

psychodynamics and psychiatry. In 1964 he became a founder member of the Institute of Religion and Medicine and he served as a member of Committees and Ecclesiastical Commissions that explored problems that arose within marriage and from escalating rates of divorce.

His considerable achievements as a scientific member of the Medical Research Council (1968–72) stemmed from the wide range of his scientific interests, his openness to new ideas and dispassionate guidance. He was to serve again in virtue of his appointment as Chief Scientist at the DHSS. He found himself somewhat unexpectedly stimulated by policy making and the cut and thrust of medical politics and he played his part with unobtrusive skill. I believe he succeeded in strengthening some bridges between the Department, the Medical Research Council and the Royal Colleges and in creating some new ones.

His Presidency of the Royal College of Psychiatrists between 1978 and 1981 was a memorable success in a number of ways.

Desmond's sensibility and tolerance enabled him to encompass the character of the members of various Committees and he was good at anticipating their patterns of interaction. The Council of the College is a larger, more talkative, argumentative and turbulent body of men than the corresponding Committees of comparable organisations with which I am familiar. Desmond was a quiet Chairman and he had rare gifts of tact and discretion. He advanced with the aid of a distinctive form of positive non-intervention through a mountainous agenda and towards the resolution of knotty problems. His qualities of leadership were acknowledged when he was elected to Chair the Committee of Presidents of Royal Colleges.

In retirement he settled in the home and garden in Devon he had created over a number of years in close partnership with Helen, his wife, herself a consultant physician. He loved the countryside around which had for him a numinous quality. It was a place of green and golden enchantment that emerged from their joint labours. There were some months of tranquil happiness surrounded by his family in the period immediately after his retirement. His marriage with Helen had been close and a mutual source of growing emotional fulfilment over 40 years in which they had shared successes and some sorrows. During the year before the end when an illness of obscure origin was manifest, Helen's exemplary fortitude and forbearance sustained his hope and spirit.

Desmond was a fine musician and derived deep satisfaction from his piano and singing in choirs, an activity which he and Helen engaged in together. He was able to see more of his three daughters who visited as often as they could. Two have proved to have outstanding musical talent and the third is a gifted zoologist. Plainly the genes of both parents were at work to some extent. But Desmond, sceptical of rigid biological determinism, would have been reluctant to invoke heredity as an explanation and modesty would have inclined him to minimise the contribution made by the rich, intellectual and musical environment he and Helen had created within the family.

There was a brief surge of improvement in the Spring when his natural vitality, humour and infectious laughter returned for a while but relapse soon followed. He endured the painful weeks at the end with legendary courage and unflinching and unremitting concern for Helen and the family.

He died on 29 June this year.

*This obituary was abstracted from the Address by Sir Martin Roth at the Memorial Service for Sir Desmond Pond on 28 October 1986.*

**ANTHONY CYRIL HAMER, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Royal Navy, and Oakley Hospital, Auckland, New Zealand**

Dr Tony Hamer died at Gisborne, New Zealand, on 1 June 1986, aged 70.

He was one of a small band who formed the immediate post-war nucleus of naval psychiatrists in the Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital, Knowle, where he was the most senior but one Lieutenant-Commander. The times were busy with different kinds of end-of-war reactions. He was obliged to give intravenous amylobarbitone, unmodified electroconvulsive therapy and deep insulin coma therapy and induce malaria with mosquitoes in wards reeking of paraldehyde. He tackled the enormous clinical tasks calmly; philosophically and quietly, empathising with his patients and accepting the impossibility of ever 'catching up'. Knowle was then a training ground and he taught, mainly by example, with a flair distinguished particularly by a wonderful gift with words. His descriptions of patients were quite outstanding in their vividness and clinical aptness. He was an inspiring mentor and colleague. The Knowle unit broke up in 1948 and Tony went to Plymouth. Thereafter in his distinctive and broadly intellectual but unassuming and kind style he made a deep impact on naval psychiatry. He had great charm and a lively and infectious humour. Hamer was born in Chile and qualified from Edinburgh in 1940. He joined the RNVR in 1941 and served in Iceland and was transferred to the RN in 1945. In the following year, at the Royal Naval Hospital, Great Yarmouth, he started his psychiatric career, which was interspersed with service in the Fleet Air Arm and—exceptionally for medical officers—qualified at the RN Staff College, Greenwich. He retired from the Service in 1970. He married in 1950, and emigrated with his family to Auckland, New Zealand, where he was a consultant psychiatrist in the Oakley Hospital. He worked until 1985 with great compassion and skill, being much loved and held in high regard. Already a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, he was awarded membership of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. He lived for a while in Rotorua and he wrote "Rotorua is the Lake district; huge lakes full of trout with ski lanes—actually volcanic fissures . . . it is also riddled with strange infernos in the shape of geysers and boiling mud pools . . . we get the odd 'quake. Light is very translucent . . . colours change rapidly".

He was a devoted family man and his wife Doris and three sons were at his side when he died. With them we mourn our loss.

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