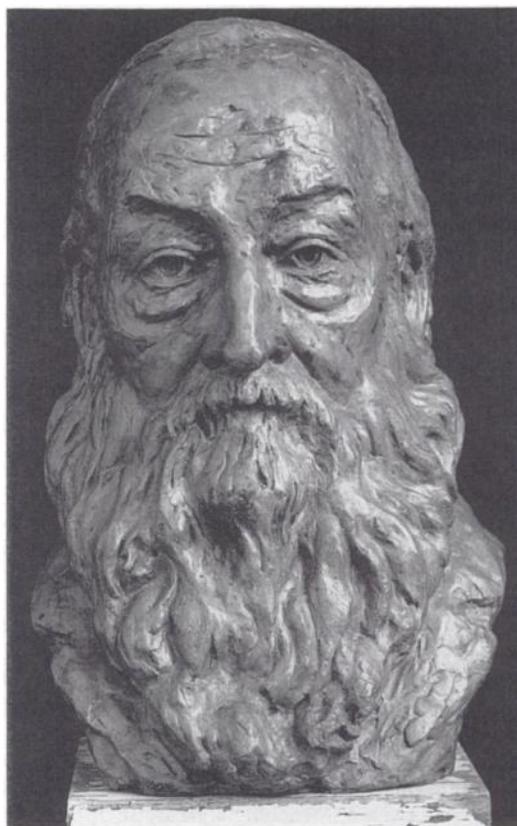


An article on 'The contribution of Henry Maudsley to the Institute of Psychiatry' by Dr Rosen will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Psychiatric Bulletin*.



The bust of Henry Maudsley was presented to the College by the sculptor, Dr Ismond Rosen, and by Mr Colin Lynn, Chairman of Lundbeck Pharmaceuticals, at the October Quarterly Meeting. The cost of casting the bronze was generously paid by Lundbeck.

Psychiatric Bulletin (1991), 15, 793–794

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

KAREL BOBATH, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, Bobath Centre for Handicapped Children, London

The treatment of disabled people has been transformed by a number of active, enabling methods of which neurodevelopmental therapy, also known as the Bobath approach, is one of the best known. It was developed by Karel Bobath's wife, Berta, a talented gymnast, sculptress and acute observer of posture movement and tone. Both were pre-war Jewish refugees from Nazism, born in Berlin but working in London for 50 years. They founded the

Bobath Centre in 1951 and the Bobath Foundation in 1985. Berta was appointed MBE in 1978 but both were recipients of many international awards.

Karel Bobath had an early training in orthopaedic surgery in Germany but in Britain worked as a psychiatrist for people with mental handicap in Hertfordshire. He was also a teacher and author. Berta found Karel willing to investigate the classical neurophysiology literature to explain phenomena she demonstrated in her work. These included inhibition of spasticity by postural adjustment and facilitation of active movement using key



points of control such as head posture and movement. She appreciated that development in childhood was not simply attainment of a series of milestones but the simultaneous acquisition of diverse skills within a wide age range. Thorough knowledge of the work of Magnus, Scaltenbrand, Sherrington and others was shared with Berta and her students, but such static physiology could not account for her success. He had no opportunity to carry out original neurophysiological research and it is only recently that this has been linked to the work of the Bobath Centre by Dr Bobath's successor, Andrew Evans. Part of Berta's genius was to appreciate the psychological dimension of disability and to seduce disabled people into achievement by mechanisms too subtle for the laboratory. She understood why people move as much as he understood how.

The three main achievements of Karel's career were his wholehearted support for a creative wife, his commitment to multidisciplinary training for the treatment of disabled people and his internationalism.

The first of these was uncommon in post-war Britain. For a doctor's wife to be working full time was unusual. That she should be a leader professionally was exceptional.

Postgraduate education in the care of disabled people, especially for therapists, has always been scarce and the Bobath Centre has been the major source of this in Britain for 40 years. Karel supported his warm personal teaching style by such books as *The Facilitation of Normal Postural Reactions and Movements in the Treatment of Cerebral Palsy* (1964), *The Motor Deficit in Patients with Cerebral Palsy* (1966), *A Neuropsychological Basis for the Treatment of Cerebral Palsy* (1980), and his chapter 'The Neuro-Developmental Treatment' in David Scrutton's *Management of the Motor Disorders of Children with Cerebral Palsy* (1984) when he was approaching 80.

