
REPORT

Music on a summer evening

WE have always known that the College owns a peculiarly fine building in an equally fine setting: in high June, notably so, when the park trees are still freshly green and the garden turf newly striped by the mower.

This year, we were privileged to share an evening which took full advantage of that setting. Four young musicians, George Caird (oboe), Paul Barritt (violin), Charles Pollard (viola), and Josephine Horder (violin/cello) gave a performance in the Long Room of the highest quality, offering us a selection from Beethoven, Britten, and Mozart. Acoustically, it was a rare joy to listen to, and the players found the room a joy to play in. Aesthetically, it was perfection: the eager concentration of the performers, the bewitched pleasure of the

audience, and, for those by the windows, the vision of passing horses under the trees in the summer dusk gave the quality of a dream, or a Dégas.

Afterwards, we shared a buffet supper on the terrace and in the garden, superbly prepared by Mrs Mary Price. From across the grass, the spectacle was memorable—light, silhouetted heads, humming talk, and companionable warmth. The duck which has honoured us by nesting on one of the terrace boxes did not stir from her eggs: she recognized safe territory. I wonder if her ducklings will respond to the plaint of the oboe?

The College glowed and pulsed on its evening off, its life expanding with the arts, as with the sciences.

CONSTANCE KUENSSBERG

OBITUARY

Sir John Biggart, CBE, DSC, MB, FRCP, FRCGP, FRC.PATH

SIR John Biggart, Pro-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast and Dean of its Faculty of Medicine from 1943 until his retirement in 1971, died on 21 May 1979 at the age of 73.

Sir John graduated MB with honours at Queen's in 1928, following a brilliant undergraduate career. In 1931, while working as an assistant lecturer in the Department of Pathology at Queen's, he was awarded a degree of MD with Gold Medal and later a Commonwealth Fund (Harkness) Fellowship for two years at Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore. After an appointment as lecturer in neuropathology at the University of Edinburgh, he returned to Queen's as Musgrave Professor of Pathology in 1937, and during the ensuing 42 years he devoted his energies with zest to the advancement of medical education and services not only in Northern Ireland but also, as a member of the General Medical Council from 1951 until 1979, in the UK. During this period he held many influential posts in the university, the health services and the community, and it is true to say that no significant decisions in the field of medicine in Northern Ireland were taken without prior consultation with John Henry, as he was affectionately known by his colleagues, many of whom had been his pupils.

His services were rewarded by many honours and distinctions. A CBE in 1948 for war-time service in Northern Ireland was followed by a knighthood in 1967,

an honorary LL.D from Queen's in 1971, an honorary DSC from the National University of Ireland in 1973, and many others. The award of the Honorary Fellowship of the Royal College of General Practitioners in 1971 was a tribute not only to his interest in the postgraduate education of general practitioners but to his success in establishing a chair and department of general practice at Queen's, an objective he was determined to achieve, and did achieve before his retirement. During his retirement his appointment as Chairman of the Northern Ireland Council for Postgraduate Medical Education, a post he relinquished only a short time before his death, enabled him to keep in touch with the successful local vocational training scheme with which he had been associated since 1965.

He was a kind-hearted and fair man, the best of company, and a staunch friend. A father figure to generations of doctors who had qualified at Queen's and others who came to work in Northern Ireland, his influence can best be judged by the affection and respect in which he was held.

In many ways he acted as a general practitioner to the profession. His students and colleagues brought him their problems—whether of a medical, marital, family, or career nature—and John Henry listened attentively and advised them from the depth of his knowledge and his native commonsense.

Doyen of the profession in Northern Ireland, he will be missed by his many friends for his wisdom, experience, and foresight. He was devoted to his family and is survived by his wife, Isobel, and a son and a daughter.

JOHN MCKNIGHT