

Ambulance and 13 IMFTU. After his return to the UK he spent a short period commanding a field ambulance in the Channel Islands before commencing post-graduate training in psychiatry. In 1947 he obtained his DPM and on completion of his training he served as Command Psychiatrist in UK Commands and subsequently from 1949 to 1952 as Adviser in Psychiatry to the Far East Land Forces. He spent the next nine years working in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, initially as O/C Psychiatric Division and subsequently for a period of six years as Officer Commanding the Hospital. He joined the staff of the Royal Army Medical College as Director of Army Psychiatry in 1961, an appointment he held until 1967. From 1967 to 1970 he served as Deputy Director Medical Services in Malaya and Western Command. Finally in July 1970, he returned to the Royal Army Medical College and reassumed the appointment of Director of Army Psychiatry and Consultant Psychiatrist to the Army in the rank of Major General. He served in this high office until his retirement from the Army at age 62 in 1976.

His 40 years service in the Army thus embraced field, administrative, and clinical duties and because of his qualities of leadership, organisation, and professional skill, he achieved outstanding success in each field. He was a man of great integrity who was forthright and singleminded but beneath this exterior, he was a quiet person, with a keen sense of humour who was kind, generous, and considerate in his dealings with his fellow man.

After retiring from the Army, he commenced a second career as Consultant Psychiatrist to the GLC and the ILEA and at the same time maintained his links with the Army by undertaking the duties of President of the Ministry of Defence Army Medical Board. He finally completely retired just past his 70th birthday earlier this year.

In 1943 he was mentioned in Dispatches, awarded the Order of St John in 1962, made Queen's Honorary Physician in 1971 and awarded the CB in 1976. He proceeded to the MD in 1961 and was elected FRC Psych in 1972. Amongst his many publications were *A Survey of Service Psychiatry in the Far East*, *Endocrine Investigations of the Psychiatric Casualty in the Army* and *Anxiety State in the Army associated with Overacting Thyroid*.

His interests included bridge, gardening and golf. His family were very precious to him. He leaves his wife Hilda, two sons, John, a solicitor, and Robert, a Major in the Royal Anglians, and five grandchildren. As a Fellow of another Royal College, I extend my deep sympathy to your College on the loss of one of its very distinguished and honourable Fellows.

APD

DESMOND CURRAN, CBE, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, University of London.

Desmond Curran died on 26 September 1985 in his 82nd year. He was Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at the University of London, having retired from his post at St

George's Hospital Medical School in 1967. The affection and respect that I had for him were sentiments he inspired probably in everyone who knew him. The immediate obituary notices in the national press did absolute justice to his dignity and integrity. A blessedly modest and shy man without outward defensiveness, he invited such balanced comments.

Born in Devon, raised near St Andrews, educated at Wellington and Trinity College, Cambridge, he undertook his undergraduate clinical studies at St George's Hospital Medical School in the 1920s. He and Eliot Slater were fellow students. Entering psychiatry he became House Physician at the old Bethlem Hospital in Lambeth during 1928-1929. There he rapidly established a long remembered reputation for the many hours he spent with patients, attempting to understand and help them. Next he spent a period in neurology at Maida Vale Hospital and first met Dr Macdonald Critchley, a relationship that was subsequently to have some national importance.

After a spell at Johns Hopkins University Medical School with Adolf Meyer, and which he came to regard as especially formative, he returned as Assistant Medical Officer to the Maudsley Hospital. Shortly afterwards he was appointed Consultant Psychiatrist to St George's and by the age of 34 had been elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians.

With the coming of the war it was Macdonald Critchley who, against resistance it is said, secured his appointment as the first Consultant Psychiatrist to the Navy. He rapidly built up a specialist service on a worldwide basis, becoming the youngest Surgeon Captain in the Royal Navy. During this period he sought out and attracted to his team many psychiatrists destined for eminence after the war. Everyone of them to whom I have spoken about that period recalls with admiration and fondness the high standards he set and the personal support he always provided.

On returning to St George's he set about consolidating and developing the psychiatric services there. By the late 1940s the present female ward at Atkinson Morley's Hospital had been opened and a few years later the unit was increased to its present size of 43 beds by the addition of a male ward. Once again he sought out and attracted colleagues around him of the highest calibre. His pre-war friendship with Erich Guttman had nurtured the production of a textbook with them as co-authors. In the postwar years his co-authors became firstly Maurice Partridge and more recently Peter Storey. In the first 20 postwar years the weekly psychiatric case demonstrations at Hyde Park Corner run by him, Sir Paul Mallinson and 'Bird' Partridge, became nationally and internationally famous and they provided the basis for systematic teaching to countless postgraduate students seeking the DPM. In 1961 he became the first Professor of Psychiatry at St George's.

