

Theodosia Madeleine Cecilia Townsend [5C21]

**Fairyfield House, Kilmallock
The home of Theodosia's father**



Photograph of a picture of Fairyfield House, by Theodosia, who is seated on the donkey.

The dachshund in the picture is 'Max', said by Theodosia to be the first dachshund in Ireland, brought to Castle Townshend by Madame de Bunsen, Charles Loftus Townshend's [5C00] mother-in-law.

Thomas Loftus Townshend Lewis

Transcription of his obituary in the British Medical Journal



Tom Lewis, who died aged 85 on Good Friday, was a distinguished obstetrician and gynaecologist. He was appointed consultant at Guy's Hospital just before his 30th birthday and just before the formation of the National Health Service in 1948. Two years later he was appointed consultant at Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital for Women. He was a meticulous surgeon and obstetrician and a very distinguished teacher, training and influencing generations of obstetrician-gynaecologists and medical students. He wrote three text books of obstetrics and gynaecology and his book *Progress in Clinical Obstetrics & Gynaecology* became a world classic. During his long career he witnessed and was involved in huge changes in his specialty with the advent of ultrasound, foetal monitoring in labour, epidural analgesia, minimally invasive surgery, and in vitro fertilisation. He served three times on the council of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, was its honorary secretary between 1961 and 1968, and was senior vice president from 1975 to 1978. He was Sims Black travelling professor of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1970, visiting and lecturing in Australia and New Zealand. He was also president of the obstetric section of the Royal Society of Medicine. He was consultant gynaecologist to the army and examiner to the universities of Cambridge, London, and St Andrews, the Society of Apothecaries, and the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. He was awarded the CBE for his contributions to his specialty. He

continued to serve the National Health Service until the age of 65 and then he worked in private practice for several years. He was a very keen member of the Gynaecological Club, a society comprised mainly of British and Irish obstetrician-gynaecologists, which meets every six months. He attended almost every meeting right into his latter years and was an enthusiastic participant at the meeting in Prague in September 2003. He was kind, determined, and driven. Everything he did, he did really well.

Thomas Loftus Townshend Lewis was born in Hampstead on 27 May 1918 but regarded himself as South African of Welsh origin. His great grandfather, Charles Lewis, ran away to sea at the age of 15 from Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire and settled in Cape Town in about 1950. He had a profitable sail making business until the coming of the steam ships in the 1860s. His son, A J S Lewis, Tom Lewis's grandfather, was a civil servant, became mayor of Cape Town and was ordained in the Anglican Church on retirement. His son, Neville Lewis, was Tom Lewis's father. Neville Lewis went from South Africa to London to study art at The Slade, where he met and married a fellow art student from Dublin, Theo Townshend. The marriage broke up in 1922, leaving Neville Lewis with three children under five, including Tom, then aged four. The children were sent to South Africa and Tom was brought up by his grandfather, A J S Lewis, and his wife, Annie Solomon, in Cape Town from the age of four until he was 15. Young Tom went to school at the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, where he had an excellent as well as a good education as well as a good grounding in rugby football and boxing. Every two or three years, his father would arrive unannounced from England and they would go off by car all over South Africa to paint portraits of the local people. On one occasion a spear was thrown through a painting, which was thought to be removing part of the soul of the subject. The painting had to be rapidly destroyed for the safety of Tom and his father. In 1933 Tom's father and his second wife, Vera Player, bought a house in Cheyne Row in Chelsea and sent for him. He was then aged 15. He went to St Paul's School, subsequently studying medicine at Jesus College, Cambridge, and Guy's Hospital, qualifying MB BChir in 1942. While a student at Guy's he obtained the Gold Medal in Obstetrics, despite being told that he stood no chance of success. He was so put out by this prediction that he worked day and night to ensure that the prize was his.

In 1943 he travelled in a convoy by ship to Cape Town and enlisted in the South African Air force as a doctor but was then seconded to the RAMC. He served in Egypt, Italy, and Greece. Meanwhile, his father, Neville Lewis served as war artist to the South African army, painting many famous people, including Montgomery.

Tom returned to Guy's Hospital after the war, obtaining the FRCS diploma in 1946, an examination he took in uniform, and the MRCOG diploma in 1948. He had continued his interest in boxing and rugby football, skiing and rowing throughout his medical student days. He captained the Guy's rugby team, then one of the premier teams in the country, from 1946 to 1948. In 1948 he had an England trial and was travelling reserve for England during the season and was picked as full back for playing against France, but was unable to play as he was in hospital with infected hepatitis. Later he was president of the Guy's rugby club, the oldest rugby club in the world, and he in fact did play his last game for the first fifteen when he was aged 46. Later he switched to playing golf and was a keen member of the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club. Before he went away to the war, he met a very attractive young student nurse at Guy's, Alexandra Moore, known as Bunty. He kept in touch with her while he was away and on his return went down to see her in Stratton-on-the-Fosse near Bath. They were married a year later in Bath abbey. Over the course of the next 19 years they had five sons, John, Anthony, Robert, Charlie, and Richard. Tom and Bunty built a holiday home on the island of Elba, which was of some significance, as early relatives on the Solomon side (his grandmother was Annie Solomon) had lived on the island of St Helena while Napoleon was a prisoner there. There was a shortage of wood and their dining table was fashioned into a coffin for the late emperor.

Tom was an authority on wine, and he and Bunty were superb entertainers with their house full of paintings by Tom's father, Neville Lewis. Tom was an authority on wine, fungi, and astronomy. Bunty Lewis remains an enthusiastic supporter of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, having a longstanding involvement with its charity, Wellbeing. Tom is survived by his devoted wife who nursed him through a very difficult last illness, and by his five sons.