



columns

contemporary practice and attitudes need to be changed. There are many constructive recommendations that would assist in fulfilling National Service Framework objectives.

Though the views expressed are those of psychologists, there is much that many psychiatrists would agree with and indeed a lot of the research quoted is that of psychiatrists'. We would have welcomed a review that encouraged our members to take much more seriously what well-respected colleagues in psychology are saying.

We will take just one area that the BPS report focuses on – family interventions. These were pioneered at places such as the Maudsley Hospital more than two decades ago and have consistently been found to have a power at least equivalent to medication in reducing the relapse rates that understandably burden Persaud (the reviewer) and so many general psychiatrists (not forgetting the patients and families themselves). Yet we understand that it is rare for a Maudsley trained psychiatrist to have been routinely trained in these methods, whereas we are sure that they are experts at the latest medications. We found it worrying that Persaud does not have the experience of working with a psychologist in an acute or early intervention service and seems unaware of parts of this country and other countries where psychologists are key members of teams running acute services along the lines recommended by the BPS, and getting improved results.

Our reading of the report is that psychologists are not suggesting that they run services without doctors and medication – as Persaud rather mischievously suggests – but in partnership. We would encourage College members to read the review and wherever possible form better relationships with well-trained psychologists, many of whom have a great deal to contribute to modern psychosis services.

***Brian Martindale** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Psychotherapy Department, John Conolly Wing, Ealing Hammersmith & Fulham Mental Health NHS Trust, Uxbridge Road, Hanwell, UB1 3EU, **Jan Birtle** Director, Therapeutic Community Service, **Teresa Black** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Wolverhampton Healthcare Trust, **Chris Burford** Consultant Psychiatrist, St Ann's Hospital, **Marco Chiesa** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Cassel Hospital, **Joy Dalton** Consultant Psychiatrist, Camden and Islington Mental Health NHS Trust, **Sheilagh Davies** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Camden and Islington Mental Health NHS Trust, **Steffan Davies** Honorary Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Rampton Hospital, **Chris Evans** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Rampton Hospital, **Paola Franciosi** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Bournemouth Community and Mental Health NHS Trust, **Michael Göpfert** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Webb House Democratic Therapeutic Community, **Lorenzo Grespi** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, West End Community Mental Health Team, **Murray Jackson** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, Maudsley Hospital (emeritus), **Claire Jenkins** Locum Consultant Psychotherapist, West Middlesex University Hospital, **Chris Mace** Consultant Psychiatrist in Psychotherapy, South Warwickshire Combined Care NHS Trust, **Dale Mathers** Psychiatrist, Jungian Analyst, **Sally Mitchison** Consultant Psychiatrist, Cherry Knowle Hospital

Special interest sessions: some thoughts

Sir: The correspondence from McIntosh (*Psychiatric Bulletin*, January 2002, **26**, 37) on the use of her special interest sessions for a placement in public health was a welcome sight for specialist registrars such as myself because unless a training scheme has special interest sessions already established, this is often left to our imagination and resourcefulness, so one is grateful for any inspiration.

A recent study (Stephenson & Puffett, *Psychiatric Bulletin*, May 2000, **124**, 187–188) revealed that some trainees have real problems in knowing what to do about these sessions. Something along the lines of an internet database of pooled experiences might be valuable and I would be happy to be contacted by any interested parties.

Finally, we also need to be aware that placements outside of our employing trusts may not be covered either by trust indemnity or by our defence organisations, and it may be necessary to negotiate a contract with the trust our sessions are with.

Tom Picton Specialist Registrar in Psychiatry of Learning Disabilities, Heath House, Grange Way, Colchester, Essex CO2 8GU

the college

Art at Belgrave Square

Art at Belgrave Square – paintings by psychiatrists and people who have suffered mental health problems – is part of Mind Odyssey.

The College is very grateful to Henry Boxer, Director of the Henry Boxer Gallery, London, for the loan of a painting from his renowned collection of 'Outsider and Visionary' art. The painting *Inside Banstead Hospital* by Rosemary Carson, a service user, will be exhibited in the College from 10 May to 10 June 2002.

Rosemary Carson (b 1952)

Since the age of 6, Carson has occasionally experienced the sensation of maggots moving in her body. She describes her childhood as rather unhappy and attempted suicide at the age of 15. Since then she has spent periods in psychiatric care and her treatment has included drug

and electric therapies. Her work featured in the exhibition *Private Worlds – Outsider and Visionary Art* at the Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham, last year. The Wellcome Trust has recently acquired one of her paintings for its permanent collection.

Painting has long been important to Carson but never more so after she became ill again in 1996 when she started hearing voices. She spontaneously began to paint faces that she subsequently recognised as fellow patients from her earlier stays in psychiatric hospitals. This brought back memories. The need to capture these memories was reinforced by the urgings of the 'underlings' (spirits of dead patients), so called because they speak to her under the voices of others. Mostly they encourage her in her work, but sometimes they become frightening and destructive. At these times, she enters a local psychiatric unit until she feels able to return to painting in safety.

Changing Minds Campaign roadshow breakfast briefing

Stigma Alert

Tuesday 25 June 2002

We would like to invite you to a breakfast briefing at St Fagan's and Penarth Suite, Jury's Hotel, Cardiff, 8.00–9.30 a.m. (including a complimentary full Welsh breakfast), to hear about the work of the Changing Minds Campaign, and in particular Stigma Alert.

Stigma Alert is an initiative, funded by Jansse-Cilag, that takes the messages of the Changing Minds Campaign to primary health care teams, in particular general practitioners (GPs), throughout the UK.

Please come along to what should be a fascinating breakfast briefing. We need your help to promote the campaign locally. This will be the only opportunity that Members will have at this year's



columns

Annual Meeting to hear more about our important work.

