

Obituary

Editor: Henry R. Rollin

MAX HAMILTON, Emeritus Nuffield Professor of Psychiatry, University of Leeds

Max Hamilton died on 6 August 1988 at the age of 76. He was born in Offenbach near Frankfurt, West Germany, on 9 February 1912 and when he was 3 years old he accompanied his parents to England where they settled in North London.

He qualified from University College Hospital, London, in 1934.

After having worked in a number of posts, most of which were not to his liking, he joined the RAF as a medical officer in 1939. It seems he decided to become a psychiatrist while in the RAF and after being demobbed in 1946, he joined the Maudsley Hospital, London. His experience there was neither happy nor secure: he left after a short period as he was considered unsuitable for training in psychiatry. He returned to University College Hospital, London, still determined to pursue his choice of post-graduate studies in psychology and psychiatry. During this formative period he came under the influence of Sir Cyril Burt and many other well known psychologists.

His training at University College Hospital proved to be a sound basis for his future career, nurturing his initial interest in psychology, statistics and psychometry as applied to clinical psychiatry. He recognised the value of psychometrics in the investigation of psychological phenomena and in this respect he was well ahead of his time in utilising statistical methods. His psychiatric research commenced in 1947 with the investigation of personality characteristics of patients suffering from gastric and duodenal ulcers. His MD thesis was based on this topic. It is said that his assessors had difficulty in understanding his thesis, as they were unfamiliar with his pioneering use of advanced statistics in analysing the results of his investigations. He extended this work to the investigation of the relationship between personality types and psychosomatic disorders.

After leaving University College Hospital, London, he moved to King's College Hospital as



senior registrar and subsequently as senior hospital medical officer to Tooting Bec Hospital where he gained valuable clinical experience. He often prided himself on being one of the very few professors of psychiatry who had actually worked in a mental hospital. His early training was undoubtedly unusual for a future academic destined to become an eminent professor of psychiatry.

When he moved to Leeds in 1953, as senior lecturer in psychiatry, he concentrated on research into depressive disorders and the formulation of his rating scale which was published in 1960 in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry*. In the introduction to his paper he alluded to the possibility of the appearance of yet another rating scale for measuring symptoms of mental disorder, as being considered redundant and unnecessary. However, he hoped that since perfection had not been achieved in this field, he might be forgiven for publishing his own rating scale. His apologetic remarks were clearly unjustified; he achieved world-wide fame as the originator of what is popularly known as the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression. The scale has become an international standard of comparison for assessing other clinical rating scales prior to their use in clinical practice. Over the years, the scale has been translated into numerous languages and has been used all over the world, the last reported translation was from mainland China. It has been found to provide reliable inter-rater agreement in its use for assessing the severity of depressive illness. It has also proved its worth in psychopharmacological research. His rating scale on anxiety has been equally useful in clinical practice though less used in research because items of the scale are based upon subjective experience rather than objective measurement.

Following his return from the National Institute of Mental Health, Bethesda, Maryland, USA, he worked for several years as a member of the external staff for the Medical Research Council in Yorkshire. He was appointed to the Nuffield Chair of Psychiatry, Leeds University, in 1963, which he held until he retired in 1977. During his time as Head of the Department of Psychiatry, he achieved greater integration of the department by adding Clinical Psychology and Psychiatric Social Work sections. This led to the establishment of an MSc course in Clinical Psychology and a Diploma in Psychiatric Social

Work. During his term as Professor of Psychiatry, he laid great emphasis on the importance of academic psychiatrists doing clinical work, clinical research and clinical teaching. His own work clearly showed that all three activities could be satisfactorily combined. He followed the example expounded earlier by Eric Guttman that a warm and understanding sympathy for human suffering was not incompatible with scientific scepticism.

Max was a popular teacher and travelled widely in response to numerous invitations from home and abroad. He had a quick wit and an incisive and critical faculty. His lectures on Methodology of Clinical Research given at Leeds University are still remembered for their precision, clarity and usefulness. He edited three works by the late Professor Frank Fish – *Clinical Psychopathology*, *Schizophrenia* and *Outline of Psychiatry for Students and Practitioners*. He also edited a valuable book in the Abnormal Psychology series in which he included classical papers by Kraepelin, Gull, Pavlov, Breuer, Freud, Jung, and Adler among others. He was thrilled and honoured to be elected to the Presidency of the British Psychological Society in 1972 after serving as its Treasurer for some years. His interest and his contribution to the Royal College of Psychiatrists were duly recognised by his election to an Honorary Fellowship of the College in 1982. He was the foundation President of the British Association of Psychopharmacology and received the Paul Hoch's award in 1980 from the American Psychopathological Association for his distinguished contribution to psychiatric research.

His fascination with any problem offering a mathematical challenge was to form the basis of his Maudsley lecture to be given in October 1988, with the title 'Mathematical Model and Clinical Judgement'. It was a great pity that his untimely death deprived the profession of what would have been an undoubtedly stimulating and thought provoking paper. His contribution to psychiatry did not cease when he retired in 1977. He continued writing and lecturing and his unflagging zest never ceased to surprise others, some a lot younger than himself. His infectious enthusiasm for flowers, particularly daffodils and narcissi, delighted his friends. He retained an unabated interest in photography, music and astronomy.

