

Obituary

IAN GEORGE WALKER PICKERING, retired, Locum Consultant, St Ebba's Hospital, Hook Road, Epsom, Surrey.

Dr Pickering, a former Director of Prison Medical Services and a Foundation Fellow of the College, died on 18 January 1984 at the age of 68.

Ian George Walker Pickering was a Yorkshireman. He was born in Bradford, educated at Bradford Grammar School before going a few miles down the road to Leeds University to read medicine. He qualified MB, ChB in 1939 and was able to do one surgical house job at St James Hospital, Leeds, before volunteering for the Royal Navy. He had a distinguished war record, achieving the rank of Surgeon Lieutenant Commander and taking part in the landings at Anzio and Normandy. He was at a later date awarded the Volunteer Reserve Decoration.

After demobilization he returned to Leeds where he joined the Medical Professorial Unit. He gained the MD in 1947. He was elected MRCP London in 1966 and proceeded to the Fellowship in 1972. In 1974 he was elected FFCM.

It was in the Prison Medical Service, however, that he was to make his real career and reputation. He joined that service in 1946, again in Leeds, and rose rapidly through the ranks until, in 1963, he succeeded Dr Harvey Snell as director, an appointment he held with distinction until his retirement at the age of 60 in 1976. During his tenure of office he was appointed a full member of the Prison Board, a tribute indeed to the esteem in which he was held by the prison authorities.

After his retirement he joined the staff of Rampton Special Hospital as a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist where his previous forensic experience proved invaluable.

During his career he was closely identified with a number of learned societies. He had been, for example, President of the British Academy of Forensic Sciences and Vice-President of the British Association of Social Psychiatry, and the Society for the Study of Addiction.

Ian Pickering was a handsome man with a schoolboy's shining morning face. Before his first coronary some few years ago he had an almost Dickensian figure: he was rotund and across his ample middle he sported a gold watch-chain. He was an excellent raconteur: he told his stories with more than a vestige of his native Yorkshire accent. But what was so idiosyncratic was his infectious belly-laugh, echoes of which will ring round the Halls of Fame for all time.

ERIC DAVID WITTKOWER, Professor and Consultant Psychiatrist, Royal Victoria Hospital, Section for Trans-cultural Research, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Eric Wittkower died in Montreal on 6 January 1983. He

was born in Germany, but his father, with commendable foresight, had him registered at birth as a British subject. He studied medicine at the University of Berlin and was publishing on psychosomatic medicine when he was 28 years old, having already become head of the Asthma Clinic at Charité Hospital, Berlin. In 1931 he was Privat-Dozent in Psychosomatic Medicine at the University. With the ascendancy of the Nazis, he and his wife Claire moved to Switzerland, and then in September 1933 to England where he was given a Research Fellowship at the Central Pathological Laboratory of the Maudsley Hospital. Two years later he moved to the Tavistock Clinic as a Research Fellow in Psychosomatic Medicine. His interests in this sub-specialty were very wide, and it is recognized that his comprehensive paper which appeared in the *Journal of Mental Science* in 1935 was a major stimulus to the psychosomatic movement in the United States, leading to the founding of the journal, *Psychosomatic Medicine* and later to the American Psychosomatic Society.

He joined the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1940 and did valuable work in officer selection and in psychosomatic problems. On demobilization, he had a Fellowship at St Bartholomew's Hospital in the Department of Dermatology and was later made a consultant to the Tavistock Clinic and a lecturer at the Maudsley. He completed his psycho-analytical training at the London Institute in 1950.

It is not surprising that with all these credentials he was invited to join the Psychiatric Department at McGill University which, under Dr Ewen Cameron, had developed an international reputation. Publications of the highest quality flowed from his pen and honours descended on him from all over the world.

In 1956 he founded the Section for Transcultural Psychiatric Studies at McGill and directed it until he officially retired in 1969. He did not retire, and though in later years he was crippled following spinal surgery, he got around to lecture at home and abroad with the help of his wife and a wheelchair. He was also still active in the Medical School at McGill.

