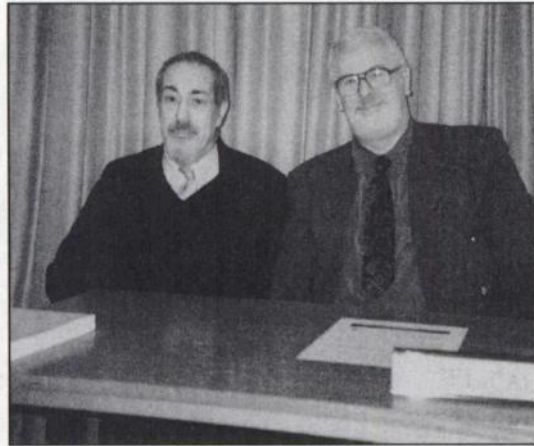


Obituaries

Mel Calman (1931–1994)



Mel Calman and Brice Pitt at the launch of 'Down with Gloom!'

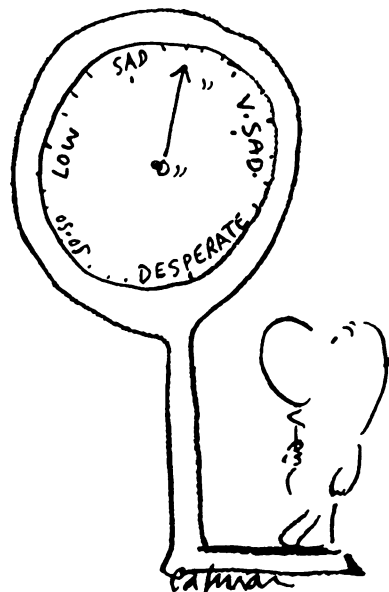
Mel Calman's deceptively simple cartoons are among the most recognisable in the world. Perplexed little people with big noses finding themselves in a variety of predicaments, make wry, shrewd comments, generally hilarious but sometimes touching and true. No stranger to depression or psychiatry (especially psychotherapy), he frequently made these topics the objects of his art, notably in his invaluable *Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*. In *Who's Who* his recreations are reported as 'brooding and worrying'!

Mel's association with the College began relatively recently, when he drew the cartoons for the first of the 'Help is at Hand' leaflets for distribution to the public, *Depression*. He went on to illustrate *Anxiety and Phobias*, *Anorexia and Bulimia*, *Sleep Problems*, *Surviving Adolescence*, *Depression in the Elderly*, *Depression in the Workplace* and, most controversially, *Bereavement*. The Public Education Committee considered at length whether the distinctive drawings could or should be used for this painful topic, not wanting to be in bad taste or seem insensitive, but not wanting to be too solemn and reverent either. When they saw what Mel had to offer they were in no doubt at all: 'I even miss her cold feet', 'I wish he were here to annoy me' and 'R.I.P. – I wish I could' are poignant and apt – not least now that he himself has gone. His work on the leaflets was

commissioned by an agency, but when a book for the Defeat Depression campaign was planned a year or so ago, the College approached him directly. As his collaborator, I met him on several occasions, over lunches and at his splendid Cartoon Gallery in Museum Street.

Compact and slightly saturnine, Mel had a straight face and a rather dour manner. He was highly professional, even pernickety. He was critical of parts of the layout of the leaflets, and was very particular that the book should state that he had contributed *drawings*, not cartoons. For one who came up with a topical pocket cartoon for the front page of *The Times* every day he took his time to come up with other drawings, and was by no means averse to recycling former efforts, having shrewdly retained the copyright. Thus several drawings in *Down with Gloom!* (his title, of course!) had previously appeared in the leaflets and elsewhere. It didn't matter – their appeal is enduring.

He was a man of many parts. Being, as *The Times* said, "a quizzical mirror of his age" he took



Drawings by Mel Calman (above and over page) from 'Down with Gloom!' by Professor Brice Pitt. London: Gaskell (Royal College of Psychiatrists)



a keen interest in all that was happening in the world, which made him an informed and entertaining talker. He was a keen theatre-goer, and his surreal plays were performed on Radio Three. He was also a movie buff, and as I was too, and of the same age, this gave us more in common than the book in hand. His suggestion that the British Film Institute be approached for a season of films featuring psychiatrists is one which ought to be pursued.

He was in fine form at the launch of *Down with Gloom* in January, with a rueful story of how the cost of his psychotherapy troubled him to the extent that he would work out how much of the cost of his therapist's worryingly expensive car he had now paid for! There is little fun to be had in being subject to depression, but Mel made his experiences remarkably entertaining. There was to have been a book signing at the Cartoon Gallery in February, but alas, by then he had died suddenly of his second myocardial infarction during the film 'Carlito's Way' in Leicester Square: he died much sooner than he should have done, but perhaps the place and manner of his passing would have pleased him.

The College mourns a good friend, and extends the utmost sympathy to his partner, the novelist Deborah Moggach, and his family. It is good to reflect that, had he been spared, he would surely in due course have been offered an honorary Fellowship: how nice if he had accepted it.

BRICE PITT

Harry Edelston, formerly Director, Bradford Child Guidance Clinic

Harry Edelston was born in York on the Eve of the Passover (as he used to remark) in April 1902. He died peacefully in hospital after a long and exhausting period of angina on 2 February 1994. He graduated MB ChB (Hons) from Leeds in 1924 and proceeded to the MD in 1953. He took postgraduate training subsequently at the

Tavistock Clinic in London. He became consulting psychiatrist to the Bradford Mental Health Services, Director of the Local Authority Child Guidance Clinic and consultant to the Bradford Marriage Guidance Council, as well as sometime consulting psychiatrist to Youth Immigration Services (Youth Aliyah) in Israel, this last being perhaps the happiest phase in his working life. An erudite scholar, he wrote a considerable number of books and many articles, mostly in the clinical field of medical psychology. In therapy he was an eclectic, and more so, being an individualist he followed no existing school. His views differed significantly from much of Freud's teaching, yet I sense that he considered 'The Master's' – as Freud had been termed – work as the bedrock of our understanding of human psychology and he paid tribute to others of his colleagues. He certainly did not hide his own light under a bushel, and was conscious of the efficacy of his own methods. In association with his peers he managed to keep just that little distance between them and himself, while his clinical apartheid was recognised in his styling himself as 'consultant in human relations'.

Edelston was occasionally ill-tempered but I liked him. He was dominant mostly but I enjoyed his forthrightness. Of counsel he had plenty and I respected his wisdom. Patience was not his forte, but such was his learning that I could easily defer to him, and he presented an armoury of therapeutic skill which one could only admire. He composed a number of aphorisms: "Psychology persists in describing the obvious in terms of the obscure: academic psychologists develop theories from studying rats running in mazes (and from other lower animals); the wise man learns from the experience of others, the fool only from his own mistakes – if then".

Like many of our other notable psychotherapists Edelston was Jewish and this, perhaps, was the Achilles' heel which restricted the impact of his otherwise expansive personality. He had an inferiority complex which, though hidden from himself, could be apparent on occasion to others. All in all Harry was a kindly man – let that be his tribute. His much loved wife, Esther, died in 1981, and he leaves two daughters and a son.

DAVID T. MACLAY

John Dalziel Wyndham Pearce, formerly Consultant Psychiatrist, St Mary's Hospital, London and at Queen Elizabeth Hospital for Children, London

Jack Pearce died on 25 January 1994. His career in psychiatry, spanning 60 years, encompassed child, forensic, and general adult psychiatry and both biological and dynamic approaches. It saw