

role and was a joy to listen to. The organ set the scene with an arrangement of Nimrod, the most soul-searching of Elgar's Enigma Variations, and closed the proceedings with J. S. Bach's Fugue in F major: and there was such sweet singing in the small, but highly professional choir.

The clergy made their contributions with dignity and without sentimentality. Simon Rowell, Natalie's god-son, read the Lesson (Revelation 21 vv 1–4).

The President, Ken Rawnsley, looking anguished, gave the address. He spoke eloquently, but with deep feeling of Natalie's personal attributes and of her twenty-five years' dedicated service, first to the RMPA and then to the College.

He spoke too of the anger he felt that her life had been cut off so abruptly when she still had so much to give and so much to enjoy.

The buffet luncheon at the College following the Service was consonant with the Service itself—highly professional, well-mannered and well ordered. Above all, it was a family affair: an opportunity to renew old friendships in a setting of communal grief.

It is to be hoped that Natalie, wherever she may be located on the Parnassian slopes, will appreciate, that in our attempt to show our affection and gratitude, we did our best.

HRR

Obituary

ANGUS MACNIVEN, retired, formerly Physician Superintendent, Gartnavel Royal Hospital, Glasgow, Scotland

Dr MacNiven died early this year in his native Isle of Mull at the age of 83.

He was a man of many achievements, of self-effacing modesty and unforgettable individuality. He graduated at Glasgow University in 1923. He had been Deputy Physician Superintendent of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and had gained experience with Adolph Meyer in Baltimore before being appointed Physician Superintendent of Gartnavel Royal Hospital, Consultant Psychiatrist to the Western Infirmary and Lecturer in Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow in 1932. These posts he graced for 33 years.

He was Secretary and later Chairman of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association in Scotland before becoming President of the whole Association from 1959–60. He was a Foundation and Honorary Fellow of the College.

Clinically his alert perspicacity and sage like wisdom were matched only by his ever present kindness. As a teacher his shrewd and firm, but quietly persistent question, 'Tell me how it works and helps the patient because I don't really understand', inevitably led the most seemingly self-assured apprentice into unexpectedly deep and uncharted water. The experience was as educative as it was memorable.

His integrity was beyond question. He was an eminent and respected witness in many notable murder trials. This respect was in no way diminished because he had the courage and honesty to say, when apt, 'I don't know'. Among his writings, a chapter on 'Psychoses and criminal responsibility' remains a thought-provoking and erudite contribution to a Cambridge University publication of the 1940s. Many of those whom he had guided along the difficult quest of attaining competence and insight in the art and science of psychiatry travelled from afar to honour him at his retiral dinner. He was loyal to his Hebridean origins, but

in no way insular. He preferred to say he had retired to an island in North Britain.

MMW

In 1946 a number of ex-Service doctors, having had to do with stress-laden men, and seeking to further their psychiatric training and experience, were accepted on the medical staff at Gartnavel, and sat at the feet of Dr MacNiven.

Angus—and in the minds and hearts of all who knew him he was never other than 'Angus'—welcomed us in his delightful, sometimes slightly surprised or bemused way ('Is that so, now, Doctor?'), and never made us feel what we were: children in a world of which he was patriarch. He was a brilliant clinician, a superb teacher by example, and a gentle but positive leader: 'Is no one *talking* to this lady?', never 'Let us have a blood rhubarb tomorrow'. On occasion, to the consternation of the duty doctor, he would travel far afield to see a patient, and telephone back at two in the morning, from Oban, to say he was bringing in a poor depressed lady, and would we have a bed ready—somewhere, even in the doctors' common room.

When we left his care (and I use the word advisedly) he did not lose interest in us, but, *experto crede*, continued to be aware of our doings, and was ready, unprompted, to give refreshing comfort and support when we met problems in the discharge of the practice of psychiatry as he had taught it to us.

When he retired it was a great joy for many of us, from all over the country, to come together to 'dine him out', present him with a sealskin waistcoat, and listen to one of his inimitable speeches.

Many, many patients whom he never knew, have reason to be grateful to the humane, patient-orientated professional philosophy which Angus instilled into his disciples. Perhaps his influence will never die.

PMcG