Cruse-Bereavement Care, 126 Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1UR, price £2.35 (inclusive of packing and postage).