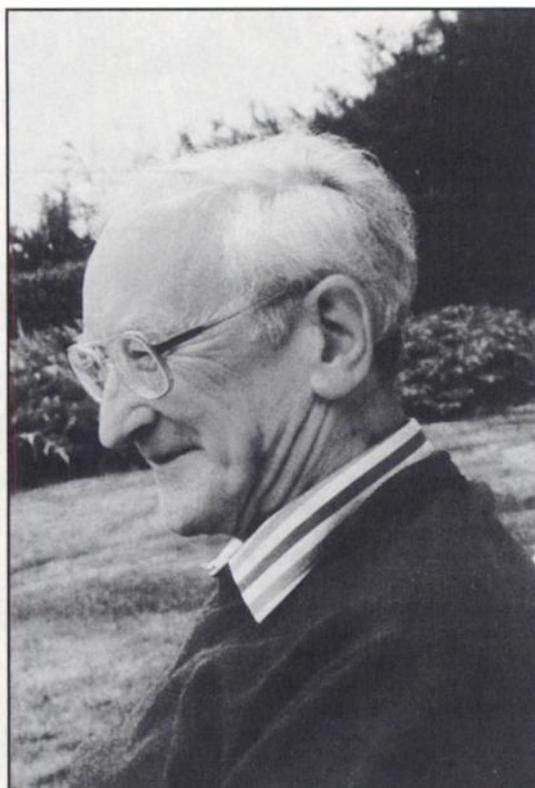


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# Obituary

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**John Sumner Stead**, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist to the Mid-Sussex group of hospitals.

John Sumner Stead formerly Consultant Psychiatrist to the Mid-Sussex group of hospitals 1959–1983, died of cerebral anoxia following a cardiac arrhythmia on 2 June 1998. He was born on 9 July 1918, he qualified in London for the MB.BS in 1942, became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of London in 1947. He gained his MD (Med) from London in 1951, the DPM in 1954. He was elected Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in 1971 and Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 1972.

John was persuaded early in life that his future lay with his hands, rather than in the drier classical pursuits of his family. However, medicine was not a natural choice, but in it he found an outlet for his empathic approach and enquiring mind which led to a life dedicated to his patients and profession.

During the war he served as a doctor on north Atlantic convoy duty and latterly in the Far East. Then his training in general medicine, cardiology and chest disease led to MRCP in 1947 and the Gold Medal for his MD thesis in 1951. He began his career in psychiatry at the Maudsley Hospital and in 1959 he was appointed consultant to the Mid-Sussex group of hospitals, where he remained until his retirement. John's expertise as a physician was widely acknowledged and his opinion as diagnostician was much sought after. Although he devoted time to the liaison aspects of psychiatry at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, where he saw many cases of psychosomatic disorder, John remained broadly eclectic with a particular interest in the psychodynamic component of his work: he was instrumental in the formation of a therapeutic community in the Brighton area.

John held strong views on the development of psychiatry both locally and nationally, and was not shy in airing them. He foresaw the management revolution that was to come, as well as the necessity for ongoing education and adequate accreditation in the service. His Chairmanship of the Joint Psychiatric Advisory Committee, at the time in a state of flux for the affairs of St Francis and Lady Chichester Hospitals, produced some consensus over the future service. As Clinical Tutor, Examiner for the Royal College of Psychiatrists and then Regional Advisor, he developed a system of routine and systematic appraisal of junior staff that was ahead of its time.

When he retired, John once said he feared "waking on a damp February morning with nothing to do". Forever enthusiastic he planned his later years around his lifelong interests. In childhood he had sailed with the working crabbing fleet of Gorran Haven, as a teenager he 'holidayed' as a deck hand on Thames barges and cargo-carrying schooners and then racing yachts and the tall ships of the Sail Training fleet. A member of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, his encyclopaedic and somewhat quirky knowledge of the rigging of ships, great and small, was valued by the Maritime Museum and the Sail Training Association. Never happier than when able to enthuse over an arcane skill with an expert, he restored a small 1920s fishing boat, built children's wheelbarrows and constructed furniture. He had neared completion of a 1/12 scale replica of his

Sussex home – the recent purchase of an adjoining field had allowed him to develop a nature reserve with meadow, hedgerows and trees chosen to fit the habitat – with exacting attention to detail.

Throughout his working life he was supported by his wife, Evelyn, who survives him; his two

sons, Robert and Matthew, both doctors; and his daughter, Frances, a journalist. Six grandchildren, of whom he was intensely proud, added to the joy of his retirement. That, “damp February morning with nothing to do” never came.

MATTHEW S. STEAD

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## Corrigendum

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### **Negative marking in the MRCPsych Examination**

Cormac & Marston (*Psychiatric Bulletin*, March 1999, **23**, 172–176) have provided a useful guide to those taking the MRCPsych Examinations. However, there has been a change in the Examination Regulations since they wrote their article. On the advice of a medical educationalist, who has been assisting the Examinations Department, negative marking in the Multiple Choice Question papers is being discontinued. In the Spring 1999 Examinations only correct replies to multiple choice questions will be

scored; those questions that are answered incorrectly or omitted will receive the same zero mark. This change will apply in both the Part I and Part II MCQ papers.

All candidates and Tutors involved in the forthcoming Examination have been informed of this change, but I would like to highlight this in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

Stephen Tyrer, *Chief Examiner, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PG*