

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

ROBERT CAMPBELL CUNNINGHAM, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Superintendent, Royal Albert Hospital, Lancaster

Dr Cunningham, a Foundation Fellow of the College, died on 4 October 1989, aged 76. He was born in Glasgow and studied medicine at Glasgow University where he graduated MB, ChB after a distinguished undergraduate career.

His initial interest was in public health, a subject in which he continued to specialise during his wartime service in RAMC. He served in the North African campaign and in Germany and achieved the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

After demobilisation he trained in psychiatry, specialising in subnormality. In 1953 he was appointed to the Royal Albert Hospital, Lancaster, of which he became Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Superintendent. At this time mental hospitals were undergoing considerable change and Cunningham seized this opportunity with enthusiasm. To this end the patients' living conditions were improved and he sought to exploit the potential of each of his patients.

Workshops were set up and patients provided with stimulating work. It was interesting to see a Down's Syndrome patient demonstrating a series of processes by which he converted a straight piece of wire for later use as a spring in an automatic gear box and to see two teams of Down's Syndrome patients playing basketball in a gymnasium built of concrete blocks which they had made in the industrial therapy unit. This dynamic approach enabled many of the more able patients to leave hospital and live in the community, who might otherwise have spent a lifetime in hospital.

Cunningham acted as consultant over a wide area, holding clinics in Barrow as well as Lancaster, and held an appointment at Manchester University where he lectured and examined in mental subnormality. He was the author of a chapter on mental subnormality in Professor Anderson's *Textbook of Psychiatry*.

The Royal Lancaster Hospital was never a forbidding place during Cunningham's regime, but was held in affection by the people of Lancaster. The highlight of the summer was always the local school fete held on the Hospital playing fields. It began with a formal procession of school children to the Hospital, where the afternoon passed in the atmosphere of a large garden party. Robert and Mary, his wife, delighted in judging the children's fancy dress

competition and awarding prizes. Patients and local people would mingle happily.

He was professionally active until his retirement. During his last year he took part in a successful mini-symposium on Epiloia at our Postgraduate Centre, where each Consultant was allotted ten minutes to describe the condition from his viewpoint.

His last major project was to build a clinical centre, named for his wife. Here a patient could stay with a parent in a comfortable apartment, undergoing several days of physical, psychological and genetic assessment, without the formality of admission to hospital.

It is a measure of the esteem in which he was held, that his funeral was attended by a large number of his former staff.

GCJ

RUDOLPH PAYNE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Little Plumstead Hospital, Norwich, Norfolk

Rudolph Payne, a Foundation Fellow of the College, died at home in Norwich on 19 June 1989. He was 73.

Born in Hungary, he came to Britain with his mother, his father having died in the 1919 influenza pandemic. He was adopted by his step-father Walter Payne, a London theatrical manager.

After working for a time in the City, he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, to study medicine and subsequently graduated from University College Hospital. There followed a variety of house jobs and 18 months in general practice which he left to train in psychiatry. He enterprisingly took up off-beat training opportunities such as attending a clinic for childhood alcoholism in Paris. From 1961 to retirement he was a consultant psychiatrist in subnormality and child psychiatry at Little Plumstead Hospital, Norfolk. His professional work showed care and skill and he made several contributions to the *Journal of Mental Subnormality*. In Norwich he co-founded a psychiatric club. He took an active part in College affairs and served as Secretary of the South-Eastern Division from 1969–72.

He was an extremely sociable man of gentle charm and humour and old world courtesy. He was a good raconteur and our last meeting was a dinner devoted to discussing turning a paper from the *Journal* into a musical. He had a long happy marriage to Phyllida, who nursed him during his final illness. Their one son is a solicitor.

KJ