

# Obituaries



**Douglas Harley Bennett**, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Maudsley Hospital, London

Douglas Bennett, who died on 30 August 1997, was one of the leading exponents of psychiatric rehabilitation both in the UK and farther afield. The College recognised his achievements by awarding him an Honorary Fellowship in 1986. Born in 1918 of West Country origin, he qualified MB, BS (London) in 1941 at St Bartholomew's Hospital, where the teaching of E. B. Strauss impressed him. After service in the Navy, he obtained a post at the Hammersmith Hospital, already a buzzing hive of research-based medicine. That experience of research and the development of theory influenced his whole approach. His psychiatric trainers included T. P. Rees and Maxwell Jones, and culminated with Rudolf Freudenberg, Physician Superintendent, at Netherne, where he obtained a consultant post. Freudenberg had been very struck by the research of Brian Ackner and Arthur Harris which indicated that the beneficial effects of insulin therapy derived from social rather than biochemical processes. He had started an activity-based programme for the entire hospital, staff and patients, and ensured that the effects were assessed by high-quality research. Netherne

soon became a Mecca for social psychiatry, and the obvious place to find someone who would help to launch the Maudsley Hospital's new enterprise of taking responsibility for a catchment area, against the precept of its founder, who had insisted that it treated only 'voluntary' patients.

Douglas started in 1962 at the day hospital, which had originally opened only for women with neurotic problems. Within a few years, helped by colleagues of all disciplines eager to work with such an inspiring man, he had set up a range of facilities for people with serious long-term mental illness, while the Camberwell Register, run by John and Lorna Wing, monitored the service and provided a sampling frame for research. Douglas's greatest assets were his own energy, and skills both in clinical work and in setting up and running services. While not a research worker himself, he used the approach of the best research in combining theory and practice and developing both together. This stamped all his work and made his teaching a stimulating experience for all involved in the enterprise of providing 'community care'. Undogmatic, modest, humorous and yet deeply serious, he enjoyed exchanging views with others. In the preface to his most important book, written with Fraser Watts (*The Theory and Practice of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*) he thanked "those who have contributed by upsetting cherished notions and forcing me to think in new ways".

The list was an international one. His teaching and advice were in demand well beyond the Maudsley and the UK. An adviser to the World Health Organization, he had many colleagues in other parts of Europe, particularly Germany and Holland, and the USA. These visitors provided an extra yeast to the multi-disciplinary ferment of his units.

After his retirement in 1982, he continued to travel, teach and write. His sudden final illness began at the Warneford Hospital, Oxford, while he was accompanying a resident from a local hostel where he was a helper.

J. L. T. BIRLEY

**David Rice**, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist Hellingly Hospital, Sussex

David Rice, a distinguished Senior Fellow of the College, died of heart failure on 13 September