

Editorial

Gary Winship

It is with great sadness that I write with news of the recent deaths of two renowned TC colleagues, Joe Berke and David Millard. I came to know Joe over many years when I was living around the corner of The Arbours in North London. Anarchist and humanist, Joe was something of a hero for many of us. The last time I heard from him he was talking about setting up a new mental health facility, which was going to be called Akedia. Radical to the last. I also knew David over many years, and his wife Sheila while working in the NHS in Reading. I remember attending events at Green College which David organised and the tours of the observatory. Gentle and erudite, and as Sir Michael Dixon notes in his tribute, “a listening person”. Joe and David were much loved by TC colleagues, and they contributed so much to our field; they will be sorely missed but never forgotten. Sir Michael Dixon and Dr Victoria Tischler have very kindly shared their reflections on David and Joe.

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Sir Michael Dixon, Principal, Green Templeton College, University of Oxford. Tribute to Emeritus fellow Dr David Millard

David was a Founding Fellow of Green College in 1979, was Senior Tutor for four years from 1983 to 1987 and was Dean of Degrees for 17 years from 1991 to 2008 – a college record. He became an Emeritus Fellow in 1991, first of Green College and, since 2008, Green Templeton College. He was a much respected and great supporter of the college until his death on 13 January 2021.

David completed medical training in Birmingham, and after national service, specialised in psychiatry. He returned there to complete his training on the professorial unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He subsequently obtained a Consultant Psychiatrist post at Rubery Hill Hospital. He then took the unusual step of relinquishing this post to move to Oxford to become a lecturer in Applied Social Studies at Barnett House in Wellington Square, a post he held for about 20 years. He was closely involved in the education of future social workers and probation officers. He maintained a clinical role as an Honorary Consultant, within the Professorial Department of Psychiatry at the Warneford Hospital.

At an important time for health and social care, David thus had a foot in both camps as a clinician and also very involved in social and welfare studies. David moved very easily between worlds of medicine and social policy and was respected in both disciplines. As a result, he was integral to providing added value for college students on applied social studies courses through the 1980s.

On giving up his lectureship, he took up more clinical responsibilities as a Consultant in the Psychiatry of Old Age. Within psychiatry, he had a special interest in the therapeutic community movement, the subject of his MD thesis. For some years, he was Editor of the *International Journal of Therapeutic Communities*.

David was one of the 18 founding Governing Body Fellows elected in December 1977 under Sir Richard Doll's leadership. Right from the very outset of what would become Green College, David was fully involved as a member of the powerful General Purposes Committee charged to design and develop the putative new college and to formulate and recommend every decision for the development of the college, including the refurbishment of the Radcliffe Observatory building and the development of new buildings – in conjunction with the Warden. The General Purposes Committee met very, very frequently in the early days,

made rapid executive decisions, and all members had to be fully committed to the task. David was a very wise and senior voice and put his back into the development of the college. In fact, many of the very first non-medical students (when students were admitted in 1980) were MSc Social Policy students, and their entry was organised by David and a small number of other colleagues.

Music took a high place among his many interests in the arts, and after retirement, he obtained a degree in that subject from The Open University. In harmony with this interest, David has commonly been described as a very “listening” person, perhaps from his experience in psychiatry, and both earnest and sincere in his approach to people. He was never given to glib remarks or ill-considered opinions in his conversation, but weighed matters up thoughtfully.

Professor Victoria Tischler, PhD CPsychol, College of Medicine and Health, University of Exeter. Tribute to Dr Joseph H. Berke

Joseph Herman Berke, Doctor, Author and Psychotherapist, died at age 81. Joe was born in 1939 in New York, raised by his mother and grandmother in a Jewish community. After studying at Columbia University, he later graduated from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York.

Joe moved to London in 1965 to work with R.D. (Ronnie) Laing at Kingsley Hall, a therapeutic community (TC) in East London. Deeply influenced by 1960s counter-culture, Joe was a medical maverick, central to the “anti-psychiatry” movement and a passionate advocate of psychotherapy rather than psychoactive medication, even for those acutely mentally distressed. A radical to his core, Joe organised the *Dialectics of Liberation* international congress in 1967 in collaboration with Laing, an event that included participation by writer/poet Allen Ginsberg, civil rights campaigner Stokely Carmichael and the sociologist Herbert Marcuse.

Kingsley Hall was a safe haven for people to experience, “go down” and live through madness. Kingsley’s most well-known resident was Mary Barnes, a former nurse, who experienced a psychotic breakdown, and with whom Joe worked therapeutically, intensely and in ways that now seem deeply unconventional. This included Joe bathing and cradling Mary like a child and having physical altercations with her. Their remarkable relationship is revealed in their co-authored text *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey through Madness*, published in 1971 and later made into a screenplay. Joe encouraged Mary to express her distress via the medium of art, a rage she often depicted violently as “IT”. Her first works, on the walls of Kingsley Hall, were made with her own excrement.

It is through Mary’s work that I came to meet Joe, when researching the exhibition *Art in the Asylum: creativity and the evolution of psychiatry* (2012). Mary’s artwork was featured in this exhibition at the Djanogly gallery, Nottingham, which explored the historical and therapeutic importance of artistic creation in mental health care, and its influence on art history, for example, via the work of the British Surrealists’ Roland Penrose and Julian Trevelyan*. Mary and Joe remained close following her recovery. She later became a celebrated artist, and Joe her advocate and supporter. He was a frequent subject in her oeuvre, often depicted as a bear. Mary’s work has been the subject of several solo shows including Space gallery (2010) and “Boo Bah” at Bow Arts (2015), both in London.

Joe became a close friend and confidante. His curiosity and compassion towards others, meeting all with unconditional acceptance was hugely inspiring to me. Joe played a central role in the TC movement, founding the Arbours Association in the early 1970s. Although in ailing health, he continued work as a psychotherapist until weeks before his death. Joe was devoutly religious, observing his Jewish faith and sharing it with others. A prolific writer, he published *The Hidden Freud* in 2015, exploring the famous analyst’s Hassidic roots.

Joe was a giant of a man, physically and intellectually. He had a dark and wicked sense of humour and was a captivating raconteur. More than anything he had a huge and loving heart. Joe married twice and had two children (Joshua and Debbie) and five grandsons. His beloved second wife, Shree, is also a psychotherapist.

*There is short film of Joe visiting the Art & Asylum exhibition in October 2013; link here: Joe Berke & Mary Barnes – YouTube.

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