

Obituaries

John Clifford Sawle Thomas, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow, and St Margaret's Hospital, Epping



John Clifford Sawle Thomas, one of the most distinguished psychiatrists of his generation, died of cancer on the eve of his 87th birthday on 20 January 1994.

Thomas (known invariably as 'Tommy' to his colleagues in the RAF) was born on 21 January 1907 in London of mixed Welsh/Cornish parentage. He was educated at St Paul's School and studied medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital, qualifying MRCS

Eng LRCP Lond in 1932. Not long after qualification he decided on a career in psychiatry and gained the DPM Eng in 1937. Despite his involvement in his speciality he found time to continue his studies in general medicine and was elected MRCP (Lond) in 1943 proceeding to the FRCP in 1966. In 1971 he was elected to the Foundation Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Sawle Thomas' career was in some ways unusual. He progressed very quickly up the conventional ladder in institutional psychiatry. He held appointments first at Stone, Aylesbury, where he worked under Dr Ian Skottowe; then at Littlemore, Oxford, under Dr R. W. Armstrong; then as Deputy-Superintendent at St Crispin Hospital (Berrywood Hospital, as was), and finally, after the war, he was appointed Physician Superintendent at St Nicholas' Hospital, Newcastle.

Less conventional for those days was his string of prestigious appointments outside institutional psychiatry. During the war he was commissioned in the RAFVR and served as a neuropsychiatrist, achieving the rank of Wing Commander. Then, at different times, he served as Regional Psychiatrist to the North East Metropolitan Board and as a member of the Parole Board. Finally until his retirement, in addition to private practice, he was Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist to Princess

Alexandra's Hospital, Harlow and St Margaret's Hospital, Epping.

Sawle Thomas was twice married. His first marriage to Maryon Elliot ended in divorce. In 1953 he married Dr Eva Waller, herself a consultant psychiatrist and a MRCPsych (the charmingly informal photograph was taken at Brighton in 1953, presumably on their honeymoon). The marriage was eminently successful and Eva's death in 1986 was a devastating blow from which he never really recovered. His unhappiness was compounded shortly afterwards by a succession of strokes which affected his speech, mobility and his intellect. And if that were not enough he latterly developed a squamous cell carcinoma of his face which delivered the *coup de grâce*.

Tommy was a rounded man as witness his multitude of interests outside his professional work. He loved literature and music, and in his retirement played bridge at a high level. Less cerebral perhaps was his newfound proficiency with a croquet mallet.

He is survived by his daughter Carole and his son Mark, the two children of his first marriage, together with seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Ebben Roderic-Evans, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Cane Hill Hospital, Surrey



Ebben Roderic-Evans, or Roddy as he was affectionately known, devoted the greater part of his professional life to the care of the long-term mentally ill. For 23 years he worked as a consultant psychiatrist at Cane Hill.

He was born on 13 August 1924 in Tregaron, Dyfed, Wales, into a farming family, although his uncle was a well known cardiologist. He trained at UCH between 1942/1947 (MRCS Eng LRCP Lond 1947 MB BS Lond 1950). He was commissioned in the RAMC and posted to Moashar, Egypt. After demobilisation he took up locum posts in