

structure and function of the CTC and its recent activities. During the meeting, literature about the College, the new examination format and reading lists was available. The pamphlets about the exam rapidly

disappeared and it was apparent from the final discussion that an issue of major concern for many trainees present was the uncharted territories of the new exam.

Acknowledgement

Our thanks are extended to the speakers and workshop leaders who helped to ensure the success of the day.

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

ALEXANDER SHAPIRO, CBE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist and Medical Superintendent, Harperbury Hospital, Hertfordshire, Consultant in Mental Handicap, Middlesex and Royal Free Hospitals, London, Senior Lecturer, University of London.



Dr Alexander Shapiro, a Foundation Fellow of the College, died on 1 April 1988, aged 76. He was a gifted, compassionate doctor, a courteous man of great scholarship and charm, a charismatic teacher, an articulate advocate and an amusing raconteur with an infectious zest for life.

Born in the Ukraine in 1911, he fled with his family from the Russian Revolution in 1919. After some time in Turkey and Paris the family settled in London in 1923. Already familiar with several languages, he quickly added English to his repertoire, thus beginning a lifelong fascination with linguistics. Even in the last three months of his life, facing with characteristic courage the inevitable approach of death, he was greatly concerned with mastering the intricacies of Japanese, his most recently acquired language.

After qualifying from University College Hospital, London, in 1935, he embarked on a career in psychiatry, choosing mental handicap as his speciality. He trained also as a psychoanalyst. He obtained the DPM in 1947 and MD London in 1949.

Apart from war service in the Mediterranean theatre with the RAFVR he spent most of his professional life at Harperbury Hospital, where he was appointed Consultant Psychiatrist in 1948, and Medical Superintendent in 1961. Under his progressive and enthusiastic leadership the hospital achieved an international reputation for high standards of service and innovative developments, noteworthy amongst which was the establishment of the Kennedy Galton Genetics Laboratory to initiate research into the causation and prevention of mental handicap.

A firm believer in the corporate strength of a professional body, Alexander Shapiro was an eager participant in the affairs of the College. A past Secretary and Chairman of the Mental Deficiency Section of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, he was from 1951 to 1972 a Member of Council of the RMPA, serving at one time or another on all the Standing Committees. During the preparation of the 1959 Mental Health Act he was Secretary of a Joint Committee of the Medico-Psychological Association preparing evidence for the Royal Commission on Law concerning Mental Deficiency. A member of the Court of Electors and a Sub-Dean from 1972–77, his distinguished services to the Royal College of Psychiatrists were recognised by election to the Honorary Fellowship in 1981.

A national and international academic authority of high repute, he was at one time President of several learned bodies including the Section of Psychiatry of the Royal Society of Medicine, the British Society for the Study of Mental Subnormality, and the

International Association for the Scientific Study of Mental Deficiency. He was much in demand as a lecturer and was invited to make lecture tours and take part in international symposia and scientific societies in the United States, Sweden, Brazil, Spain, Italy and Israel. A true eclectic, he believed that an international sharing of knowledge and exchange of ideas were essential for the development of the best services and treatment for people with mental handicap.

A passionate participant in the dialogue concerning the best form of care for the mentally handicapped, whilst supporting the philosophy of community care for those who would benefit from it, Alex argued fervently for the retention of a sheltered environment for those who, because of the degree or complexity of their disability were unable to interact or cope with the demands of society. Impatient with humbug and hypocrisy and never in awe of bureaucracy or a slavish follower of fashion, he warned that the government policy of closure of large hospitals for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped would lead to unnecessary suffering, if implemented before adequate research had been undertaken, and an increased allocation of resources provided.

Alex pioneered energetically for the improved teaching of the psychiatry of mental handicap to medical students. He was a member of a working party set up by the Psychiatric Sub-Committee of the Board of Studies in Medicine of the University of London in 1976 to review the teaching of mental handicap in medical schools nationally, and to propose an improved syllabus. His influential teaching sprang from a conviction that the provision of a sympathetic comprehensive service to vulnerable groups in our society depended, amongst other things, on the sensitivity, understanding and knowledge of doctors. He took great pride in setting and maintaining high standards of medical practice, and enunciated clearly his belief in the essential leadership role of the consultant in mental handicap.

His contribution to medical literature was extensive, including chapters in several books. His publications encompassed topics ranging from *The Importance of Chromosome Studies in Mental Deficiency* to *A Survey of Married Mentally Handicapped Patients in the Community*. He wrote important papers on delinquent behaviour within the field of mental handicap, highlighting his particular interest in the young offender and adolescent with behaviour disorder for whom he established a greatly valued Regional Specialist Unit.

The energy and commitment so apparent in his professional life extended to his hobbies. A particularly keen yachtsman and navigator he was an enthusiast in all matters scientific, electronic and mathematical. A prolific producer of wine and lover of international cuisine, he was never happier than when presiding with his wife over an occasion of excellent food, convivial company and lively conversation, ever to be remembered with gratitude and affection by his friends and colleagues.

Alexander Shapiro had a global interest in mankind, never ceasing to be excited by new developments and discoveries. In an eminent career he contributed as much as any other single person in our time to the extension of knowledge and improvement of treatment and standards of care for people with mental handicap. His achievements were acknowledged nationally by his appointment as CBE and locally by the naming of an adolescent day care unit at Harperbury, "The Alex Shapiro Centre".

He was devoted to his family and is survived by his wife Nikki, who supported him unstintingly, their son, who is a doctor at present working in the United States, their two daughters and four grandchildren.

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The deaths of the following have also been reported:

EILEEN MINNIE BROOKE, formerly Chief of Medical Statistics, Institut Universitaire de Médecine Sociale et Preventive, Lausanne, Switzerland.

IVAN EDWARD CARTER, Consultant Psychiatrist, Isaac Walton Killam Hospital for Children, PO Box 3070, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

JOHN RICHARD TERRELL FINLAYSON, 1A Engleton Road, Coventry, Warwickshire.

LOIC HEMSI, Consultant Psychiatrist, St George's Hospital Medical School, Cranmer Terrace, London SW17.

IRVING SEYMOUR KREEGER, Consultant Psychotherapist, Department of Psychological Medicine, King's College, Denmark Hill, London SE5 8RS.

THOMAS AUBREY MUCKLE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, St Nicholas Hospital, Newcastle upon Tyne.

HARRY POZNER, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, 3 Crabtree Gardens, Headley, Bordon, Hampshire.

ARCHIBALD SMELLIE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Lennox Castle Hospital, Glasgow.