

this work for many years in spite of his failing health due to long-standing diabetes. Having for some time conducted seminars on counselling patients with diabetic retinopathy at King's College Hospital, it was all the more tragic that he had to retire because in the end he himself lost his sight. He will be missed by many who benefited from his humane approach to medicine and psychiatry. He leaves two sons, one of whom is a doctor, and a daughter who has recently become a member of the College.

HW

WILLIAM SARGANT, Emeritus Consultant, St Thomas's Hospital, London

William Sargant died at the age of 81 on 27 August 1988. He was a striking personality. Well over 6ft and broadly built, he had tremendous charisma and authority; above all he wanted to alleviate suffering. His father – a strong Methodist, whose hero was John Wesley – had a considerable influence on his character, and in shaping his principles and his ambivalent attitude to authority and the Establishment.



Sargant was successful in any field into which he wholeheartedly threw himself. After a successful start at St Mary's, he looked destined to become a physician, until depression and pulmonary tuberculosis diverted him into psychiatry. He became a locum at Hanwell, and was appalled by what he saw of patients' sufferings and the indifference of the staff. He joined the Maudsley, one of the group of outstanding psychiatrists gathered together by Professor Edward Mapother, and quickly established a reputation as both brilliant and explorative; he demonstrated the value of benzedrine in certain types of depression and he was among the first to use cardiazol convulsions and deep insulin therapy. His opposition to psychoanalysis was implacable but always tinged with humour, and he admired Freud as a thinker. One of his hopes was to treat a patient analysed by Freud, but the only time he met one, the patient had had too much ECT to be able to recall his analysis! In 1938 he was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to Harvard, and was in the USA at the outbreak of war. He hurried back to England and rejoined the Maudsley, which had been split into two parts. Sargant joined the half at Sutton Emergency Hospital, later Belmont Hospital, and there worked with psychiatrists of the calibre of Slater, Shorvon, and Minski, and developed effective techniques for

treating shell-shocked combatants – barbiturate abreactions, heavy sedation and narcosis, and modified insulin to restore weight – the principles of which still stand. In 1944, with Slater, he published an *Introduction to Physical Methods of Treatment in Psychiatry*, which for many years was the bible of psychiatrists worldwide.

In 1948 he took charge of the Psychiatric Department at St Thomas's Hospital. The effect there was dramatic and within a few years his department was highly sought after by patients and junior psychiatrists. He was an inspiring teacher, and many of his students took up psychiatry as their career.

Sargant worked at pressure – and smoked 40+ a day at one time – and was prone to spells of moodiness when events went wrong. In 1954 he became depressed and had a second, more serious, bout of tuberculosis. In some ways this forced 'sabbatical' did him enormous good during which he wrote *Battle for the Mind*. He returned to St Thomas's Hospital with renewed zest, and produced numerous papers, especially on the antidepressants, and lectured extensively.

He was Registrar of the old Royal Medico Psychiatric Association from 1952–71, President of the Section of Psychiatry of the Royal Society of Medicine, and helped to create the World Psychiatric Association. Initially opposed to the formation of the Royal College, he eventually accepted the majority's wish. Perhaps he was too individualistic for the College to vote him their first President. It was a pity. He was elected a Foundation Fellow in 1971 and an Honorary Fellow in 1973.

He married Peggy in 1940, and drew much strength from her. She survives him.

PD

BARONESS WOOTTON OF ABINGER, CH

Baroness Wootton of Abinger, perhaps the most distinguished social scientist of her time, died on 11 July 1988 at the age of 91.

Barbara Frances Wootton was born into an illustrious Cambridge academic family. She herself took a brilliant degree in economics at Cambridge, and later became a Fellow of Girton and so seemed set to follow her parents into the academic establishment.

Her entire life was catastrophically altered, however, by the personal losses she sustained in the First World War, losses which scarred her emotionally for the rest of her long life. Her husband was recalled to his regiment a matter of hours after their wedding: he was killed in action in France five weeks later. She had already suffered the loss of her brother, killed in 1916, together with countless others of her male contemporaries. In 1935 she married for the second time,

but her husband, George Wright, died in 1964. She was childless and this was yet another sorrow she had to bear in her tragedy-ridden life.

Perhaps the bitterness of her losses caused her to doubt, and then abandon, the benefits of the religion in which she was raised and become an agnostic. She passionately advocated equality and a respect for human dignity, principles she incorporated in her own brand of democratic socialism.

After leaving Cambridge in 1922, she worked as a research officer in the TUC and Labour Party Joint Research Department. She then became in turn Principal of Morley College, and in 1926 director of studies for tutorial classes in the Extra Mural Department of London University. In 1944 she moved to Bedford College, but resigned in 1952 to take up a Nuffield Foundation research fellowship, as a result of which she published a book of seminal importance, *Social Science and Social Pathology*.

In the pursuit of what she had set out to do she devoted herself to far more than esoteric, theoretical speculation: she was endlessly and untiringly engaged in practical matters. Thus, she was a lay magistrate for the best part of half a century and sat as chairman of Juvenile Courts in London. She was a member of innumerable committees, including the University Grants Committee, and was a Governor of the BBC.

In 1958 she was honoured by being created one of the first woman life peers, and in 1977 made a Companion of Honour.

In 1979 she was elected an Honorary Fellow of the College, and on 16 November of that year she delivered the 53rd Maudsley Lecture entitled 'Psychiatry, Ethics and the Criminal Law'.

Her lecture was a *tour de force*. In her characteristic lucid prose she explored the relationship between mental disorder and crime and looked forward to a time when "places of detention would cease to be labelled as 'hospitals' or as 'prisons', but would combine the best features of both: nor would their inmates be classified either as wicked or sick". She went on to advocate a switch from one treatment regime to another on purely pragmatic grounds and without having recourse to legal formalities.

Her ultimate paragraph is well worth quoting because it illustrates so well her somewhat quixotic philosophy aiming, as it does, at a Utopia which never was, and, alas, can never be.

She said, referring to the exchange of milieux between prison and hospital: "If this sounds like either a reversion to 18th century practice, or a Utopian dream for the future, I can only repeat what I have often said before, that in the course of a long life I have well and truly learned that to demand reforms whilst they are still Utopian is the best way to ensure that they will eventually become accepted as commonplaces".

The deaths of the following have also been reported:

ROBERT HENRY AHRENFELDT, Consultant and Research Associate, World Health & Institut de Psychiatrie, Paris.

ISAAC JOHN DAVIES, formerly Medical Superintendent, St Audry's Hospital, Suffolk.

ANTHONY CLARE FAIRBURN, Consultant Child Psychiatrist, Royal United Hospital, Combe Park, Bath.

MAX HAMILTON, Emeritus Professor, University of Leeds.

KARL LEONHARD, Emeritus Professor, Nervenlinik Charite, Berlin, East Germany.

MAHENTHIRAN SELVERAJ PERINPANAYAGAM, Consultant Psychiatrist, Castel Hospital, Castel, Guernsey, Channel Islands.

OLIVE NETTIE ROPER, formerly Consultant Child Psychiatrist, Hertfordshire County Council; 21 Olivers Way, Wimborne, Dorset.

ULRIC PAUL SEIDEL, Community Psychiatrist, Haringay Health Authority, North East Thames Region; 7 Marston Close, Fairfax Road, London NW6.

RICHARD STEWART WILKIE, Consultant Psychiatrist, St Brendan's Hospital, Bermuda.

WACLAW WOLLEN, MBE, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Darenth Park Hospital; 9 Fairlands Court, North Park, Eltham, London SE9.