A series of roadshows were held at the end of 2001 in the following cities: Aberdeen, Belfast, Birmingham, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Londonderry, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and Swansea. Each roadshow included contributions by a psychiatrist, a GP and a service user. A comprehensive and informative pack of materials was prepared for

each contributor, including a specially made CD-ROM and video.

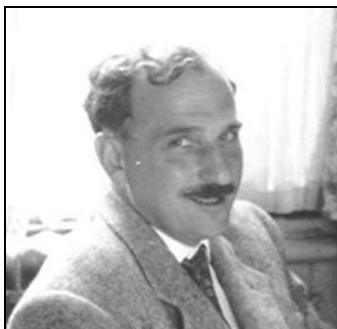
We were also able to send a colourful leaflet, *Time Wasters... Does it Ring a Bell?*, to all GPs in the UK. This brochure set out the aims and objectives of the Changing Minds Campaign and asked GPs to actively discourage stigma and discrimination among their colleagues and patients. It also addressed the consequences of stigmatising patients with

mental health problems in terms of time and resources.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Liz Cowan, Campaign Administrator, on tel: 020 7235 2351 ext. 122 or e-mail: lcowan@rcpsych.ac.uk, by Monday 17 June 2002 at the latest.

Professor Brice Pitt Chairman, Campaign Roadshow

obituaries



Leonard Crome MC

Former Pathologist, Fountain Hospital

Len was born on 14 April 1909 in Dvinsk, Russia, and died on 5 May 2001 in Stoke-on-Trent, England. He qualified in medicine in Edinburgh in 1934. Soon after, in 1936, he became concerned with the situation in Spain and decided to give his medical skills in the fight against fascism. By the age of 28, as permanent chief of the medical services serving the XIth and XVth Brigades, he improvised life-saving treatment in makeshift conditions such as tents, railway carriages and caves.

In the Second World War Len served with the Royal Army Medical Corp in North Africa and Italy and was awarded the Military Cross for bravery at the Battle of Monte Cassino.

After demobilisation, in 1947, he decided to concentrate on the pathology of learning disability. He trained at St Mary's Hospital under Alexander Fleming and Wilfrid Newcomb and, since he wished to specialise in neuropathology, he worked with Alfred Meyer and Elisabeth Beck at the Maudsley Hospital. In 1956 he became a pathologist at the Fountain Hospital – an international centre for the treatment and prevention of learning disability. He regarded himself as an 'ombudsman for the dead' and was scrupulous in obtaining permission for post-mortems from the relatives. He published widely and wrote a much quoted *Pathology of*

Mental Retardation with Jan Stern, where his meticulous wide-ranging experience added substantially to a fresh understanding of the aetiology of learning disability, and, thereby dispelled ancient myths.

He was much respected, generous and kind as a professional collaborator, and he welcomed students and colleagues from around the world. Fluent in many languages and receptive to many cultures, he was a 'citizen of the world on the side of the underprivileged'. He was a principled, courageous and honest man, qualities that sometimes were interpreted as controversial.

He was steeped in Russian culture, which suited him as the Chairman of the Society for Cultural Relations in the USSR from 1969–1976. In addition he was Chairman of the International Brigade Association, which he held until his death. After 'retirement' he wrote *Unbroken. Resistance and Survival in the Concentration Camps*, a book about resistance in the German concentration camps.

In March 2001 the Government's new strategy document on learning disability stated that 'forgotten generations of people with learning disability lost out... a revolution in care is needed... the four key principles of civil rights, independence, choice and inclusion' all lie at the heart of the Government's proposals. These principles were at the heart of Len's professional and political belief. He was 50 years ahead of his time.

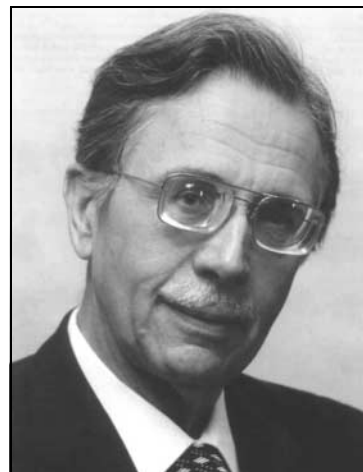
He is survived by two sons, John and Peter, a geriatrician.

Ilana Crome

Remembering Felix Post

Recollections assembled by Tom Arie

When Felix Post died last year there was great sadness but little fuss. Only one formal obituary notice appeared, excellently done by Robin Jacoby (*International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, November 2001, **16**, 1025–1027 – from which the picture of Felix is



reproduced, with permission). Now six friends here remember Felix as their teacher, and his unique mixture of meticulous authority with humility, kindness and quirky humour. My contribution, which will be confined to facts of Felix's life (a personal memoir of mine was in September's *International Psychogeriatric Association Bulletin* and November's *British Geriatrics Society Newsletter*) follows.

Born in Berlin in 1913 to a Jewish mother, Felix came to England in 1934 to complete his medical studies, qualifying at St Bartholomew's in 1939. His house jobs included medicine at the Hammersmith (where he would accompany the visiting psychiatrist A. J. (later Sir Aubrey) Lewis on his rounds). After brief internment as an 'enemy alien' he moved in 1942 to psychiatry in Edinburgh, where he later acquired the MRCP. There he saw the then 'hopelessness of most mental illness'. Professor D. K. Henderson urged him: 'look at all these old people here – why don't you write 'em up?', and, as Felix put it, 'that's what I've been doing ever since' (Then and now, *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 1978, **133**, 83–86).

In 1947, after army service, he joined the Bethlem Maudsley Hospital, where he remained until he retired in 1978. The Felix Post unit for older people is his memorial. There were many papers and three famous books: *The Significance of Affective Symptoms in Old Age* (1962),