

He was a religious man and in this area, like in many other areas in his life, he was often in conflict. The son of an English father and a Belgian mother, he was brought up in both English and French, which gave him the flexibility to move across the boundaries of culture, race and age. At the same time it made him into a bit of a misfit. I was always aware of his determination to fit into the English model while at the same time his rebellion against it accounted for a Latin/continental flavour to his personality.

I would like to quote a poem by the Spanish poet Jaime Gil de Biedma which Philip would have liked.

No volveré a ser joven

Que la vida iba en serio
uno lo empieza a comprender más tarde:
como todos los jóvenes, yo vine
a llevarme la vida por delante.

Dejar huella quería
y marcharme entre aplausos
-envejecer, morir, eran tan sólo
las dimensiones del teatro.

Pero ha pasado el tiempo
y la verdad desagradable asoma:
envejecer, morir,
es el único argumento de la obra.

I Will Never be Young Again

That life was serious
one becomes aware later:
like all youth, I came
to take life by storm

To leave a mark I wanted
and depart at the moment of applause
to grow old, to die – were only
the dimensions of the theatre.

But time has passed
and the ugly truth
raised its head:
to grow old, to die
(is) and are the only plot of the play.

(My translation).

LUIS RODRÍGUEZ DE LA SIERRA

Barbara Shorvon, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, South London Hospital for Women and Children

Barbara Shorvon, nee Bensusan-Butt, was born in Colchester on 24 July 1914 and died in London on 20 July 1994. Her mother was the first woman GP to practise in Essex.

Barbara studied medicine at the Royal Free Hospital and graduated MB BS (London) in 1939. She decided to specialise in psychiatry early on in her career and gained the DPM in 1942. In 1971 she was elected MRCPsych. Apart from her consultant appointment at the South London Hospital for Women and Children she practised as psychotherapist to HM Prisons Wormwood Scrubs and Holloway in addition to Sutton Neurosis Centre and Dartford Prisoner of War Neurosis Centre.

As a consultant psychiatrist, Barbara was a skilled diagnostician whose patients respected her way of working. She was a friend to her colleagues at the South London Hospital for Women and to many of her patients.

Long before 'mentoring' was fashionable she 'mentored' me. We were colleagues at the South London Hospital for Women. When she nursed her husband Dr Joe Shorvon, himself a distinguished psychiatrist, through 18 months of terminal illness I took her place as psychiatrist at Holloway Prison. I found that Barbara was respected by both prison officers and prisoners: she employed an ex-prisoner in her home for many years.

In 1978, I had pneumonia, and the day I left hospital Barbara's secretary phoned to say that 'my boss' was taking me to her home for the weekend. She asked no 'psychiatric' questions, fed and watered me well and said I was not to return to work for six weeks. After her first stroke I was pleased to be able to accompany her to Singapore where we stayed with Barbara's friends. She then went on to visit her son in New Zealand and I travelled to Australia.

Sadly her last years were clouded by her stroke. Gladly I drove her round Richmond Park rather than have a 'bereavement session' after her twin brother died in March 1994. In retirement I miss Barbara. She was a unique woman who leaves not only consultant doctor sons but many friends and patients who are truly bereaved.

JOSEPHINE LOMAX-SIMPSON