

---

# Obituaries

---

**Isaac Atkin**, formerly Physician Superintendent and Consultant Psychiatrist, Park Prewett Hospital, Basingstoke, Hampshire

Isaac Atkin, one of the Golden Oldies of British psychiatry, died on 11 November 1993 in his 94th year. He was a leading light in the old RMPA and from 1956–58 was the chairman of the South Western Division. He will be best remembered, however, for his long and distinguished association with Park Prewett Hospital. In 1937 he was appointed Deputy Superintendent but in 1939, at the outbreak of war, he was transferred to Knowle to return to Park Prewett, which had served as an ENS hospital from 1939–45, as Superintendent in 1946. He then set about the modernisation of the hospital. It was he, for example, who introduced concerts given by the Council for Music in Hospitals, and persuaded the Committee to subscribe to the BRCS picture library scheme which enabled the hospital to borrow up to 50 pictures and to hire speakers to give talks on painting. He was responsible, too, for the introduction of modern methods of treatment of psychiatric illness to a point where Park Prewett was recognised as being in the forefront of modern psychiatric hospitals.\*

Isaac Atkin was born in Vitebsk, Russia, on 19 July 1900, into a Jewish family who emigrated to England in 1908. He was accompanied by a brother, Joseph, a year older, who also qualified as a doctor and practised as a GP until his death in 1962.

Atkin studied medicine at St Bartholomew's and qualified MB BS (Lond) in 1924, proceeding to the MD in 1927. He decided to specialise in psychiatry early on and gained the DPM in 1927. He was elected to the Foundation Fellowship of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1971. In addition to his appointment at Park Prewett, he was Consultant Psychiatrist to the Royal Hants County Hospital and Psychotherapist to HM Prison, Winchester. Atkin had a number of publications to his credit including a book, *Aspects of Psychotherapy*, published in 1962. He was a man of great culture, his first love being the ballet about which he amassed a valuable library.

He remained a bachelor until 1980 when he married the widow of a colleague, Dr France. She

predeceased him in 1984. He is survived by two sisters, Minnie and Esther.

**Hugh Brechin Craigie**, CBE, formerly Principal Medical Officer for Mental Health Services in the Scottish Home and Health Department

Hugh Craigie died aged 85 at his home in North Berwick on 20 November 1993. He qualified MB, ChB at Manchester University in 1931, obtained the DPM and became a member of the RMPA in 1937. His work in the 1930s was mainly at Manchester Royal Infirmary, the County Mental Hospital at Lancaster and Whittingham Hospital, until, in 1939, he volunteered for the RAMC. His service in the War led to his article, 'Two Years of Military Psychiatry in the Middle East', which was published by the BMJ in 1944. By then he had become the Lt Colonel in charge of the military psychiatric unit at Bellsdyke Hospital. In 1947 he was appointed Senior Medical Commissioner to the General Board of Control for Scotland. He was elected Chairman of the Scottish Division of the RMPA for 1954–55, FRCPE in 1958, and a Foundation Fellow of the College in 1971. He was a Corresponding Member of the American Psychiatric Association.

Hugh was appointed Principal Medical Officer in the Scottish Home and Health Department in 1960, following the dissolution of the General Board of Control by the Mental Health (Scotland) Act of that year. He remained in that post until his retirement at age 62 at the end of 1970. His responsibilities included that of Psychiatric Adviser to the Secretary of State for Scotland on patients detained under restriction orders. He would each year make some 250 psychiatric examinations and reports on these patients, and drive thousands of miles between Edinburgh and the 30 psychiatric hospitals in which they were detained. He developed cordial relationships with the consultants and nurses who were treating the patients. He was a member of the Management Committee and the Medical Sub-Committee of the State Hospital at Carstairs. He was the Department's Assessor on the sub-committees of the Standing Medical Advisory Committee which produced influential reports on The Elderly with Mental Disorder; Alcoholics – Health Services for Their Treatment and Rehabilitation; and Forensic Psychiatry. Recognition came to him by the award of the CBE in 1963, and the naming of the Craigie Education Centre at Carstairs and Craigie House in Woodilee Hospital.

