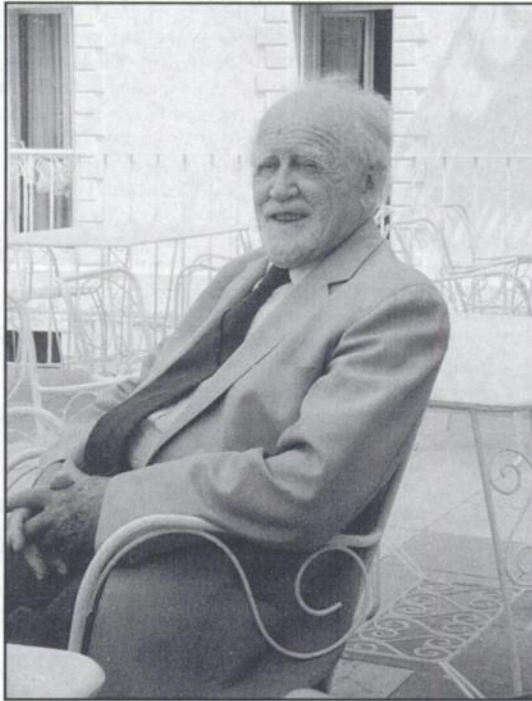

Obituaries



John Gibson, formerly Physician Superintendent of Lawrence's Hospital, Surrey

John Gibson died peacefully at Worcester Royal Infirmary on 19 September, 1998 aged 90. He had lived for many years with his youngest son and family in Worcestershire, but spent the last three years alone in Malvern, this his final act of independence.

The son of a much loved and admired Medical Officer of Health for Wakefield, Thomas Gibson (Edinburgh University 1885–1889), he attended Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School and Leeds University, qualifying for the MB ChB in 1933. He later admitted that he would rather have studied English or languages, but was too frightened of his father to study anything other than medicine!

After his housemanship in Brighton he went into general practice at Milborne Port in Dorset. He drove through the countryside in a very unreliable Bullnose Morris, which he had bought for £10 in Leeds. He was, occasionally, called out to assist the vet on a difficult case, but his most dangerous mission was judging the baby show

at the village fete. He disliked the formality and social demands of a country doctor, especially of having to dress for dinner each night with the senior partner – whose chauffeur also acted as butler and anaesthetist as and when required.

It was, we are told, the lack of a reliable car and of funds which took him from general practice and back into hospital work. He moved in 1936 to the Kent County Lunatic Hospital at Canterbury, while also studying at the Maudsley Hospital for his DPM; which he gained in 1938. In the same year he was appointed Senior Assistant Medical Officer at St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton, under Dr Thomas Tennant, in charge of the admissions section at Wantage House.

In 1939 he was very upset when the army rejected him. Was it patriotic duty, fear, romanticism or escape? So he remained at St Andrew's where he was much admired. However, between 1946 and 1948, he was finally accepted into the RAMC; first spending an unhappy time at Barlinnie dealing with the 'Irish question' and later, a much happier time, running a joint services psychiatric hospital in the Suez Canal Zone. Always a keen swimmer, he received his 'war wound' on his big toe, from a hostile crab in Port Said harbour.

In 1950 Dr Gibson moved to Barnwood House Hospital in Gloucester for five years and then to St Lawrence's Hospital, Caterham, where he later succeeded Dr Doreen Firmin as Physician Superintendent. While at St Lawrence's he enjoyed the stimulation of a large and vibrant hospital. He finished his long-term research into status epilepticus and was awarded his MD at Leeds in 1959. He spent a considerable amount of his time creatively developing industrial units, designing a new school, softening the negative aspects of a large institution, encouraging research, placing children in female wards and finally, to the horror of grey suits at the Ministry of Health, introduction of selected, mixed 'family' wards. He strove, for many years, to raise the treatment and care of patients with severe disabilities on a long-term basis within the limited funds available. He also was very interested in the long-term care and progress of adults with significant accidental brain damage whom he sometimes found languishing in general hospitals and nursing homes. Even the first BBC *Songs of Praise* hospital broadcast came from St Lawrence's hospital chapel. In 1972 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. After his retirement from St