Internationalism was reflected in participation in the biannual international meetings of the Medical

Education and Information Unit of the Spastics Society and in the way hundreds of students came to the Bobath Centre from around the world and maintained links thereafter. The Bobaths also travelled widely to teach in Europe, North America and the Far East, particularly, at an age when most are pottering about in slippers.

As a psychiatrist for people with mental handicap in Leavesden and Harperbury, Karel brought energy and hope for improvement. At first this led to excessive treatment for some people of extremely limited capability but others made unexpected progress. Overall, the Bobath approach has brought new optimism to the lives of many thousands of people.

By early 1991, Karel, now aged 85, was extremely deaf and unable to walk, Berta, aged 83, was failing in health. Having enjoyed Christmas with three generations of their family, they took their lives together and died peacefully on 20 January.

The funeral was attended by family, friends and close professional colleagues, but a large international gathering at the Barbican Centre in London on 28 July celebrated the lives and work of two remarkable people in a fitting way – not least by a professional musician, restored from a spastic quadriparesis as the result of a tumour, to being able to play Schubert's Sonatine in D Major.

IAN MCKINLEY

In keeping with the practice adopted by an increasing number of journals, it has been decided to drop the anonymity of our obituarists. From now on all obituaries will be signed in full.

However, the compilation of an obituary is an arduous and painstaking task, and as a mark of our appreciation of the help given to us over the past few years a list putting names to the initials is given below.

It occasionally happened, and will continue to happen, that an obituarist cannot be found and an obituary has been compiled by a member of staff. These have been unsigned and will continue so to be.

D. Abrahamson	A. H. Crisp	O. Hill	P. A. McKinnon	C. M. Parkes	G. B. Simon
U. B. H. Baruch	P. Dally	E. Hopper	S. Mahapatra	D. Parr	A. Sims
J. Bastianns	A. G. Deane	J. Hughes	P. Mason	H. E. Pelsler	K. Sivakumar
H. Beckman	K. E. Donnan	M. F. Hussain	H. Maxwell	M. Pine	S. Spencer
S. Benaim	L. Dunn	G. C. Jackson	H. Merskey	D. Ploog	G. Stein
G. Berrios	M. Y. Ekdawi	E. James	A. G. Mezey	D. Protheroe	A. Stevens
R. S. Bluglass	J. Ellis	J. Jancar	J. E. Miles	I. Pullen	H. Stewart
M. Bott	W. Ellis	F. A. Jenner	M. J. Minski	N. Retterstøl	J. R. Stuart
A. Bowen	T. W. Fenton	D. Jones	J. Moffatt	J. Roberts	G. E. M. Strang
W. Boyd	D. Flannery	K. Jones	W. R. Moffatt	P. Rogers	P. Sykes
A. N. M. Brittain	A. Galbraith	K. M. G. Keddie	N. Moore	A. Robin	P. Taylor
A. Campbell	A. Galea	N. Kessell	H. M. Morgan	H. K. Rose	J. Templeton
J. C. Carothers	M. S. A. Gawad	M. Leyshon	D. Murphy	M. Roth	W. L. Walker
D. Chiswick	P. Graham	I. C. Lodge-Patch	H. Neubauer	A. Roy	G. Wallis
A. W. Clare	A. M. Halliday	V. Lunn	M. Neumann	P. Sainsbury	D. C. Watt
D. Clark	M. A. Harper	D. N. Lynch	J. H. Newton	N. Sartorius	M. M. Whittet
C. Clarke	J. Harrington	W. A. G. MacCallum	D. Nugent	G. K. Shaw	H. Wolff
S. Cohen	M. T. Haslam	P. McGrath	A. Obholzer	M. Shepherd	P. G. Woolf
J. A. N. Corsellis	J. Hertzog	W. R. McKibbin	T. P. O'Riordan	J. Shires	C. Yorke