His clinical skills were legendary. His exceptional knowledge of human nature and of clinical psychiatry shone through his teaching. He came to be regarded as an infallible prognostician. The textbook has always reflected

these admirable qualities of accurate clinical observation and clear headed classification. It was in 1957 that, working in neurosurgery at Atkinson Morley's Hospital, I first learned of him, met him and immediately seized the offer to enter psychiatry training in his department. The department at that time again reflected his creative influence. During the previous decade key research papers on such topics as the natural histories of obsessional neurosis and homosexuality and the impact of prefrontal leucotomy had been published. Everyone of the junior and senior staff in training with him became naturally engaged in well supervised research. From immediately after the war he had begun to build up a strong psychotherapy department. He believed that some people could change through learning and that they might be hampered by the occasionally psychosocial defence! However, he was fond of advising against psychoanalysis on the grounds that it could devitalize people—'like taking the fizz out of soda water', he would lament with a certain feeling. He himself was deeply interested in aberrations of social behaviour and became an internationally respected authority on the classification of personality disorders, sexual deviations and violent behaviour. He served on the Wolfenden Commission and was adviser to both the Foreign Office and Home Office. In 1948 he was Croonian Lecturer at the Royal College of Physicians. He became President of the psychiatric section of the Royal Society of Medicine in 1951/52 and President of the Royal Medical Psychological Association in 1963-64, immediately before its metamorphosis into the Royal College of Psychiatrists. A physician to the core he regretted the total separation from the Royal College of Physicians but saw its inevitability at the time.

For those of us who sometimes judge people by their ability to hold a three iron shot straight into the wind, it is noteworthy that he became a low single figure handicap golfer at a young age. He won the Jubilee Vase at St Andrews and gave up golf in middle age. Desmond kept his 'fizz' until the end. Ten or so years ago at Atkinson Morley's Hospital we renamed the male ward 'Curran Ward' in his honour. Shortly afterwards the annual 'Curran Lecture' was established and he graced it with his presence until recently. Sadly, but proudly, we shall now, with the agreement of Margot Curran, his delightful and loving wife for many years, be renaming it 'The Curran Memorial Lecture'.

AHC

ALECK FOLKSON, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, St Francis Hospital, Haywards Heath, Brighton General Hospital and the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

Dr Aleck Folkson died on the 21 November 1985, at Cuckfield Hospital, aged 63. He graduated from St Bartholomew's Hospital in 1946. Early in his psychiatric career he held a house job at The Lady Chichester Hospital in Hove, later working at Warley Hospital, Brentwood and as a Senior Registrar at Westminster Hospital. He

served in the Army as a captain in the RAMC, graded as a psychiatrist.

He became a consultant psychiatrist at St Francis Hospital, Haywards Heath, in 1957 and in 1959 became the Deputy Medical Superintendent there. He held that post until superintendents and deputy superintendents disappeared, continuing as a consultant psychiatrist and later becoming the Chairman of the Medical Committee.

His important work was distributed between a profound dedication to making St Francis Hospital a centre of excellence, developing a psychiatric unit at Brighton General Hospital and establishing a service for alcoholism. The first time I met him, which was at a reception for candidates for a consultant appointment, he told me that he viewed his work with alcoholics as a hobby. This beautifully illustrated Aleck's attitude to work and the care of patients. His dedication was such that he often made little of it and the help, support and kindness he gave to a vast number of alcoholics who have been described by him as a hobby was as much, if not more, than any of us give to the whole of our work.

He retired in 1984 but continued yet another of his interests, forensic psychiatry, by doing sessions at Lewes Prison. He was particularly pleased by being invited to join the Home Office Parole Board on which he served until his death. Aleck was much more concerned with services for the mentally ill and the individual treatment of patients than publishing papers but he did contribute to journals on the subject of depression and alcoholism.

His wife, Sheila, was ill for many years and died but a short time before Aleck. Both were very much involved in voluntary work at St Francis Hospital and were the driving force behind the St Francis Summer Fair Association (Hospital Friends). He is survived by a son and two daughters.

Aleck Folkson was a lovely man who made a significant contribution to psychiatry in the Brighton Health District and much more importantly humanely helped a very large number of people, supporting many of them over long periods without consideration for himself or his free time.

JAW

The deaths of the following have also been reported:

SAMUEL MILLAR ALLAN, formerly Medical Superintendent, Exminster Hospital, Devon.

SURESH BUDHWANI, Registrar, St Cadock's Hospital, Caerlon, Gwent, South Wales.

FAKHRI MOHAMED SALEH DABBAGH, Assistant Professor, Mosul College of Medicine, Mosul, Iraq.

JONATHAN GOULD, retired Consultant, The Chantry Rhode, North Petherton, Bridgewater, Somerset.

WILLIAM JOHN GRAY, Principal Medical Officer and Assistant Under Secretary of State, 88 Crosshill Terrace, Wormit, Fife.

BJPsych
Bulletin

Desmond Curban

AHC

Psychiatric Bulletin 1986, 10:95-96.

Access the most recent version at DOI: [10.1192/pb.10.4.95](https://doi.org/10.1192/pb.10.4.95)

References

This article cites 0 articles, 0 of which you can access for free at:
<http://pb.rcpsych.org/content/10/4/95.citation#BIBL>

**Reprints/
permissions**

To obtain reprints or permission to reproduce material from this paper, please write to permissions@rcpsych.ac.uk

**You can respond
to this article at**

</letters/submit/pbrcpsych;10/4/95>

**Downloaded
from**

<http://pb.rcpsych.org/> on October 22, 2017
Published by The Royal College of Psychiatrists

To subscribe to *BJPsych Bulletin* go to:
<http://pb.rcpsych.org/site/subscriptions/>
