

Book Reviews

Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 33 (2016).
doi:10.1017/ipm.2015.40

Trinity's Psychiatrists – From Serenity of the Soul to Neuroscience.
Edited by Marcus Webb (141 pp.; ISBN: 97818771408614).
Trinity College Dublin: Dublin, 2011.

This book by Professor Marcus Webb was published by Trinity College Dublin (TCD) as part of their celebration of the tercentenary of their medical school.

It is a well researched and easy to access account of those psychiatrists associated with TCD either through medical qualification, psychiatric training or appointment.

The author has, for the reader's convenience, parcelled the psychiatrists into chapters, initially according to chronological narrative and latterly according to role. In all, there are in the order of 30 psychiatrists substantially chronicled with many more mentioned briefly.

By necessity, the author has also included an excellent essay on Swift and St Patrick's Hospital (Chapter 2). It is a striking account of Swift's illnesses and personality that references Maurice Craig, Lord Brain, William Wilde and others. With similar adroitness, Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with the Quaker-led reform of asylum care and asylum development in Ireland in the early 19th century. I was particularly happy to see John Cheyne's contributions to phenomenology being acknowledged over a number of pages.

As would be expected, the text draws heavily on obituaries in the medical press and each doctor's own published work. Some familiar names such as Moore and Norman are of course covered and covered well. Non-TCD graduates may be less familiar with such names as Leeper and Drury, but these were well-known figures in the Ireland of their time. National University of Ireland graduates (John Dunne and Anthony Clare) also appear when they have taken appointments in TCD. In these and later chapters Professor Webb's respect and admiration for deceased or retired colleagues is clear.

In any project such as this, there will always be potential for dispute over who should and shouldn't be included. The author has tried to include all those who have made contributions and acknowledges in his preface that omissions may have occurred. He also notes that he has spared those whose careers were still in progress as of 2011. The major omission that struck me was Noël Browne, a 1942 TCD graduate who was appointed as Minister for Health in the 1948–1951 inter-party government. Browne subsequently became

a career psychiatrist and managed to combine an appointment as an EHB consultant with a lengthy Dáil career.

The references are excellent and occur as numbered notes at the end of each chapter. This allows the author to occasionally expand on a point or to provide a brief pen-picture on an author. Readability has been improved by avoiding use of the contraction 'Dr' before each person's name. The book is well edited and certainly not error-strewn. Indexing is first rate. I spotted one error where, in the piece about Dan Rambaut, the score for Ireland's first rugby win over England (1887) is given as 6–0 when in fact it was 2–0. At the time, tries did not count (except in drawn matches) and merely provide an opportunity to kick at goal. A successful kick counted as one.

Professor Webb's book will be a valuable addition to anyone interested in the development of the discipline of psychiatry in Ireland and rests easily amongst the growing library of works on the history of psychiatry here.

AIDAN COLLINS
St Vincents Hospital, Fairview, Dublin, Ireland
(Email: aidangcollins@hotmail.com)

First published online 16 October 2015

Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 33 (2016).
doi:10.1017/ipm.2015.13

The Social Determinants of Mental Health. Edited by Michael T. Compton and Ruth S. Shim (270 pp.; ISBN: 978-1-58562-477-5). American Psychiatric Publishing, Washington, DC and London, England, 2015.

Despite growing knowledge about the biological underpinnings of many mental disorders, it remains all too apparent that social, economic and political factors have considerable relevance to clinical features, treatment and outcomes in many cases. Poor people have at earlier ages presentation and longer durations of untreated illness. The mentally ill are over-represented in homeless and prison populations, not least because they are more likely to be taken into custody following an offence, compared with those without mental disorder.

This is a vicious cycle: mental disorder increases likelihood of arrest; imprisonment increases disability and stigma, further impeding recovery. The adverse effects of these social, economic and societal factors, along with the stigma of mental disorder, impair access to social and psychiatric services, and amplify the effects of mental disorder in the lives of sufferers. As a