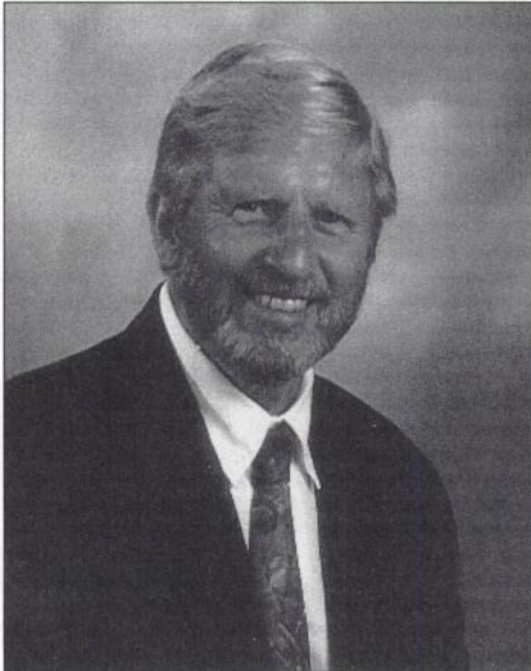

Obituaries



John Clifford Denmark, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Department of Psychiatry for the Deaf, Whittingham Hospital, Preston

Dr Denmark was born on the 15 February 1924, in Liverpool, the fourth of the six children of Frank Lindley Denmark and Florence Sabina Denmark (née Webster). A keen sportsman, he captained the cricket and soccer teams at Liverpool Institute, where he studied modern languages. At the outbreak of war he was evacuated to Bangor, North Wales and in 1942 volunteered for active service, serving in the Royal Navy as a Petty Officer until demobilisation in 1945. During this interruption to his studies he married Frances, and after hostilities ended, studied medicine at Liverpool University. During his six years at university his children, John and Kathleen, were born. He developed an interest in neurology during his studies, but shortly after qualification in 1952 was asked to fill an urgent vacancy in psychiatry. Thus began a long and distinguished career. He was appointed consultant psychiatrist at Bolton and District General Hospital, and was subsequently appointed Consultant Psychiatrist to Whittingham Hospital,

Preston, where he established the Department of Psychiatry for Deaf People in 1964. He was elected MRCPsych in 1971 and proceeded to FRCPsych in 1973.

During his formative years, John acquired an unusual and unique skill for a hearing person. His father was the principal of a school for deaf children in Liverpool, and during his early years, he mixed and played with deaf children. John became a natural user of sign language. He would often communicate with deaf people in the street using British Sign Language, causing amazement when he explained that he was not deaf himself. His communication skills, together with his skills as a clinician, led to his pioneering psychiatric services for deaf people in the UK.

John pioneered the establishment of mental health services for deaf people in Britain and Europe. He established the first specialist unit, in the UK at Preston, and worked as the only consultant psychiatrist serving for deaf people in the UK from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s. There are now three specialist mental health services for deaf people based in Manchester, Birmingham and London. The former two are, fittingly, named after him.

John played a fundamental role in bringing about a crucial change in the education of deaf children in the UK. He was rightly convinced that deaf children were being inappropriately educated using speech and oral/aural methods. Through his articles and lectures, he made professionals and the general public in this country and indeed the world, aware that young deaf people could be prone to psychological and emotional problems because of the communication difficulties with their hearing parents and teachers. His influential opinions were instrumental in bringing about changes in this controversial field. Moreover, being in a position of authority, he enabled the acceptance of sign language as a language in its own right, a philosophy strongly embraced by the deaf community, and now accepted by most authorities in the field of the education of deaf people.

John had numerous honorary appointments, and was an advisor to various organisations for deaf people including the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, the North Regional Association for Deaf People, and Royal Schools for Deaf Children, Cheadle, Manchester. He had other affiliations too numerous to mention. He was also invited to many national working groups and committees. He made an international

contribution to this field, being a founder member of the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness, and presenting lectures at international conferences throughout the world. John was a prolific writer who wrote numerous articles on the subject. He also wrote a comprehensive text book entitled *Deafness and Mental Health*, published by Jessica Kingsley in 1994, which has made a seminal contribution to this field of work.

John's knowledge of general psychiatry and general medicine was extensive, and he was much sought after, even in his retirement, to provide independent reports for mental health review tribunals, and other psychiatric reports. John's death caused great sadness to many, including the Mental Health Act Commission, whose Chief Executive, William Bingley, has put on record that "John Denmark will be remembered by many at the Mental Health Act Commission for his approachability and helpfulness".

John was a warm, humorous person who easily established a rapport with others, both in clinical and non-clinical settings. It was exhilarating to see him interact with deaf patients, many of whom regarded him as a close friend, even though they held him in complete awe. He had the gift of being able to entertain and educate others with his breadth of knowledge and vast array of anecdotes.

John was a keen golfer who enjoyed the camaraderie and competition on the golf course. He played at Preston Golf Club and in a number of golf societies. He was always keen to impart his golfing knowledge after he had won the match.

John will be greatly missed by many around the globe in both deaf and hearing communities, and by the countless people whom he has helped and advised. He has been a source of support and inspiration to numerous professionals now practising in this field. His death is a great loss, though he has left a rich legacy to the field of psychiatry. John Denmark died on 8 September 1998, and is survived by his wife, Frances, son, John, and daughter, Kathleen. His commitment to the cause of deafness was total, and it is fitting, though sad, that nine years after retiring from his consultant post in 1989, his final living moments were spent in discussions with a television producer to publicise the unique history and need for mental health services for deaf people, a project that unfortunately he will now be unable to complete.

A Memorial Service is being planned for April 1999. Further details can be obtained by contacting Dr Brendan Monteiro at National Centre for Mental Health and Deafness, Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester M25 3BL; telephone 0161 772 3432.

BRENDAN MONTEIRO



William Howard Kenneth Carpenter, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Prudhoe Hospital, Northumberland

Dr Carpenter was born in 1914 at Longhope, on the edge of the Forest of Dean. His father died in the First World War in 1917. He left school with no certificates and for two years was an engineer apprentice in the Royal Air Force. He then trained as a pharmacist, with Boots, graduating BPharm (Nott) in 1940. He won a major exhibition, and with the encouragement of his first wife, decided to use the prize money to train as a doctor and qualified MBChB Bristol, in 1946. One of his first temporary jobs was as an assistant medical officer in the Stoke Park Group, at Purdown and Hanham Hall, where he stayed for 21 years, rising to be Deputy Medical Superintendent. He left in 1968, and in the same year remarried, and took his MRCS (Eng) LRCP (Lond). He was appointed consultant psychiatrist at Prudhoe Hospital, Northumberland (he was elected MRCPsych in 1971) where he worked until he retired in 1978. He then returned to Bristol where he was persuaded to help as a locum at Stoke Park for a further seven years.

One of Howard's tasks at Stoke Park was to be doctor for the resident medical staff and their families, as well as performing the medical