---

\*For details of Atkin's contribution to the development of Park Prewett, readers are referred to *Park Prewett Hospital, The History 1898–1984*, by Dilys Smith, published by Basingstoke and North Hampshire Health Authority.

Hugh's first wife Lillia died in 1958. They had three sons. The eldest is in banking in Scotland, the youngest is a hotel manager, and the middle one became Professor of Religious Studies in Calgary but eight years ago died from injuries sustained in a road traffic accident. In 1962 Hugh married Eileen who looked after him in his final illness.

RAYMOND A.W. RATCLIFF

**Eleanor Mildred Creak**, formerly Physician in Psychological Medicine, Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, London.

With the death recently of E. Mildred Creak, at the age of 94, child psychiatry has lost one of its earliest great champions and a great character. She knew from an early age that she wanted to be a doctor and work with children. She entered the London School of Medicine for Women but after a year she transferred to University College Hospital and qualified MBBS London from there in 1923. She may by then already have developed an interest in psychiatry which she was better able to satisfy at UCH where she developed a great admiration for two psychiatrists in whose out-patient clinics medical students were welcome. These two were Bernard Hart, and the other was A.F. Tredgold who was interested in mental deficiency.

In early 1920s it was hard for women to get good hospital training appointments. Mildred had become a Quaker during her medical school days and this may well have helped to get her a post at The Retreat in York where she stayed for four years. She then accepted a job at the Maudsley Hospital which, although it meant working for the first year with adults, enabled her to transfer to the Children's Department and within another year she became Assistant Director of that department. In 1932 she was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship for postgraduate training in America where she spent nine months of her time at the Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic, working closely with Frederick Allen and his child guidance team who were also in close communication with the local paediatricians. Returning to the Maudsley, Dr Creak played a large part in establishing a separate department where children could be seen as in-patients as well as out-patients. The new department, in a new building, opened in 1939 but had to close within a month when patients were evacuated to North and South London to lessen the risk of bombing.

During World War II Mildred joined the RAMC and rose to the rank of Major. Again it was hard for a woman to find work in the post-war period. Mildred was asked to return to the Maudsley but she opted against this with courageous honesty, saying "it wasn't the place for me; too scientific,

too abstract, too learned, too statistical." She had done a voluntary placement at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children while previously working at the Maudsley and was very eager to return there and for the following two years worked there on a twice weekly voluntary basis in out-patients, as well as at various other tasks there, most of them also on a voluntary basis. Two of the paediatric physicians at Great Ormond Street were keen to see a psychiatric department started and she was invited to be consultant to a twice-weekly out-patient clinic which was at first voluntary and in 1946 Mildred was appointed to the staff and from then until her retirement in 1963 this was where her main work was carried out. Indeed, she established the Department of Psychological Medicine at Great Ormond Street and won both the respect and affection of all who worked with her, whether as paediatric colleagues or members of the multidisciplinary team which she developed and maintained in her own department on the pattern of the best of American child psychiatry which had so impressed her.

Anna Freud's talks to the staff of the Maudsley aroused Mildred's interest and she went into personal analysis herself for three years before the War. She resumed work with the same analyst soon after her return but she died very suddenly three weeks after the resumption of this long interrupted analysis. She went back into analysis, consciously choosing a Kleinian analyst on this occasion. She was also personally very warm-hearted, generous and concerned as a woman with innumerable friends. Her generosity and concern extended to all in her department and their children, many of whom remember her with affectionate interest. I think she was in some ways particularly helpful to me, a young woman trainee child psychiatrist also being as determinedly psycho-analytically trained as she had not been. She was a very popular Head of Department and for that reason we all tried to please her as well as because if she ever was provoked to what she judged to be unreasonable anger she would then suffer torments of conscience from which we all wanted to save her.

Probably another point in my favour with Mildred as a part-time registrar in her department was that I was simultaneously working part-time as a senior registrar to Donald Winnicott at his department in Paddington Green. Mildred was always generous in her praise of colleagues whose work she admired, particularly in the field of child psychiatry and analysis though she was also able to be critical without disparaging. Mildred was quite clear that Winnicott was a genius, "he was a man out of this world and his gift of insight and his ability to express it was ahead of everyone else." Having worked for them both simultaneously I had the