
OBITUARIES

E. O. Evans, FRCGP

Offley Evans died on 6 August 1984 after a year's illness during which he so bravely fought unequal odds. He was 69 years old, and had retired from general practice in Stratford upon Avon nine years previously. It was a great tribute to him that although living some distance away in Dulverton, Somerset, he was constantly visited by his old friends during his illness — two even came from as far as New Zealand.

After Wellington College, Berkshire, and St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, he qualified in 1939 and held house appointments there and at St Andrew's Hospital, Dollis Hill. In 1940, he joined the Medical Branch of the RAFVR and served first in Kenya and then in Malta during the siege about which he had several good stories. On demobilization, he went to Bristol Royal Infirmary as a registrar before joining the practice of Wells, Girling, Marks and Trick in Bridge Street, Stratford upon Avon. This was an interesting practice in that it must have been one of the earliest group practices in the UK, being formed as such just after the 1914–18 war, and subsequently in 1922 having a central surgery with a dispensary and a (then) modern suite of consulting rooms built in the town centre. At that time, the partners were Hewer (FRCS), Box and Wells (MRCP). By 1936 the practice boasted one FRCS and two MRCPs and a DA.

Offley (he was always amused by the family connection with Offley's port which gave him his Christian name) was a first-class anaesthetist as well as a first-class general practitioner and in 1947 he was appointed anaesthetist to Stratford Hospital. He excelled at obstetric anaesthesia both in the home and the maternity hospital which is now sadly about to close owing to rationalization.

Offley also had many outside interests. He took a prominent part in the early schemes for the advancement of general practice and the training of the general practitioner, being a founder member of the RCGP, and later Chairman of the Midland Faculty.

He became a trainer in 1961 and subsequently Chairman of the Training Committee for Warwickshire. He also served on the Birmingham Regional Hospital Board, was for three years Chairman of the South Warwickshire Division of the BMA, Chairman of the Leamington Medical Society, and he was a Stratford area representative on the LMC for 11 years. His great interest in the

improvement of general practice led to several published articles. On his retirement, he said, 'It is interesting, for example, to look back to an article written by myself, Dr [now Professor] Ian McWhinney and Dr A. Murray [who were also Stratford general practitioners at the time] which was published in the *Lancet* in 1961. In it we listed 10 practical suggestions for the reform of general practice. Nine of these have since been achieved. In addition, the Department of Health has now accepted the concept of the need for community hospitals — upgraded versions of the cottage hospital or general practitioner hospital.'

There is some irony in the fact that on the day Offley died the South Warwickshire District Health Authority passed a resolution to send its rationalization proposals to the Region. In these proposals there is a plan to create a new community hospital with 40 general practitioner beds from Stratford on Avon Hospital. He would have dearly loved to have been at that meeting to see the wheel — albeit with a new tyre — turn full circle!

Offley was a quiet man. He wore his heart in his head — not on his sleeve: but he was nevertheless an extraordinarily popular man socially. He was a tall, athletic person with a remarkably incisive analytical mind, yet someone who was uncommonly fond of music and gardening in which he excelled: his knowledge of garden plants was encyclopaedic and his garden was well known throughout South Warwickshire. At the same time, he was an accomplished tennis and hockey player, a keen fly fisherman and when he had to give up hockey he took up golf with the same application and precision.

When Offley retired, he followed the practice tradition and became Chief Medical Officer to the NFU Insurance Company, again bringing reforms — this time to their medical department. After two years at the NFU, he finally retired and, with his wife Jane, went to live in Dulverton, Somerset. There he rapidly mastered Tiverton Golf Course, and slowly set about making a garden out of six acres of hillside. Illness forced him to give up, but not before he had succeeded in this creation as in most things to which he set his mind and hand.

Offley Evans leaves a widow, two sons and a daughter to whom we extend our utmost sympathy in the knowledge that although they mourn, they mourn one of the very best.

M.H.F.C.