I recall a visit he made to Ottawa to lecture on 'Cultural Aspects of Psychiatry' when he pointed out the psychological problems of immigrants who had to adjust to strange cultures. I was asked to propose a vote of thanks and I had to point out that while he stressed these negative aspects of acculturation, his own life history was a splendid example of the positive aspects. He had come as a refugee to England and made his mark quickly. He had joined the army and again distinguished himself. He had moved to Canada and enhanced his reputation in Psychosomatic Medicine and then switched to Transcultural Psychiatry in which he again achieved an international reputation. Even after his official

retirement he continued to work harder than ever and further enhanced his reputation. After the lecture he told me he liked my positive attitude to cultural stress and said it had never occurred to him to see his own lifestyle as a possible model.

He was truly one of psychiatry's greats. A gifted researcher and teacher, an innovator and disciplined scientist, he fully justified those who had arranged for his reception in England and thus saved for psychiatry one whose contributions few can match.

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The deaths of the following were also reported:

BERTRAM BLAKE, Medical Superintendent, Mental Health Service, St Dymphna's Hospital, Carlow, Eire.

LONGIN DOLNY, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Mid-Wales Hospital, Talgarth, Powys, Wales.

JOHN MACKAY, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Kingston General Hospital, Hull.

JANE HENDERSON THOMPSON, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Newcastle and District Counselling Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne.

News Items

Dr Thomas Bewley

It was announced at the special meeting of Council on 13 April that the new President of the College will be Thomas H. Bewley, Consultant Psychiatrist at St Thomas' Hospital, London SE1.

Dr G. B. Simon

Dr G. B. Simon, Director of the British Institute of Mental Handicap, and until recently, Director of the National Development Team, has been appointed Professor of Mental Handicap at the University of Birmingham—the second such chair in the UK.

Short Paper Session

It is planned to hold a session of short papers of original research findings at the Autumn Quarterly Meeting of the College to be held in London on 15 and 16 November 1984. The Programmes and Meetings Committee has requested that submissions for this should be sent in on abstract forms—these forms are available from Miss D. Hart at the College. Completed abstract forms are to be returned by 30 July 1984.

Kenneth Reeves Essay Prize

The Society for Psychosomatic Research awards a prize of £100 for an essay of relevance to psychosomatics from anyone working in the field. The winning essay will be presented at an ordinary meeting of the Royal Society of Medicine. Details and application forms: The Honorary Secretary, Dr Joan Gomez, The Society for Psychosomatic Research, Westminster Hospital, Department of Psychiatry, Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2AP.

Audio-Visual Aids to Teaching

Psychological Defence Mechanisms

This videotape is an introductory one and is recommended for use in conjunction with discussion on the topic. It is aimed primarily at students of medicine and other disciplines in the mental health field and should also be of inter-

est to trainee psychiatrists. It lasts 22 minutes and examines defence mechanisms through a series of clinical vignettes.

The tape is available on U-matic and VHS formats, priced at £50 and £40 respectively, plus £3 package and posting (cheques should be made payable to 'St George's Hospital Medical School'). Further information: Dr Andrew Powell, Department of Psychotherapy, Clare House, St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road, London SW17 0QT.

Electroconvulsive Therapy—Therapy and Practice

This videotape focuses on the administration of ECT and may be used in conjunction with various written guidelines including the College's 'Wall Chart'. It will be particularly useful for trainees entering psychiatry and should be used in a tutorial situation as a basis for discussion.

The tape lasts 22 minutes and is available on U-matic (£65), VHS (£60) and Betamax (£60) formats. Cheques should be made payable to the 'Department of Mental Health, Queens University, Belfast'. Further information: Dr Roy McClelland, Department of Mental Health, Queens University, Belfast BT9 7BL.

An Introduction to the Mental Health Act 1983

This tape/slide programme (62 slides and 45-minute commentary) is a useful resource for those who need to find their way through mental health law for the first time and for those practitioners who must relate to the changes since the 1959 Act. It is of special value in the training of Approved Social Workers. This tape/slide set is available for purchase (£25 including p&p) or hire (£7 per month). Further information: Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, 21a Kingsland High Street, London E8 2JS.

Out-patients at the local fire brigade?

One of our readers in Derby has sent us a letter he received from his local fire brigade. The letterhead states: 'P Reid, B.A., D.P.A., D.P.M., A.M.I.P.M., F.I. FireE., County Fire Officer'. Surely this is carrying community psychiatry too far!