Obituary of Dr Russell Barton

There are a number of inaccuracies in Dr Henry Rollin’s obituary for the late Dr Russell Barton. Most importantly, he did not relinquish his post at Severalls because of an impolite letter to the Lancet. Dr Barton was clearly displeased with the suggestion that he stay on as Consultant after the position of Physician Superintendent was abolished, even though he could keep the emoluments of his previous position. He moved to the United States for an opportunity to exercise direction on a hospital-wide basis, an opportunity which no longer existed in the land of his birth.

The title of the grade he held at Shenley was Senior Hospital Medical Officer, not Senior Medical Officer. Institutional Neurosis was published in 1959, not 1976. As he came to Severalls in 1960, only his experience at Shenley was included in the book. Finally, at Severalls it was not discharges that plummeted. Discharges increased – the patient census plummeted.

I can also throw some light on the question whether Dr Barton ever changed his mind on the subject of community care for the mentally ill, having maintained periodic contact with him until his infirmity made such contacts impracticable.

He never regretted his role in the deinstitutionalisation movement, although he recognised, like the rest of us, that the actual performance fell well short of what he would have wished to see happen.

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Obituaries

Ian Hunter Lockhart Gillies

Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Stobhill General Hospital, Glasgow

Hunter Gillies, as he was always known, died on 11 September 2002. He was born in Glasgow on 4 January 1911 and attended Allan Glen’s School. He studied medicine at Glasgow University, graduating MB ChB with Commendation in 1934. He proceeded MD with High Commendation in 1938, having obtained the DPM in 1936. He became a member of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1947 and was elected as a fellow of that College in 1953. He was a founder fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve from 1941 to 1946 and he was a specialist in neuropsychiatry at the Naval Hospitals in Chatham and Sydney, Australia. He was Deputy-Physician Superintendent at the Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfries from 1946 until 1953. His colleagues at the Crichton included Professors Willi Mayer-Gross and Martin Roth.

In 1953, Hunter Gillies returned to Glasgow on his appointment as consultant-in-charge of the psychiatric unit at Stobhill General Hospital in Glasgow. The hospital was established by the city of Glasgow early in the 20th Century and had mental observation wards from which the large psychiatric unit developed. It became an active unit, dealing with patients with a wide range of psychiatric conditions under the leadership of Hunter Gillies. He was held in high regard by colleagues in other specialities in the hospital and this helped to make the
psychiatric unit an accepted part of the general hospital. He leaned to the apprentice model of psychiatric training and he was an exemplary trainer. Once a trainee had worked for him, he became the gold standard. His former trainees recall their experiences of him with pleasure and gratitude and remember him personally with affection. He was of distinguished appearance and had considerable energy. Those who worked with him knew that the dryness of manner which he sometimes displayed readily gave way to warmth. He had a sharp sense of humour, and generosity and concern for others underpinned his actions.

In addition to his responsibilities at Stobhill General Hospital, at the request of the procurator-fiscal, over many years he examined persons accused of serious offences. His published work in this area highlighted the importance of alcohol as a major factor in serious offences. His forensic reports, as well as his clinical notes and letters, contained vivid thumbnail sketches, while at the same time being characterised by lucid and felicitous expression and astute judgment. He was one of the most respected Scottish psychiatrists of his generation. He retired in 1976. He was a private man. In his younger days, he enjoyed sailing – especially off the west coast of Scotland. He maintained an interest in cooking into his later years.

In 1948, he married Mrs Isabelle Canay of Sydney, who died in 1983. In 1987, he married Mrs Margaret Richmond of Oxfordshire and relocated there. She survives him.

Hamilton Frame

Dr John Richard Theobalds
Formerly Richard Consultant Psychiatrist, Lancaster Health Authority

John Theobalds was born on 26 July 1923 and died from lung cancer on 28 June 2002.

He received his medical education at Westminster Hospital and qualified from there MRCsEng., LRCP Lond and MB, BS, Lond., in 1947. After national service, mainly at a military hospital in Egypt, he returned home and worked in general medicine hospitals at Westminster and the Royal Salop Hospital, before deciding on a career in psychiatry.

To this end he served as Registrar at Park Prenton Hospital, Basingstoke and later was appointed Consultant Psychiatrist, Lancaster Health Authority and Medical Director, Priority Services NHS Trust, Lancaster. He gained the DPM Eng in 1960, was elected MRCPsych in 1971 and proceeded FRCPsych in 1986.

John's major interest was in the treatment of alcoholism and drug abuse and he opened Harvey House, currently relocated in the community in Lancaster, and was a founder trustee and committee member of Inward House, a residential therapeutic community for the treatment of drug and solvent misusers.

John’s interests were widespread. He loved sport, particularly soccer: he was a lifetime Arsenal supporter and succeeded at one time to be given a trial for Chelsea! He enjoyed reading poetry and listening to music, particularly traditional jazz.

He leaves behind him his second wife, Brenda, whom he married in 1980.

Mohammed Abdul Halim