

inclinations and timing. Age brings with it a new area of experience – the lives of one's grandchildren – Michael, Anna, Victoria, Julian, Georgina, Henrietta, and Hédié. It is demanding, intriguing, testing of one's thinking, and invigorating. One of them has programmed his wrist computer to ring on my birthdays. Kindly, and with naive optimism, he has programmed it for the next 50 years!

I continue researching and writing. I lost my research team when I retired, and so moved into private practice; this enables me to retain some help. I am writing on psychopathology and nosology. History was always an interest since I edited *World History of Psychiatry* in 1975. As I mentioned earlier, for 25 years, I collected material for *A Reference Companion to the History of Abnormal Psychology* published in 1984. It took seven years to write and three years for the publisher to produce. The two volumes are always alongside me on my desk, but their considerable cost must deter others from having them. I am now editing *Concept of Schizophrenia – Historical Perspectives* for the American Psychiatric Press. As Chairman of the History Section of the World Psychiatric Association, I am much involved in that organisation and with historians worldwide. I have now started a new 'Clinical Psychiatry Series' for Brunner/Mazel.

On retirement, I was given a video player, which makes it possible for me to indulge in one of my strong interests – Italian opera. I have studied Verdi in particular. He was a man of a massively strong personality, which is projected into his music. You will find him confronting a mob in the council scene in *Simon Boccanegra*. The love for his foster-father is

found in the bass arias of his early operas, but they died with this man. His touching tribute to his 'other woman', Guiseppina, who later became his wife, penetrates the whole of *La Traviata*. His feelings for women always make the most melodious music of each of his operas expressed particularly in a father-daughter dialogue. I read Dylan Thomas and have made a particular study of the art of Salvador Dali. A new interest takes me into horticulture. I sit on the Council of the International Clematis Society, edit its journal *Clematis International*, and have just finished a book for Ward Lock on clematis.

*What advice would you give young people?*

I would suggest that they try to advance on a narrow front; you can only penetrate in depth in that way. Even so, the further you move towards truth, the more change you will advocate, and the more difficult life will become. Secondly, test your theories with daily experience; discuss them with an intelligent and creative layman. Thirdly, steel yourself to being unpopular. The insecure and the deprived in particular seek for approval and appreciation; they find unpopularity intolerable. The search of truth has to mean change; this creates insecurity, the insecure will defend themselves, and your unpopularity is an inevitable consequence. Fourthly, avoid picking up too many of the 'golden balls'. You can never reach the truth if you stoop to pick up too many committee memberships, marks of public approval, chairmanships, visiting professorships, public addresses, etc. You may end up 'very distinguished', but sick with yourself for lack of real achievement.

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## Conferences

A joint conference between the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the College of Occupational Therapists on *The Costs of Fragmentation and Psychiatry* will be held on Monday, 12 November 1990 at the Royal Institute of British Architects, London W1. This will be an important occasion to consider how services for mentally ill people will be provided in the future. Speakers will include Mr Stephen Dorrel, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Health, and Mr Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, Chairman of the Mental Health Act Commission. The programme is available from Deborah Hart at the College.

A one day conference on *Working Together in Mental Health: The Multidisciplinary Team in the Next Century* will take place on 23 November 1990 at St George's Hospital Medical School, London SW17 0RE. It is organised by the British Association of Social Psychiatry. Registration fee, including lunch, coffee and tea for members: £5; (for non-members: £15). Closing date: 26 October 1990. Late registration: £25. Further information: Dr Pamela Pilkington, 16 Lichfield Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3JR (telephone 081 940 0369).