Max will be remembered for his personal warmth, kindness and sense of humour. He is survived by his wife, Doreen, their son and two daughters and two sons from an earlier marriage.

SBM

A personal appreciation

Max was my professor from 1969 to 1977. I probably did not know him very well; he was 35 years my senior and saw a lot of other young psychiatrists pass

through his department, before and after me. But he made an impact on me and I am saddened by his departure.

My earliest impressions as an undergraduate and young post-graduate were of Max the terrifying, brilliant, sharp and abrasive teacher. To avert one's gaze during his teaching was not to achieve safety but it would convince him that one was avoiding, not concentrating, maybe sleepy, and he would make sure that any such deviation was harshly exposed. The victim of such an exhibition was always subsequently wary, attentive and respectful. His tactics commanded vigilance and trepidation. Not everyone liked him for his method, but he was an effective teacher.

Later, when I was his registrar, Max interviewed me for a senior registrar vacancy. I came second or third. After the interview he took me to one side. "Young man," he said, "When you have failed to get as many jobs as I have failed to get, you may be justified in feeling downhearted."

The enormous relief of knowing that such a 'star' had not always been hugely successful was a boost to my confidence. Max knew when to apply such a salve and did it for me more than once. He was proud to be the only Professor of Psychiatry to have worked as a medical assistant.

Max was a singularly able psychiatrist, researcher and teacher. He also had a sense of justice and rightness which was difficult to fault. Though occasionally this gave rise to what were considered harsh judgements, he always had at heart the highest moral standards. He believed passionately in the National Health Service and in social justice. At a gathering of NHS clinicians in the mid 80s he asked me quietly "You see all these people who work for the NHS – how many of them do you think vote Labour?"

Though he was an international star of psychiatry, Max's humour and down-to-earth temperament never faded. He delivered a brief talk on DSM – III. His slides were of two American psychiatrists. In a whimsical aside he said, "I have thought of giving a talk where all the slides are photographs of the people reviewed, not tables of their findings. That would be novel." That brief snatch was it.

I was in awe of Max, his mathematical, methodological, statistician's mind was very unlike mine. But he was human. "One man's dustbin is another man's research project," he said. I have not forgotten that lesson. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: Max saw form and value where others saw only misery or detritus.

Nine years after his 'retirement' I commented that I was glad to see him looking relaxed. I was not terrified, by this time and it was I who had, unjustifiably, relaxed! Max recounted the anecdote from Mark Twain about how the young man's father had

learned so much during the young man's adolescence. I enjoyed the interchange and we both laughed.

I am not a researcher, not a technically minded clinician. I could never emulate Max but I admired him as much as any mentor. I think the reason for this can be summed up in his humanity and sensitivity, which not everyone, I think, was privileged to see. He

combined these qualities with enormous academic, clinical and professional achievement.

Max, you gave us a tremendous amount. Some of us wanted more. I am grateful for my generous share. Thank you for everything.

Now relax.

DPF

At an international symposium held at The Friends Hospital, Philadelphia, on 17 and 18 October 1988, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the first ECT, a

moving tribute to 'Max' was paid by Professor Max Fink.

Miscellany

Policy Studies Institute 10th anniversary

The Policy Studies Institute is an independent research organisation undertaking studies of economic, industrial and social policy and the workings of political institutions. PSI was formed in 1978 by merger between Political and Economic Planning, established 1930, and the Centre for Studies in Social Policy (CSSP), established 1973. It publishes between 30 and 40 books and reports each year and recent publications have included *Doctors and their Careers*, which highlights the way that the skills and talents of women doctors are wasted; and *Illicit Drug Use*, which underlines the links between alcohol abuse, under-age smoking and illicit drug abuse. Further information: PSI, 100 Park Village East, London NW1 3SR.

Dr Bertram Mandelbrote

Dr Mandelbrote has retired after nearly 30 years service to Phoenix Unit, Littlemore Hospital and the Oxford Area.

Diploma in Family Therapy

The Department of Psychiatry, University of Manchester, will be holding a part-time course extending over a two year period beginning in late September 1989. Attendance is on one day per week during each academic term. The teaching focuses upon the theory and practice of family therapy. Further details: Dr Michael Kerfoot, University of

Manchester, Department of Psychiatry, Williamson Building, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL (telephone 061-275 2000).

New publication

Mental Handicap and Mental Health: A Community Service

by Nick Bouras, Katie Drummond, David Brooks and Matt Laws, is a research report describing five years of detailed monitoring of clinical activities, service developments and future challenges from the National Unit for Psychiatric Research and Development. Copies are available from NURPD, Lewisham Hospital, London SE13 6LH, price £5 (including postage and packing); cheques should be made payable to NURPD.

Dr Frank J. Ayd, Jr

Dr Ayd, an Affiliate of the College, was awarded the Open Mind Award in Psychiatry recently by Queen Fabiola of Belgium at the close of an international scientific symposium on drugs for emotional and mental disorders. Dr Ayd is Emeritus Director of Professional Education and Research at Taylor Manor Hospital, Ellicott City, Maryland, USA and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, West Virginia University Medical Center-Charleston. The two other recipients of the Award were Dr Pierre Deniker of France and Dr Paul Janssen of Belgium.