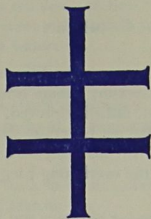


LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL



A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
FOR THE LIFE AND WORK
OF
ALICE CONSTANCE OWENS
M.B.E., PH.D., M.A., F.B.A.O.T.

Saturday, 22nd January 1977, at 12.30 p.m.

When all have come to their places the Canon Treasurer welcomes the congregation and introduces the service.

Then all stand to sing

HYMN

PRAISE, my soul, the King of heaven,
To his feet thy tribute bring;
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King.

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
Dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace.

All sit for

THE FIRST LESSON

PSALM 121

read by Miss JOY ROOK

Principal Lecturer, Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic

Then everyone stands to sing

HYMN

THE Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for His own name's sake.

Yea, thou I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill;
For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me,
And in God's house for evermore,
My dwelling-place shall be.

All sit for

THE SECOND LESSON
1 CORINTHIANS Chapter 13
read by MRS. MARGARET TYRER

Now all sit or kneel for

THE PRAYERS

THE ADDRESS

MISS PHYLLIS M. HOWIE

Principal, College of Occupational Therapy (Liverpool) Ltd.

Then everyone stands to sing

HYMN

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among those dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

Everyone remains standing as the Canon Treasurer gives

THE BLESSING

GO forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage, hold fast that which is good;
render to no man evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, help the afflicted;
honour all men;
Love and serve the Lord,
rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit,

AND the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit be upon you,
and remain with you always. Amen.

A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE AND WORK

OF

**Dr. CONSTANCE OWENS, M.B.E., M.A., Ph.D., FBAOT.,
TDip., OTR. Hon. Fellow WFOT.**

22nd JANUARY, 1977

THE LADY CHAPEL OF LIVERPOOL CATHEDRAL

ADDRESS

by MISS PHYLLIS M. HOWIE, Principal of the College of
Occupational Therapy

As I look round the group of people assembled here to-day at this Service of Thanksgiving for the life and work of Dr. Constance Owens, I realise that individually we have known and appreciated different facets of a vivid personality and at different stages of her life. There are members of her intimate family circle, friends and professional colleagues of long standing who knew her as Conn, official representatives of Authorities and Organisations, former students to whom she was 'Mrs. O.' and those more recently who have known and respected her as Dr. Owens. She was seventy when she died and her professional life and interest spanned half a century, during which she was driven by a strong sense of purpose and dedication, jet-propelled by her vitality, and with the intellectual acumen and creative vision that enabled her to lead with confidence. [Hers was a pioneering spirit. From reminiscences that Conn herself wrote, and from fascinating glimpses given by friends in letters and in conversations, collectively to-day we can perceive the whole picture and pay tribute to a remarkable person.

She was born in Cambridge and was grateful for her education at the Perse School. When she went to Birmingham University with the intention of reading for an English Honours Degree and subsequently teaching, there happened the significant event which was to change the course of her life. A friend suffered mental illness and Constance Tebbit came face to face with the harsh realities of life in a mental hospital in the 1920's. She developed a consuming interest in Psychology and Psychological Medicine and it was clear to her that this was where her vocation lay. What was less clear was how to pursue it, and there was a period of difficulty when she left the University in mid-course and took a stop gap job. But a lead was given when a visiting psychiatrist asked her if she knew of a graduate who might do some work occupying patients in a mental hospital, and she was invited to meet Dr. Elizabeth Casson at the Holloway Sanatorium, Virginia Water. For the first time she had met someone wholly in sympathy with what she wanted to do. From Dr. Casson she learned of Occupational Therapy and the training which was only available in North America; and now, as she put it "there was a star in the sky and all was not black". She had found her vocation.

She wrote to America, but the possibility of actually going there seemed remote. As she was a minor she could not be appointed to the hospital staff, but she remained in Virginia Water and worked with Dr. Casson, learning an enormous amount. She had, however, to have a paid job and when she was 21 was appointed to a large state mental hospital in Colchester "at the princely salary of £50 a year". She relished the challenge of that job, but for financial reasons accepted a position in a London Hospital. On the day she was appointed there, she received her dreamed of opportunity, the offer of a scholarship at

the Philadelphia School of Occupational Therapy where Helen Willard was to be her mentor and tutor, and Claire Spackman a fellow student. She entered into her new and exciting life with zest, and as Claire Spackman remembers, "nearly drove the faculty crazy". She was vivacious, fun loving, mischievous and challenging, and became an exceptional student in a lively group.

