

INTRODUCTION

"One hopes that developments and changes of fashion are the results of more enlightenment, knowledge and skill, but one fears that often they are not - change is not necessarily the same as progress"

Jocelyn Proby

Jocelyn Proby was one of the great figures in osteopathy. A man of brilliant intellect, he graduated from Magdalene College Oxford and then went to the University of Toronto as a history don. While in Canada he became interested in osteopathy. A move to Kirksville followed and he added to his already impressive list of qualifications with a D.O.. He then returned to Canada and worked with Daniel Mackinnon and at this time became interested in the ideas of Henry Lindlahr, the two major influences on his work and thinking. With characteristic energy he later wrote several articles describing and advocating the use of Mackinnon's technique as well as editing and revising Lindlahr's four volumes on Natural Therapeutics. At the age of 62 when most people would be contemplating a comfortable retirement he was still intent on expanding his knowledge and organised a course of instruction in "Structural Integration", under the personal tuition of Ida Rolf, which he successfully completed.

However, Jocelyn Proby was much more than a brilliant mind. Those that knew him well, patients and colleagues alike, have many stories of his kindness and compassion. It was not uncommon for him to keep seriously ill patients at his home at Ballyraine House in Arklow, treating and nursing them himself. During one exceptionally difficult winter he daily drove several miles through deep snow in order to treat a seriously ill child, eventually restoring the child to health with a rare blend of exceptional skill and devoted care.

These stories give an important insight into his views on the scope of osteopathic treatment. Along with J.M. Littlejohn, John Wernham and others of that generation he believed that osteopathic treatment could be beneficial in a wide range of conditions, not merely for neuro-

neuro-musculo-skeletal problems. He took this belief into the treatment room and successfully proved the effectiveness of osteopathic treatment for many acute conditions. Patients came to him from all over Europe and beyond, drawn by his ability and integrity, but success never altered him. Returning to visit Dublin, some years after giving up his practice there, he was genuinely surprised when he was recognised with pleasure by grateful patients.

Throughout his career he worked quietly and untiringly to help establish osteopathy. In the 1930's he was one of the founders of the G.C.R.O., in the 1940's Vice Principal of the B.S.O., in the 1950's, President of the O.A.G.B., and founder member of the Institute of Applied Technique (now the Institute of Classical Osteopathy). In the 1960's, 70's and 80's he continued to study, lecture, write and inspire all those osteopathic students who were fortunate enough to have contact with him.

In 1978 he returned from Eire to England where he continued to practice until past his 90th birthday. He died on the 30th December 1993 at the age of 90, and osteopathy had lost one of its great figures.

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August 1999