



obituaries

Jurek Lister (Known as Jeremy Lister)

Formerly Consultant
Psychiatrist, West
Glamorgan Health
Authority, Swansea

Jeremy Lister was born in 1919 in Poznan, western Poland, where his father was a wine importer. The ninth of ten children, he had decided on a medical career early in life. His undergraduate medical studies at Warsaw University were interrupted by the Second World War, when he was interned by the Russian authorities.

During his detention in the Ukraine and Siberia, he underwent the most arduous experiences. On being finally released, he had lost half his body weight, but had already decided to join the Polish Army. In his fascinating book, *Poles Apart*, published in 1997, he described the long and perilous journey that brought him to Britain. This involved travelling incessantly over vast distances under the most appalling and gruesome conditions.

After joining up with the Polish forces, he was parachuted into Greece, where he was to liaise with the partisans. He was later awarded the King's Medal for Courage in the Cause of Freedom.

Having got to Italy, he was able to re-start his medical studies at Bologna University. He was demobilised in Britain, only to learn that the Polish School of Medicine at Edinburgh had been closed. Seemingly undaunted, for a period, he was able to attend the Paderewski Hospital, which was considered to be a medical school. He was eventually accepted as a student at the Welsh National School of Medicine, Cardiff and qualified, MRCS, LRCP in 1951. From having lived in several different countries, he had become a gifted linguist. On one occasion, on a professorial ward round, to the despair of the medical staff, four patients who each were only able to speak their native language, namely Greek, Italian, Polish and Russian, had been admitted. To the great surprise and relief of his seniors, he was able to serve as a translator in the case of all four.

Before specialising in psychological medicine, he held various posts at the Swansea General Hospital, Morriston Hospital and Neath General Hospital, where he met his wife Barbara, who worked there as a radiographer. In 1955,



he took up psychiatry, became a consultant at Cfn Coed Hospital, Swansea in 1963, and was made a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1983. As a past-chairman of the West Glamorgan Division of Psychiatry, the Welsh Psychiatric Society and of the West Glamorgan Division of the BMA, Dr Lister's contribution to the work of the National Health Service locally was considerable.

He retired from his NHS post in 1984, but continued with his clinical work for many years afterwards. He will be sadly missed by a wide circle of friends. A devoted family man, who was renowned for his kindness to others, he is survived by his widow, Barbara, and their three children.

Tom Davies

Irene Veronica Josephine Aherne

Formerly Consultant
Psychiatrist,
Cork Regional Hospital

Irene Aherne was a delightful person, vital, determined, serious, humorous, sensible and original.

On qualifying, she joined the TB Services, then she switched to Psychiatry. After gaining her qualifications, she was appointed to a junior post, and then promoted to consultant where she took a keen interest in rehabilitation, pioneering group therapy in the intensive care or secure wards of Our Lady's Hospital, Cork, now closed.

Her care for patients and their welfare was exceptional. I recall her climbing up a drain pipe that was loosely attached, with a fall of over 20 feet, to gain access to the flat of an elderly lady who was a cause of great concern to many.

Irene was very simple, open and direct. During the course of her training I suggested she should give expert witness in Court. Her first case was in the Cork Circuit Court and the Judge at the time was very conservative and strict. He had announced from the bench on several occasions that he much preferred the evidence of priests and probation officers to that of psychologists and psychiatrists. He had a tendency to ask a series of almost stereotyped questions if one made reference to a deprived or traumatic childhood, examples being, what do you mean he suffered in childhood, did he say his prayers, did he make his First Communion, did he make his Confirmation, and so on, something some experts found hard to cope with. I helped her prepare for this the night before, shooting such questions at her in rapid succession.

The next day, in the course of her evidence, his Lordship did the same, whereupon Irene collapsed with laughter. The Judge said, in very surprised fashion, 'Doctor you seem to find my questions very funny'. She looked him in the eye, smiled, and said last night my tutor Doctor D helped me prepare the presentation of my evidence, including your questions, and you have asked the same questions in the same sequence and tone of voice as he did, and she looked down the court room at me, then back at his Lordship, and laughed again.

His Lordship smiled, said, I do like a well prepared witness, and took her recommendations very seriously.

Unfortunately, she developed progressive impairment of her hearing, and despite all sorts of hearing aids and amplifiers, she had to take early retirement, spending her time with her sister, until her sister died less than a year before her.

She would appear from time to time seeking advice or help for somebody needing it, and remaining cheerful and active until her death, being seen on the roof of her house effecting an emergency repair only three weeks before her sudden and unexpected death.

A lovely lady. We offer sympathy to her brother, nieces and nephews, with whom we share her loss.

David Dunne