

The College

The New President

Thomas Bewley will take up office as the new President of the College at the Annual Meeting in July. He has been closely connected with the College for many years, and was Sub-Dean from 1972–77 and Dean from 1977–82. He has also been Secretary and Chairman of the Manpower and Education Committees. His particular interests lie in the field of drug dependence and he has published on this subject, as well as on medical manpower and the side-effects of drugs. He was a co-founder of the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence, and a member of both the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs and its precursor the Standing Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence. He was a consultant adviser to the DHSS for nine years, and has been a Consultant Psychiatrist since 1961 at Tooting Bec and St Thomas Hospitals.

A colleague writes: Dr Bewley comes from an Irish Quaker medical family. His father and grandfather were physicians. His mother was a medical student and his sister is a psychiatrist. His wife is also a doctor and a member of the GMC. Seven of his eleven cousins are doctors, one recently being Dean of Queen's University Medical School, Belfast. His grandfather was Professor of *Materia Medica* at Trinity College, Dublin, and his father was Professor of Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene at the Royal College of Surgeons Medical School. As well as their teaching commitments, both practised as general physicians when specialization was less common than it is today. Both were in charge of a Quaker mental hospital (Bloomfield) in Dublin and treated psychiatric patients there for 81 years, 51 and 30 years respectively. Dr Bewley has himself treated a patient previously treated (during the First World War) by his

grandfather and later by this father.

Dr Bewley was playing tennis in the Bloomfield Asylum gardens before World War II, so there was always a likelihood that he might become a doctor, possibly a psychiatrist, if only because of familiarity, heredity, environment or lack of alternative ideas. He decided on medicine in his penultimate year at school; the alternative had been journalism. Diseases of the mind interested him, seeming more complex than other branches of medicine. In his last year at school he read the works of Sigmund Freud from cover to cover (in translation), and still thinks of Freud as a great literary figure, educator and prophet, as well as a psychiatrist. While at medical school he played competitive chess and founded a film society, making two films. The first was called 'Asylum' and was a dream inside a dream inside another dream (which suggests an early interest in dynamic psychotherapy). The second was a puppet film about a clock which was enamoured by, and endeavoured to ravish, a statue, who loved a lamp post (an obvious forensic topic).

He qualified in 1950 at Trinity College, Dublin, and trained as a psychiatrist at St Patrick's Hospital, Dublin, the Maudsley Hospital and the University of Cincinnati. He had been awarded the Henry Hutchinson Stewart Travelling Scholarship and came to England for further postgraduate training. He has remained an Irishman who is ambivalent as to whether he is an overseas doctor or not. Like many of his compatriots, he has ended up outside Ireland. If he was not where he is today, he would probably be in Dublin, perhaps as Treasurer of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, as this office was held by his grandfather (1903–44) and his father (1944–74).

Natalie*

It was a memorable occasion, so memorable in every way that one could be forgiven for believing that Natalie herself had had a hand in its organization.

The church, St Paul's, Knightsbridge, conveniently located a little more than a stone's throw from the College, was well filled. It was very much a family gathering: there were representatives of Natalie's family, some personal

friends, and then ourselves, her extended family. There were present two of the three past presidents of the College, Linford Rees and Desmond Pond (Lady Roth represented Martin Roth who was abroad), and a past president of the RMPA, William Sargant. Officers of the College and members of Council, past and present, came from every corner of Britain and Eire, together with representatives of the Divisions. Equally well represented were members of the staff of the College who worked, or had worked in the past, in some capacity with Natalie.

The music, so often little more than a tedious background to a Service of this sort, played an important and integral

*A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Natalie Cobbing (1926–1984) was held at St Paul's, Knightsbridge on 29 March 1984.