

## Ralph R. Hetherington 1917-2000

**R**ALPH Hetherington died on 23 February 2000, aged 82. Several former colleagues have provided me with their recollections. I am grateful to A.R. Allan, the university archivist, for other information.

From 1 January 1960 Ralph was appointed Lecturer in Clinical Psychology (half-time) in the Department of Psychological Medicine at the University of Liverpool, and half-time Clinical Psychologist in the United Liverpool Hospitals. He was thus engaged in clinical work, research, professional training and medical undergraduate teaching.

His main responsibility was the initiation and management of a clinical psychology specialisation within the Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Psychology, later upgraded to a master's degree. Thanks to Ralph's efforts, the initial scarcity of clinical applicants was overcome and the number of appointments open to clinical psychologists in the Liverpool area was greatly increased.

Ralph adopted an eclectic approach to psychological issues. He set great store by Allport's classic book *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation*. He was



a pioneer in advocating a wider role for clinical psychologists in their work with consultants in general hospitals, that is in relation to medical specialists other than psychiatrists.

Around 1962 Ralph was awarded a grant from the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust to investigate the psychological aspects of physical illness. He and his colleagues in that research published many papers on topics as varied as patients' reactions to hospitalisation, psychological factors affecting coronary disorders, women's reactions to pregnancy and labour, and patients' failure to recall what their doctor had told them.

Ralph was enthusiastic and hardworking. Apart from his research work and administrative duties, including a short

period as Acting Head of the Department of Psychiatry, he found time to write a *Textbook of Psychology for Medical Undergraduates* and to develop a neologism learning test, following up the work of Walton and Black.

Ralph moved to London in 1973 following his appointment as General Secretary of the Society. He was also appointed Visiting Professor of Psychology at the University of Liverpool. He was President of the Society for the year 1982-83, and the Society's Scientific and Professional Secretary until his retirement in 1980.

Former colleagues recall that Ralph was an ardent and respected Quaker. He felt greatly honoured when, in the 1970s, he was invited to deliver an annual address to the Society of Friends. Ralph was also an inland waterways 'sailor' and owned a large, splendid canal barge. Ralph's interest in canals and barges was apparently almost suicidal for someone as tall as he was.

Ralph was a pleasant, helpful person to work with. He will be fondly remembered.

*Emeritus Professor Dennis Bromley,  
Department of Psychology, University  
of Liverpool.*