

# Obituary

**PERCY LAVERN BACKUS, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London.**

Percy Lavern Backus died peacefully at home on 3 August 1983. He was born on 26 October 1892 in Ontario, a son of the manse, of Yorkshire and Scottish descent. His forefathers went to Canada in pre-Confederation days.

He went to the University of Alberta and McGill University where he graduated MD, CM in 1919, being the Prizeman of his final year.

He had planned a career in surgery, and came to England in 1930 to study for the FRCS; but with a young family the industrial depression compelled him to turn to general practice. Here his interest in and concern for his patients led in 1937 to training in psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital and the Tavistock Clinic. He took the DPM in 1939. Surgery's loss was psychiatry's gain.

At the onset of World War II he joined the RAMC as a specialist psychiatrist and went to France, being evacuated in May, 1940 in the retreat to the beaches. He returned to France as a Lieutenant Colonel with the psychiatric hospital which went there after D-day.

On release from the army he resumed consultant practice in Harley Street and for a short time at the Tavistock Clinic. In 1946 he was invited by Dr G. W. B. James to join him at St Mary's Hospital in the grade of consultant, where he remained until the age of retirement. Thereafter he continued for many years in private practice. He was always a very good doctor. His psychiatric work was wideranging, but his main interest was in psychotherapy, where he was unusually effective.

Percy Backus had many interests apart from medicine. For example, he was President of the Canadian University Club in the UK and President in Britain of the Graduates Society of McGill, and a governor of London House for Overseas Graduates. He was a Rotarian, a Freemason and Master of Canada Lodge.

But it is as a practising Christian that he will be most widely remembered. He held many Offices in the Methodist Church, and his work was rewarded in 1967 when he became Vice-President of the Methodist Conference, the highest honour that can be bestowed upon a methodist layman. This involved much overseas travel. He was truly a good man.

His first wife died in 1952. Their two sons are doctors in Canada. His second wife survives him. Both marriages were supremely happy.

JDWP

**MARY JENNY LAKE ELLIS, Senior Medical Officer, HM Borstal Institution, Bedford Road, Feltham, Middlesex.**

Dr Mary Ellis (née Taylor) died on 19 April 1983, aged 62.

Mary, as she was simply and affectionately called by a host of friends and colleagues, read medicine at the Royal Free Hospital and qualified MRCS, LRCP in 1944 and graduated MB, BS (London) in 1946.

Having decided on a career in psychiatry, she held appointments at Powick Hospital, Worcester and at Horton Hospital, Epsom. She gained the DPM (England) in 1965, was elected to the foundation membership of the College in 1971 and proceeded to the fellowship in 1977.

Mary opted for the Prison Medical Service almost 20 years ago, and was posted to HM Borstal, Feltham, Middlesex, where she remained for the duration of her service, attaining the rank of Senior Medical Officer. Her appointment to Feltham was particularly felicitous; her personality, combining as it did firmness and kindness, made her the ideal person to deal with the manifold problems which abound in the care of adolescent delinquents. Her unique and long experience, both as clinician and administrator, stood her in good stead when she was called upon to advise on the plans for the new Feltham.

For two periods, from 1971–75 and from 1978–82, Mary edited the *Prison Medical Journal*, an excellent journal which, because of restrictions on its circulation imposed by the Home Office, is far too little known. Mary's request for a paper for her journal, no matter from whom, carried with it something of the imperative of a royal command. There must have been few who had the temerity to refuse.

**FREDERICK PATERSON HALDANE, retired, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, West Middlesex Hospital, Isleworth.**

Ricky Haldane, for many years Consultant Psychiatrist at the West Middlesex Hospital, died on 15 September 1983 at the age of 71.

He qualified MB, ChB in 1936 at the University of Glasgow, having previously been educated at Edinburgh Academy. He passed his DPM (Eng) in 1939 and was elected Foundation Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1971. He had taken a keen interest in the foundation of the College.

Professionally he started his psychiatry as Assistant Physician under Dr R. Ström-Olsen at Runwell Hospital in Essex in 1937, and in 1945 was appointed Deputy Physician Superintendent of Glasgow Royal Mental Hospital, Gartnavel. After a year he joined the army and saw much overseas service as Specialist Psychiatrist, becoming a temporary Lieutenant Colonel as Officer commanding a Military Psychiatric Hospital and adviser in psychiatry to GHQ Central Mediterranean Forces. On returning to civilian life after a brief spell at Menston Hospital near Leeds, he was appointed Consultant Psychiatrist at West Middlesex