

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

**CICELY LAMORNA HINGSTON, MBE (Military),
formerly Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist, The
Royal Sussex County Hospital**

The death of Dr C. Lamorna Hingston in January at the age of 94 brings to an end a most remarkable career.

Dr Hingston was born on 26 August 1894, the daughter of a doctor. She was educated at Cheltenham Ladies College.

During the First World War she joined the VAD and was seconded to the WMAAC. She was posted to France where she served for no less than 4½ years and was awarded the MBE (Military), an exceptional decoration for a woman.

After demobilisation she became resident secretary at the Lady Chichester Hospital, Hove, Sussex to Dr Helen Boyle, a distinguished psychiatrist and the first woman president in 1939 of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association.

Undoubtedly inspired by Helen Boyle, Dr Hingston decided to study medicine and qualified MRCS, LRCP from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington in 1930. She worked for a time in general practice before specialising in psychiatry. For a time she worked as a clinical assistant at the Maudsley and took the DPM in 1933. She was elected a Foundation Fellow of the College in 1971.

In 1937 she followed in Dr Boyle's footsteps and was appointed visiting consultant to the Lady Chichester Hospital and also the Royal Sussex County Hospital, the Royal Alexandra Hospital for Children, and in 1938, to Southlands Hospital, Shoreham. As an exhibition of her special interest in the emotional disturbance in children, she was responsible for founding the Child Guidance Clinic at the Lady Chichester Hospital, the first such clinic in Sussex, and, further, in her appointment in 1942 to the staff of the East Sussex Child Guidance clinics at Hove and Lewes.

With the establishment of the NHS in 1948 she was appointed a consultant and as such she served the various hospitals in which she had previously worked on a voluntary basis.

When she had reached the age limit, in 1959, she retired from the NHS, although she continued to work in private practice. In 1949 she founded the Brighton and Hove branch of the League of the Hard of Hearing over which she presided for many years.

Dr Hingston was tireless in her service to the community as witness her membership of a number of hospital management committees, and her active interest in the local branch of the BMA, in addition to which she gave assistance to lay organisations including the Board of Governors of the Hove County Grammar School for Girls of which she became president.

Mr Andrew Hibbert-Hingston, nephew, writes:

If I may add a personal note, she was a devoted daughter, sister, and aunt, great- and great-great-aunt, who took deep delight in her family. This did not prevent her from being noted for her humorous or astringent comments; she would puncture pomposity at once, though never unkindly. She was always interested in other people and all generations talked to her naturally and profited from the contact with so understanding a person. Actual advice was never volunteered without being asked for – but practical help often was, in many ways.

It is plain from the sheer number of bodies on which she served for so long, that her wisdom and humanity were out of the ordinary, and in great demand. A devout Christian all her life, she exemplified the ideal of service to others without ever a hint of becoming even remotely priggish.

**JAMES JOSEPH O'REILLY formerly Medical
Superintendent, All Saints' Hospital, Birmingham**

Dr J. J. O'Reilly, for many years the leading psychiatrist in Birmingham, died at the age of 90 in Northern Ireland in November 1988.

He was born on 5 April 1898 in Belfast, the son of a linen merchant. He received his education at St Patrick's College, Cavan, and at Queen's University, Belfast. Following posts as Assistant Medical Officer, at Somerset Mental Hospital, Wells, and Dorset Mental Hospital, he served as pathologist at the Hampshire Mental Hospital, Park Prewitt from 1928–1932. He then moved to All Saints' Hospital, Birmingham, where he was Medical Superintendent from 1938 until 1963. During this time he dominated the hospital and Midlands psychiatry, pioneering changes and developments in many areas as the National Health Service became established, and the

role of psychiatry altered. As a medical superintendent he exerted a virtually total authoritarian control over his hospital. He knew every patient and most of them by name. The whole staff went in awe of him, although he could be very loyal and supportive to those he liked and appreciated. He could, however, be extremely harsh to those who were not in his favour, and he is said to have once dismissed three matrons in one week. He was very progressive in his vision and in the developments which he initiated. All Saints' Hospital was one of the first mental hospitals in the Midlands to have a full-time psychologist, a full-time psychiatric social worker and, later, its own EEG Department. In 1942 he established the first out-patient department in Birmingham for the psychological treatment of neurosis, at a time when the major influences locally were largely organic in orientation. Initially he led a small group which held regular meetings in each other's houses or at the hospital to discuss the psychodynamics of individual patients. This led to the establishment of his out-patient clinic, first at All Saints' Hospital, and then, in 1955, the Uffculme Clinic, formerly a geriatric unit, was taken over as a psychiatric treatment centre. O'Reilly managed to secure the appointment of Mayer-Gross, who had just ended his work at Dumfries, and John Harrington, whom he attracted from the Maudsley Hospital. He was particularly helpful to a number of European doctors who sought to establish themselves in psychiatry in his hospitals and clinics.

J.J. (as he was widely known) continued to dominate the local scene throughout this time and no significant decision was made without the assurance of his support and approval. For many years he was the sole lecturer in psychiatry in Birmingham and his lectures were given to six medical students at the hospital. He was very active and was an important influence in the development of psychiatric services throughout the region, as a member of the Regional Health Authority from 1947 to 1963 and of All Saints' Management Committee from 1947 to 1963.

He had a particular interest in forensic psychiatry, possibly facilitated by the close proximity of Winson Green Prison which is situated next door. He was the

principal expert in this field for many years and on his retirement he remained at the hospital and created the Midland Centre for Forensic Psychiatry, of which he was the first Clinical Director. Indeed, he became so fascinated by the interaction of psychiatry and the law that he decided to read for the Bar and was called at the age of 70.

After this long and distinguished sojourn in the Midlands he moved South to settle in Bournemouth where he worked for a number of years as a child psychiatrist and also as Postgraduate Tutor in Forensic Psychiatry at the Postgraduate Medical Centre at Knowle Hospital, Wessex.

J.J. was not an easy man to know. One day he might be very friendly and affable and the next day unexpectedly aloof. He was a great raconteur and delighted in telling stories of the eccentricities of his fellow Medical Superintendents and also of his early experiences in Belfast. Fly fishing was a lifelong enjoyment for him and he was a member of the Upper Tanat Fishing Club. He was also a member of the Caravan Club. He enjoyed photography and he equipped a photographic laboratory in the basement of his hospital. He enjoyed woodwork and had his own lathe. He was a devout Catholic and was frequently consulted by Catholic priests who often referred Catholic patients for therapy. He remained busily occupied in his retirement; he wrote a book on the history of the O'Reillys and kept in touch with many of his old friends.

He married Hilda Lee in 1929 who died after he retired. O'Reilly then returned to Northern Ireland to live with a very old friend from his fishing days in the Midlands. His friend died before him and he was cared for until his own death by his friend's widow.

J.J. never sought international recognition and did not write a great deal professionally, but few men in psychiatry could have had more power and influence than he exercised in Birmingham for 25 years. Locally he had a formidable reputation and although he clashed with some colleagues late in his career, he was generally regarded with respect and affection. Many felt him very kind, generous and helpful and very much a man of his word.

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