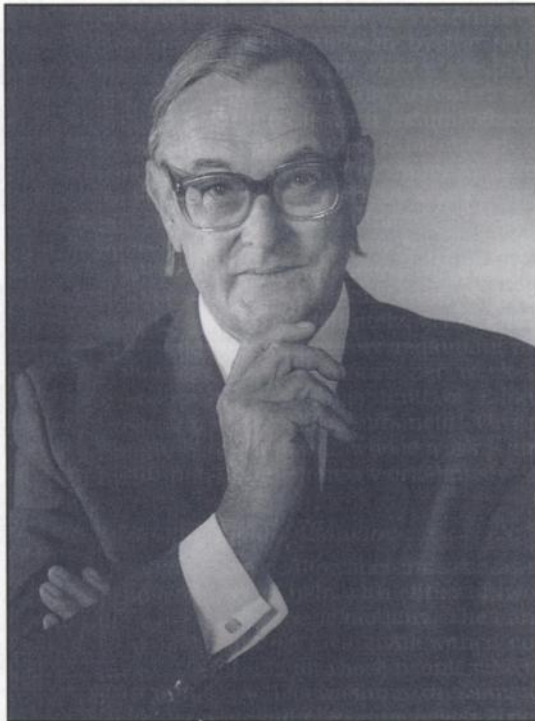
Lawrence's he took a locum post for five years at the Royal Earlswood Hospital, Surrey.

While at Caterham John Gibson started writing, first a short history of the hospital and then medical textbooks. He found this greatly satisfying and enjoyed the research and developing the lucid presentation of a variety of medical and health related matters. His only attempt at a crime novel was rejected, but more than 25 textbooks were published, revised and translated into many languages. From writing he moved into specialist indexing of scientific and medical textbooks, starting from an impassioned request from a frantic publisher, in need of an index. He loved this complex work. He was a committee member of the Society of Indexers and won the Society of Librarians' Wheatley Medal.

If not involved in two, or even three, indexes at a time, sometimes from overseas sources, he enjoyed walking in the countryside, brushing up his French, German, Italian and Serbo-Croat, reading a wide range of fiction from Proust to Raymond Chandler and, despite increasing deafness, listening to grand opera. When able, he enjoyed travel, especially to the former Yugoslavia and after that, the support of former nationals in many parts of the world.

John Gibson married twice. First to Sybil Hooper, by whom he had three sons and second to Jennifer Jarvis.

R. O. GIBSON



Philip Henry Connell, CBE, formerly Director of Drug Dependence Clinical Research and Treatment and Maudsley and Bethlem Hospital, London

Philip Connell, who died on 26 July 1998 aged 77 years, was a big man, not only in stature, but also in his impact on the fields in which he

operated. A meeting with Philip Connell always left an impression.

Philip Connell's successful career in medicine did not begin until his twenties when a legacy enabled him to commence his medical studies. After qualifying from St Bartholomew's Hospital in London, he trained in psychiatry at the Maudsley during the 1950s and was then appointed as a new consultant psychiatrist in Newcastle, charged with developing a new child and adolescent psychiatric service – an interest which he maintained throughout his life. Six years later, having established a thriving unit, he was appointed as a consultant psychiatrist at the Maudsley and Bethlem Royal Hospital in London, where he continued to work until his retirement in 1986. He became especially interested in the new growing problem of drug misuse among adolescents. Drug misuse among the young in the early and mid-1960s particularly involved misuse of amphetamines – an issue which had previously intrigued Connell and had been the subject of his MD thesis several years earlier. From this position he conceived, argued for, developed and then led the new combined clinical and research unit – the Drug Dependence Clinical Research and Treatment Unit – which was to be the base at the Maudsley from which he operated for the next 20 years. Treatment within this unit addressed the problems of a wide range of young people with addiction problems, not only the stereotypical addict injecting heroin, but also the pill-popping oral amphetamine misuser.

While his work in drug dependence came to be the major part of his contribution through most of his working life, he maintained an interest and clinical presence in child psychiatry throughout his professional career. He was the first chairman