



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.

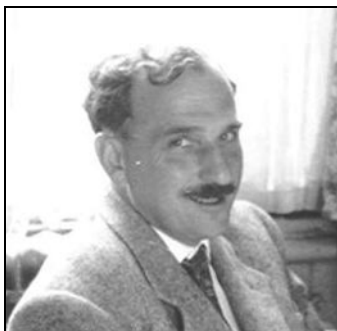
We were also able to send a colourful leaflet, *Time Wasters... Does it Ring a Bell?*, to all GPs in the UK. This brochure set out the aims and objectives of the Changing Minds Campaign and asked GPs to actively discourage stigma and discrimination among their colleagues and patients. It also addressed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

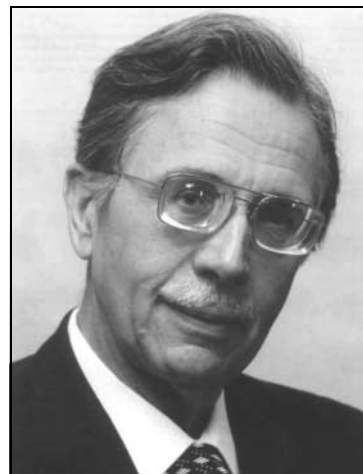
He is survived by two sons, John and Peter, a geriatrician.

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),