



columns

by the London County Council Mental Health Department.

But in which direction should he point his genius and his hunger for work? It was probably his own personal suffering as a member of a persecuted minority, plus his deep-seated compassion for the underdog, that led him to seek out a neglected and best-forgotten section of the community. And what better example could he find than those he saw around him every day in the back wards in mental hospitals, among the frequenters of park benches or pavement-sleepers – to wit, those suffering from alcohol or drug misuse? These, he decided, were the people to whom he would devote his professional life and with missionary zeal he set to work.

His first NHS unit for the treatment of alcoholism was established at Waringham Park Hospital near Croydon, South London, to be followed by another for alcoholism and drug addiction at St Bernard's Hospital, Ealing, West London, now named the Max Glatt Centre. In theory, both units were based on group and/or community principles and, as his fame spread, so further units were established in the NHS, in the private sector and within the prison service, the best known being that at HMP Wormwood Scrubs.

Max was a prodigious worker. He served as an honorary consultant psychiatrist at four London teaching hospitals as well as acting as chair or member of innumerable committees. His advice was sought by important bodies such as the British Medical Association, the Home Office, the Royal medical colleges and councils concerned with the problems of alcoholism and drug addiction. To cap it all, he was appointed a part-time lecturer at several universities.

Tangible rewards began to flood from universities and academic bodies at home, and particularly, from abroad, who fell over themselves to award him prizes and honorary degrees. In 1970, The Royal College of Physicians of London elected him MRCP, to be elevated to FRCP in 1975. The Royal College of Psychiatrists elected him to the Foundation Fellowship in 1971, and in 1985 he was elected to the Honorary Fellowship. Prestigious prizes were heaped on him in America and, ironically, in Germany. It is worthy of comment that the suffering experienced at the hands of the Nazis failed to quench his love for Berlin, to which he returned whenever the occasion arose.

Max was a prolific writer. He proved as nimble with his pen as he was with a table tennis bat. This simile is apt because, surprisingly, he was an excellent and stylish table tennis player, who had represented Berlin as a student and at a senior club in Croydon much later. Having mastered the English language, Max's

contribution to the literature was enormous. *Inter alia*, by 1982 he had contributed 30 papers in the UK and abroad, written 9 chapters in important books and, as a single author, had published 4 books, all of them now classics. What is more, Max was a skilled editor. Between 1961 and 1978, he transformed *Addiction* from a parochial British journal into a publication of world-wide repute.

But Max, albeit a physician of the utmost fame, remained modest, gentle and good-humoured throughout his life. His love for his family was matched only by his devotion to and the strength he gained from his Judaism.

But what drove him relentlessly on was work; work was always the name of the game. He never retired and he died, as he would have chosen to do, with his boots on. The end came on 14 May 2002, the spread of advanced prostate cancer was responsible, in all probability, for the fall he sustained while conducting his weekly group at the Florence Nightingale Hospital. He was in his 90th year.

He leaves his wife, Gisella, herself a Holocaust survivor, his son Julian, two grandchildren and a host of grateful patients.

Henry R. Rollin



Roy Porter

Formerly medical and social historian[†]

Surely there has never been a historian who was elected an Honorary Fellow of both the Royal College of Psychiatrists and the Royal College of Physicians. In this, as in so many things, Roy Porter was unique. Yet he once said to me – and no doubt to many others – 'I'm not really a medical historian. I'm a social historian and an 18th century man'.

Roy's achievements and life – only 55 years unfortunately – have been extensively set out in the obituaries that appeared in all the serious newspapers.

These facts were also eloquently expressed in the encomia given at his memorial service on 22 April 2002 at St Pancras Parish Church, packed by those who knew him, had been taught by him, had heard his lectures or had at least read some of his unique literary output. The admissions' tutor from his Cambridge college told how Roy's scholarship papers had gained the highest marks ever known to his examiners. Yet he had not come from any intellectual hothouse.

By origin, Roy was a working-class cockney, born in 1946 and raised in a warm but crowded family home, lacking in all mod cons. In a delightful introduction to his *London: A Social History*, he described this 'stable, if shabby, community . . . undiscovered by sociologists'. From there, the family moved to a semi with indoor toilet which, in the 1950s, was definitely going up in the world. At his grammar school (would he have done so well in a comprehensive?), Roy was fortunate to come under the influence of an exceptional English master, although on arrival at Cambridge, he switched to history. He was recognised quickly as an outstanding student and mopped up the predicted double first.

He was then influenced by the psychoanalyst and scientific historian, Bob Young, founder of the Free Association Books, to study the 18th century history of geology, resulting in his first book, *The Making of the Science of Geology*. After this, he became Fellow, Director of Studies and – astonishingly for one so unconventional – Dean of Churchill College, with heavy teaching and administrative duties. Meanwhile, books began to appear on the history of environmental sciences, 18th century science and the Enlightenment. A wish to have more time for research and writing then led to his move to the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, first as Senior Lecturer and then as Professor.