Dr. Casson had meanwhile bought a house in Bristol in 1929 where she proposed to run a residential clinic, and at the end of her course Conn joined her there to take charge of Occupational Therapy for patients with psychiatric disorders, and to start a training course for Occupational Therapists, and so in January 1930 Dorset House School came into being, with Constance Tebbit as its first Principal. She could turn her hand to anything. Paddy Reid vividly remembers arriving at Bristol as its first student and finding Conn at the top of a ladder whitewashing the walls of the room that was to be the pottery, and she has retained the delightful picture of her at the innumerable dances with her taller partners towering over her, "chatting volubly into their chests". Nothing daunted her and it was typical of the way in which she tackled her work that she should solve the problem of clinical practice by starting small subsidiary departments and supervising the students herself. But even she found that there were "limits to human elasticity" and when she was offered an appointment at a large mental hospital in the North she took this. Then following her marriage to Glyn Owens in 1934 she found the hospital did not employ married women, and it seemed as if her working life was ended.

Not so. Students at Dorset House approached her, agitating for a professional organisation, a meeting was held in London, and she became the first Chairman of the Association of Occupational Therapists; a position she held for six years. Typically, with Conn at the helm the committee moved fast, during the first year plans to draw up a syllabus, establish professional examinations, and to publish a journal, were all put into effect.

Then came the war with its new challenges. She was further involved in the Association affairs and in 1941 was asked to return to Upton Hospital, Cheshire, where she was approached to take on a trainee—and she found herself again in professional education. But at the end of hostilities the emergency hospitals closed and no-one was concerned with the problem of the six girls partially through their training. Her husband Glyn came to the rescue, advocating private enterprise, and arrangements were made to buy a derelict house in Victoria Road, Huyton. In 1946 she opened the Liverpool School of Occupational Therapy. She further accepted an invitation to establish occupational therapy in local hospitals in Liverpool, and in 1948 she became a member of the Mental Health Committee of the newly formed Liverpool Regional Hospital Board.

It is not possible in this address to mention all her varied achievements, but only to give the main events in which she pioneered. In 1949 the International Refugee Organisation invited her to become an honorary consultant and gave her the complex and specialised task of preparing a programme, and recruiting and organising a team for work in hospitals in Germany. This involved her in much travel for visits of consultation and supervision in Germany and Switzerland. In 1951 the International Society for the Welfare of Cripples held a meeting in Stockholm including Occupational Therapy in its official programme. The Occupational Therapists who met there discussed together the possible forming of an International organisation. Conn chaired the committee formed to explore the idea, and followed this by inviting all known Occupational Therapy Organisations to come to a meeting in Huyton. There at the School, the World Federation of Occupational Therapists was born, with Peg Fulton of Scotland as its first President, and Conn Owens as its first honorary Secretary-Treasurer. It then became necessary for the Associations in Scotland and England to have an official link, and the Joint Council of Associations of Occupational Therapists in the United Kingdom was formed with Conn as its Chairman from 1952 - 1958. She was delighted to be made an honorary member of the Scottish Association.

Drawing up a Constitution for the World Federation and launching an international policy for professional education was an assignment which she found fascinating and it was the kind of challenge to which she could so ably respond. The World Federation of Occupational Therapists obtained the distinction of recognition by the World Health Organisation as a non-governmental organisation, and she became the official delegate at the World Health Organisation Assembly in Geneva and served until 1971.

Throughout this time she was also running the school, as Principal, with the support of an able and loyal staff. These activities, in addition to looking after her home and family, might have seemed more than enough, but she had long wanted to be academically qualified, and when she was over 50 was accepted as a mature student at Liverpool University under the sympathetic guidance of Professor Hearnshaw. In his words "she was one of the most remarkable mature students" he had ever had in the Department of Psychology. Even so, he thought that the MA was awarded when she presented her thesis entitled "Selection for training as an Occupational Therapist" would be the culmination of her academic career. But she had other ideas. She resigned as Principal of the School, handing it over to a Board of Governors, and embarked on her PhD on the topic of "Imagery", a topic of practical importance now widely recognised. She worked with tremendous application and energy and produced one of the most massive theses in the history of the Department. Again she was not

finished—"she was indefatigable and was appointed a part-time research assistant in the Medical Research Unit on Ageing" where she helped with research for seven years. "She refused to be daunted by difficulties and seemed to thoroughly enjoy grappling with complex data and the intricacies of computer programming".

