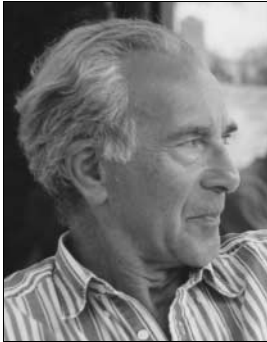


Obituary

Dr Montague Joyston-Bechal



Formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Central Middlesex Hospital, London

Montague Joyston-Bechal, FRCP, FRCPsych, DPM, was a psychiatrist whose temperament fitted him well for his chosen career. He was by nature curious about the human condition but with a curiosity tempered by compassion, courtesy, humour and abounding empathy, so it

was small wonder that as a clinician he was held in high and affectionate esteem by patients and colleagues alike.

Montague was born on 26 April 1930 and went to Merchant Taylors School. In 1948 he went up as a medical student to Queen's College, Oxford, where he cut a more dashing figure than many of his contemporaries. He acted, and gave parties which Kenneth Tynan might attend. Despite these distractions he completed his pre-clinical studies and obtained a degree in physiology with seeming effortlessness. He proceeded to clinical training at the Westminster Hospital where he played the lead in Hospital pantomimes, and qualified BM BCH in 1954. National Service followed as an RAF medical officer in Sri Lanka, which allowed him to act as medical officer during the filming of *Bridge on the River Kwai*, a posting which Montague much enjoyed. On demobilisation he took a 6-month GP appointment job in Australia, married Sally, whom he met in Perth, and came back to London. Having passed the MRCP he enrolled in the intellectually demanding 3-year postgraduate psychiatry training at the Maudsley.

At the Maudsley, Montague made lasting friendships with a number of contemporaries – a capacity for friendship was

another of his prime gifts. Having qualified in psychiatry with the academic DPM, he held a senior registrar position at the London Hospital before being appointed consultant at Shenley in 1967, and held appointments at Edgware General and the Wembley Hospital. In 1974, he was appointed consultant psychiatrist at the Central Middlesex Hospital, where he gave the next 16 years of his professional life to nurturing his clinical base at the Central Middlesex, and to the generous giving of himself and his skills to his patients and to the junior staff who trained under him. He gave his time to numerous hospital committees.

There was also still the party goer, the good conversationalist, the man who kept up with a cultural life, but that never diminished his commitment to the NHS. He was a general psychiatrist with a specialty in psychotherapy and sexual problems. He developed a successful private practice and expertise in medico-legal work, with those activities continuing after his retirement from the NHS in 1990 and up to his 79th year. His publications included a paper written in 1966 on the puzzling condition of stupor.

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Montague personally, are likely to assert that he exemplified what his profession in important ways should at the very best be about. Beyond that professional distinction we will remember him for his boundless and multiple wider enthusiasms – London life, trout fishing in Oxfordshire, literary festivals attended, a love of jazz, wide travel, a taste for fine beer. He could strike up a friendly conversation with any stranger met. His marriage to Sally, who after a career in academic dentistry established herself as a successful sculptor, added incomparably to the richness of his life. He died on 25 February 2009. He is survived by Sally, his two sons and daughters-in-law, and three grandchildren who further contribute to a happy circle of family life.

Griffith Edwards

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Reviews

Memory: A Very Short Introduction

Jonathon K. Foster

Oxford University Press, 2008, £7.99 pb, 144 pp.
ISBN 9780192806758

A number of titles from Oxford's short introduction series already occupy my bookshelf. One of the series' attractions is that it makes academic material easily accessible. The latest addition by Foster addresses memory and does not deviate from the formula.

Foster successfully conveys the past and present understanding of the inner workings and structure of our memory. He presents interesting challenges to test ones memory; I was surprised that I could not remember specific details of objects I handle daily, such as coins. Through invoking such reactions, deficiencies in our memory are convincingly highlighted.

His use of apt vignettes throughout is engaging and of interest from a clinician's perspective. The case is told of Donald Thompson. He was accused of rape; however, he was participating in a televised debate at the supposed time of the rape. He was obviously innocent. The rape was committed while the afore-mentioned debate was coincidentally showing on the victim's television at the time and the false accusation was actually due to the phenomenon of 'source amnesia'.

There are excellent summaries on scientific studies from the viewpoints of their proponents and opponents. The apparent ease with which these can be understood is a testament to the author's skill. At times, however, my own memory seemed to fail. With the introduction of many similar sounding terms, on occasion I had to refer to their original descriptions. Perhaps a glossary would have helped in this regard.

This book does not pretend to be a text on memory that would be of use to psychiatrists. However, it presents material