It was there, particularly in association with Professor Bill Bynum, that his interest turned to the history of psychiatry. Their first edited product, together with the late Michael Shepherd, was a trilogy, *The Anatomy of Madness*. Today, its contents give a very uneven impression but, in fact, it opened a new era in the serious professional historiography of psychiatry. It also provided a launching pad for a new generation of historians of the subject, some of whom were psychiatrists. One of Roy's personal works, *Mind Forged Manacles*, which was a history of madness from the Restoration to the Regency, followed next, and clearly established his reputation. His literary output then began to assume Stakhanovite proportions.

Once asked what he was currently writing, Roy replied '14 books'. It was neither an exaggeration nor a boast, but

[†]Photo courtesy of The Wellcome Trust, University College London.



simply a fact. How he did it will probably never be clearly understood, though he certainly slept very little. One house guest who came down to his kitchen in the middle of the night found Roy deep in the works of Aristotle. Perhaps he had mild hypomania, without any of the pathological features. Practically every photograph of Roy that has appeared since his death has shown him with a wide and mischievous grin. Most people would feel more cheerful after even a casual conversation or telephone call with him.

Among the books that emerged in breathtaking succession were those on *A Social History of Madness* (up to the Regency), *Gibbon*, quackery in England, medicine in the 18th century, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, an encyclopaedia of the history of medicine, a social history of London, a medical history of mankind and a dictionary of 18th century history. Other publications are too numerous to mention and are to be found in many academic journals.

On top of this, he was a prolific reviewer of books, a regular broadcaster and a ubiquitous lecturer, rarely refusing an invitation, however humble or remote the audience. The two qualities that have been most often stressed since Roy's death were his kindness and his generosity; whatever his commitments, colleagues or students never came to him

in vain for help or advice. I was once astonished to receive a note of congratulation from him about a book review I had written in a fairly minor journal. It was the sort of kind action one often thinks of, but does not get round to doing.

With German Berrios, Roy was a founding editor of the journal *History of Psychiatry*, the first one to be devoted to the subject. He was also Editor for many years of *History of Science*. Some time after the Wellcome Institute moved to University College London, while still at the height of his powers, Roy surprisingly took early retirement and moved to the Sussex coast. His intention, he said, was to have more time for writing and travelling, to cultivate his allotment and learn to play the saxophone – he was a great jazz enthusiast.

Great historian though he was – in the opinion of his peers – it would be impossible to write anything about Roy without trying also to portray the person. With facial hair that oscillated between a beard and 'designer stubble', a shirt generously unbuttoned, a gold medallion or even an earring, jeans and cowboy boots, Roy was scarcely the picture of a reclusive scholar. He enjoyed good living in every form and enlivened every gathering he attended. Fame had not brought him riches though; he was unworldly about finance and his travel was by train or bicycle. His long-suffering literary agent found, when she

took him on, that he had already signed 29 publishing agreements, few of which would bring him any significant monetary income. His personal life can be best described as eventful; he was divorced four times – possibly a record outside Hollywood.

We had one disagreement when he contributed to a volume that was being edited by German Berrios and myself. Characteristically, his own chapter was one of the first to come in; it was stimulating and stylistically admirable. In writing about the 1920s, though, he praised the part of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* in which she sarcastically describes the intervention of a fashionable psychiatrist (based on Sir George Savage, who had treated her). But, I asked him, what would you have done if you had been the psychiatrist in 1923, with the options available then? For once, he had no ready answer and we agreed on a compromise text. Perhaps there is really no substitute for the actual experience of clinical responsibility, even for one so learned and full of human sympathy.

Roy died suddenly, while cycling from his allotment in St Leonards. Work on the history of psychiatry will never be the same without him.

Hugh Freeman

miscellany

Mental Health Act Section 12 approval training

The Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry is planning a second series of its Mental Health Act Section 12 approval training initiated in 2001 with the support of the Department of Health. One hundred and twenty Faculty members participated in the 2001 training sessions held in London, Cardiff and Preston. The programme is designed to provide full training for approval under the Act by considering the Children Act, Human Rights Act and the Common Law, while ensuring that the consent also meets the needs of child and adolescent psychiatrists. Feedback from participants in 2001 was very positive. The Faculty would like to invite those interested in

this training to contact Mr Robert Jackson at the Royal College of Psychiatrists (e-mail: rjackson@rcpsych.ac.uk).

The British Pakistani Psychiatrists' Association

The British Pakistani Psychiatrists' Association (BPPA) was formed in 2001 and has now become fully operational. Currently it has over 144 regular and 32 associate members but it is hoped that membership will double by the end of 2002.

The BPPA is not about nationality. It is about cultural diversity in multi-cultural Britain and it celebrates cultural heritage in collaboration and in integration with British communities. Psychiatrists from the

subcontinent have provided a high quality and consistent service to the NHS and wish to participate in the development of the new NHS with full vigour. The BPPA aims to develop social connections and peer support and has already established social and academic links with Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi and Arab associations. There is also an opportunity to enrich the psychiatric scene further by exchange programmes in psychiatry. Links have been developed with its counterpart in the USA and a joint conference is planned for 2003. This will offer advice on careers, training and other relevant issues confronting members.

For information about membership, please e-mail: akmal@britpakpsych.org.uk. You can also visit the BPPA web site at <http://www.britpakpsych.org.uk>.