

INTRODUCTION

This Biography of Psychiatry was initiated by Professor Ross Kalucy, Head of the Department of Psychiatry at Flinders Medical Centre, Adelaide, South Australia, soon after my retirement in 1979. The aims of the project were set out in an application for a grant from the Glenside Hospital Research Committee in October, 1981:

"The aim of this project is to examine some aspects of the development of psychiatry in South Australia since the Second World War. A parallel aim and a complementary activity is to examine in detail the life and career of Dr. W.A. Dibden.

The examination of one person's career is a traditional historical technique for examining wider issues. The aim is to look at the clinical, social and philosophical problems which have faced psychiatry since the Second World War. Dr. Dibden's career lends itself to this because of its diversity and because of the seniority of positions that he has held both as a clinician, as an administrator, and as an advocate of mental health need."

It was hoped, too, that somewhere along the line, it would be possible to look at the issue of what goes into the making of a psychiatrist. After all, it is a striking thing that psychiatrists are extremely ambiguously regarded in our society and that being referred to a psychiatrist is still a matter of shame or humiliation. It is doubtful if this has been achieved. Each reader may have to judge personally.

The strategy adopted was to work within containable dimensions. It was decided to confine the study predominately to the period following the Second World War, as this was the period when there was an enormous expansion in psychiatry. Yet it was a time when some of the residues of the nineteenth century, such as the problems of stigma and of being unable to treat people, were still visible. It was a period when treatments became available and when social consciousness began to change. During this time, the

speed of change was also dramatic: there was more change and development in these thirty to forty years than in the previous five thousand years.

It was agreed that the enquiry be limited to developments in South Australia. South Australia is a small and homogeneous State with a number of people still living who had been through these changes. Relatively good records exist both within institutions and the public service. The area of interest could also be contained by linking it with the development of my own career within South Australia. The advantages seen were that my career exactly corresponded to the area of interest, that I had been actively involved in most of the events, and that the inclusion of my story would give a very human feel to the whole endeavour.

I must confess that I found the task difficult. There was little trouble in interviewing chosen people on tape and having the tapes transcribed with the aid of a grant from the Glenside Research Foundation. After initial reservations, I was not perturbed by having lengthy discussions with Ross Kalucy recorded on tape. This aspect of the project went along relatively smoothly though it took a lot longer than anticipated. People were not always readily available; some had moved out of South Australia and lived interstate. Ross Kalucy became Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Flinders University and could give far less time to the project. I missed the stimulation of my talks with him and the motivation they gave towards overcoming my diffidence to talk about myself; for I began to realize that, in order to present the varied stories of those I had interviewed in a meaningful and readable way, I would have to interweave them with my own.

This is how the biography has finally been written. I must accept responsibility for the other limitations I had to impose so that I could complete the task. There were so many people I could have interviewed and events I could have recorded. For example, I have referred only very briefly to those Ministers of Health who were responsible for the Hospitals Department and the Mental Health Services. I have barely mentioned the Departments of Psychiatry at the University of Adelaide and the Flinders University. Issy Pilowski succeeded Bill Cramond at the University of Adelaide and was very active in both the South Australian Association for Mental Health and the Australian National Association for Mental Health; Ross Kalucy was the first appointment to the Chair at Flinders and I was on the selection committee. But these are all stories in their own right.

Similarly, only passing reference has been made to the development of community psychiatric services. Carramar Clinic commenced in Dr. Cramond's time, and Beaufort Clinic in mine. The fate of the Security Hospital and the changed use of Willis House have been referred to in the Epilogue. Both involved innovations in staffing and administration, especially with regard to the nursing staff, and the relationship with Hillcrest Hospital of which each was a specialist team. The clinical staff of the Security Hospital had also to establish a harmonious working relationship with the administration and staff of the Yatala Labour Prison next door. Their stories need to be told.

I could have referred to other psychiatrists, both within the Mental Health Services and in private practice, who contributed significantly to the development of the psychiatric services in the State. Lothar Hoff received only a brief mention, even though the redevelopment of Glenside Hospital was kept on target by his diligence. Andy Czechowicz who was Superintendent of both Hillcrest and Glenside Hospitals and a tremendous supporter of the Mental Health Association has not been included. There were those psychiatrists in private practice who contributed so willingly and with small financial reward to the educational programme for psychiatrists in training and whose help ensured its success. It was the same with social workers, psychologists and other paramedicals. Even more to be regretted is that I have hardly mentioned the nurses and the nurse educators, who contributed so much to the constructive developments in the treatment and care of the mentally ill and psychiatrically disabled. I could have written about the development of Industrial Therapy, about S.A.A.T.M.I. (South Australia's Aid to the Mentally Ill), which was brought into being by Bill Salter, Pat Loftus, Ken Lincoln and others. The organization later changed its name to Invicta Sheltered Workshops. The Board of Management acted in a voluntary capacity and Ken Lincoln was Chairman for some twenty-four years. Charlie Blaskett and Gordon Armstrong, both retired from industry, both now deceased, gave their time and energy for little return to make the enterprise run. It was just that the canvas would have grown too big.

Fortunately, some of my omissions had been covered in other places and I was aware of these. I have referred in the text to the books "1870-1970 Commemorating the Centenary of Glenside Hospital", written and prepared by Harry Kay, and "Hillcrest Hospital, The First 50 Years" by Averil G. Holt. Miss Joan

Durbin has included psychiatric nursing and interviews with psychiatric nurses in her recent book "They Became Nurses. A history of nursing in South Australia 1836-1980", Allen & Unwin, Australia, 1991.

There were just so many highways and byeways down which I could have travelled that I had to draw a line. I apologize to those who may feel rejected or unwanted. Perhaps they would like to take up where I have left off.

Many people have assisted. Most important were those who willingly and pleasantly agreed to be interviewed and on request reviewed what I had written. My greatest source of encouragement came initially from Professor Ross Kalucy and latterly from Professor Bill Cramond. Ms Maureen Bell, Chief Librarian in the Hugh Birch Library at Glenside Library, not only looked after the oral history tapes and the transcripts but provided invaluable help with photocopying and the search for information. My daughter, Dr. Anne Martin, nagged me into acquiring a word processor, and Mr. John Mann from Flinders Medical Centre supported and counselled me whenever it turned into a malevolent monster, so that now after a couple of years I feel I have gained precarious control.

I acknowledge with gratitude the support and encouragement I received from Dr. Robert Goldney and Dr. Julian Hafner in my application for funds from the Glenside Research Foundation. And last, I want to thank Shirley, my wife, for putting up with me when I became irritable and frustrated with the word processor and who read the final drafts and made constructive and valuable criticisms.

W.A. Dibden

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Linden Park S.A.