While in the throes of her MA thesis she was honoured by being awarded the MBE in the Birthday Honours List of 1959.

The World Federation of Occupational Therapists made her an Honorary Fellow for life in 1964, and the English Association of Occupational Therapists in 1972 made her one of the first Fellows.

The extent of her achievements is formidable, particularly when at the same time she was a devoted wife, and mother of Tregaye and furthermore adopted Ilse Heinemann who became another daughter to her. More recently she has loved her role as grandmother and delighted in her two grand daughters, Fiona and Nicki, who have been a source of great pride to her. She was a loyal and loving friend and stimulating companion. Throughout her married life her hospitality has been generous and never failing, and friends continued to visit her in Wales and to enjoy listening to her spirited and witty conversation. Through massive correspondence she maintained contacts with her many friends everywhere. Latterly, although arthritis shackled her movements, and pain was a constant companion, she did not repine; never lost heart; her mind was agile and far ranging, and she was still eager to learn and to enjoy. When she could no longer work in her garden, painting became an increasing delight to her, and one of her main preoccupations. She enjoyed her friends in the Art Group. Her paintings show her love of colour and scene, of flowers and plants, and especially the well loved view from her home across the estuary. She achieved a high degree of skill and her output was prodigious.

Conn was always spurred on by challenges and difficulties. Joy Rook who was first a student and then worked closely with her as a staff member and Director of the School, remembers that no problem ever defeated her. "She was one of the original divergent thinkers, and always had an answer, often so original that it took one's breath away. Life was fun for her, and to be with her". This impish sense of fun remained with her and made her company refreshing to her friends, even if at times it could be a source of apprehension to the unwary. Her intellectual calibre was out of the ordinary and kept the students on their toes. She could be disputatious for she liked controversy and had courage to match it - it took courage on the part of others to disagree with her, too. She could be a counsellor—or a sparring partner, and there is no doubt that she liked her own way. She was clear as to where she was going, and dedicated to the furtherance of the profession, and if she thought decisions to be right, however unpopular, she took them undeterred. Her physical stature was small but she had the

indomitable spirit and intellectual stature of a Titan.

Our final tribute to Dr. Constance Owens must be in the field of education, for she was not only a leader in Occupational Therapy, but dedicated to the education of Occupational Therapists in this country and overseas. She was an international figure, active in encouraging exchange of students and therapists between countries, and in fostering post-graduate education and research.

We at the School of Occupational Therapy in Huyton respect her as our Founder, and Principal for 16 years from 1946-1962. As a member of our Board of Governors she has given unsparingly of herself and guided the growth of the College. She was still ahead and pointing the way to future developments.

She was an exceptional person and visionary educationalist and has left us with a tradition of liberal education, and of singular loyalty from former students. She was able to inspire confidence and she carried forward from her days with Dr. Casson the ability to encourage her students to develop all their capabilities for life. We were happy that we could celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the College with her, and that she had the opportunity to have her work recognised and to renew contacts with her former students from almost every course at the College, many of whom had travelled far to be there.

Her own unique ability and reputation attracted mature students from this country and overseas to undertake the Teacher's Diploma. Many have since held high office in this country and abroad, and she took justifiable pride in their achievements.

Freda Jacob from Australia writes that when she was undertaking her Teacher Training at Huyton there were students from Africa, India, Sweden, Finland, Spain and Greenland. Contacts world wide have been cherished by her throughout the lifespan of the college and the warmth and vigour of these have been our inheritance. To-day we know from them, and are glad that Ilse Achter, Helen Willard, Claire Spackman, Mary Lou Franciscus and Olive Rayne in the United States, Kirsten Bech in Denmark, Freda Jacob and Fay Belcher in Australia, and Frances Rutherford in New Zealand, know of this Service and in spirit will be joining in our thanksgiving.

Doctor Constance Owens has made for the college and our profession a reputation of which we can be proud. To-day let us be glad of her friendship, courage, vision and achievements, secure in knowing that "never can fate unkind take what was given at that earlier hour".

As our tribute to her we shall endeavour to maintain the traditions which she has fostered, and to further her ideals. Her professional colleagues world wide will themselves, and in turn through their students, continue to enrich the profession which she pioneered and to which she dedicated her life.