

## Henk Lamberts

Influential academic who classified encounters in primary care

Henk Lamberts's work included coauthorship of the *International Classification of Primary Care (ICPC)* and international research into the content of general practice. He was not thrown by anything or anyone, but ill health took away first his eyesight and finally the integrity of his nervous system, leading to his untimely death at the age of 68.

Apart from being a scientist of the first order with drive and a penetrating intellect, Henk was a polymath, a lateral thinker, and fun to be with. At the annual Wonca (World Organization of Family Doctors) classification meetings, colleagues would compete to be asked to dine with him because he was entertaining and challenging, no matter what disagreements had preceded the evening meal: for Henk's formidable intellect was difficult to challenge unless one was fully and evidentially prepared. His command of the English language matched the most erudite native English speaker, and he had always read the most recent English literature as well as the academic literature relevant to his world.

Henk was born on 13 July 1940 into an influential family in Rotterdam, a month after the invasion of the Netherlands. His father was a solo general practitioner and member of the Dutch resistance who subsequently became a Labour member of parliament. Henk himself became a regional councillor in Rijnmond in 1963, two years before his graduation from the Medical School of Rotterdam, and subsequently city councillor in Rotterdam. He went on to found the Ommoord Health Centre and group practice in Rotterdam, an important and innovative centre of primary care and family practice. Here he created one of the first multidisciplinary primary care teams in Europe.

Henk left Rotterdam for the University of Amsterdam in 1984, where he remained professor and chairman for more than 10 years. Then he became a full time research professor until his retirement at age 65, in 2005. Even after his retirement he continued his work by supervising more than 20 doctoral students and also working extensively with the US National Library of Medicine to develop a website to consolidate the use of *ICPC* internationally, in more than 20 languages.

His work in community oriented primary care, which he started in Ommoord and continued in Amsterdam, required the development of a new analysis tool, a statistically valid classification

designed specifically for the clinical, behavioural, and social circumstances of family medicine and incorporating the nature of healthcare management for health in the community. This work, published in 1987 as *ICPC*, and coauthored by Maurice Wood, was the product of years of effort by a World Health Organization international working party, initially funded by the US National Center for Health Statistics. After publication, subsequent development was carried out under the aegis of Wonca, by Henk and subsequently many others. *ICPC* is translated into 22 languages, accepted by the World Health Organization as a member of the family of international classifications, widely used for the routine collection of data on episodes of care in the Netherlands, Japan, Poland, Malta, and Serbia, and also used in further studies in Australia, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Much of this work was done by Henk and his coworkers in Amsterdam and abroad, and his written legacy to the world of general practice includes three textbooks and hundreds of articles.

Although *ICPC* has never been adopted as a standard in the United Kingdom, it has been used here in several academic research projects. Additionally, Henk was a frequent visitor to meetings of the primary health care specialist group of the British Computer Society. Here his main impact was in the structure of the electronic health record and the importance of the concept of "health care episodes" in the longitudinal evolution and analysis of health conditions in primary care. Many will remember the juxtaposition of two titans of the worlds of health classification and terminology, when Henk and James Read met at a British Computer Society meeting in Gateshead in 1991.

Henk received several prestigious prizes and awards for his innovations and research in family medicine: he was honorary member of the Dutch College of General Practitioners, member of the US Institute of Medicine, recipient of the Maurice Wood

award of the North American Primary Care Research Group in 2005, and he was made honorary fellow of Wonca in 2007.

During his last two years of academic life he had increasing neuromuscular pain on activity, which increased inexorably in the three years of his retirement. Initially it was thought to be a neurological problem as a result of the use of statins, but this was revised to "a rapidly progressing picture of multiple neurological deficits probably due to a paraneoplastic syndrome, leading to respiratory failure."

However, he remained cheerful and active and continued to travel widely. In late November 2008 he visited the United States and Puerto Rico for the annual North American Primary Care Research Group meeting, where he was formally awarded fellowship



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of Wonca. In his acceptance speech he delivered a parable in which he paid homage to the considerable academic resource his wife and research colleague, Inge Okkes, had provided during his later career. Typically this was delivered spontaneously with considerable humour, to the delight of his audience.

While at home on 23 December 2008 the neuromuscular pain and concomitant paralysis became catastrophic, affecting his respiration and requiring admission to hospital. Little relief was available and by his own wish he returned home to his family. With help, his demise was

peaceful on 29 December.

His wife provided this vignette: "Henk was, among many other things, the funniest man I ever met. In his last hour, sick and aware of impending death he made me laugh. After several years of severe allergy to flowers we never had them in our home. Among his last words to me were 'In any case, in the death notice you may safely state: Henk loved flowers.'"

Henk leaves his wife and two daughters by his first marriage to Marjo, who died in 1989.

**Nick Booth, Maurice Wood, Chris van Weel**  
Henk Lamberts, coauthor of the *International Classification of Primary Care* (b 1940 Rotterdam; q Rotterdam 1965), died 29 December 2008 from neuromuscular paralysis, respiratory difficulty, and euthanasia.

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**Alan Marsh Barlow**

Former consultant pathologist Huddersfield Royal Infirmary (b 1928; q Manchester 1954; MD, FRCPEd, FRCPath), died from coronary artery disease on 21 January 2009. In 1963 Alan Marsh Barlow was appointed consultant pathologist in Huddersfield and was one of the last general pathologists but with a special interest and skills in clinical haematology. A prime mover in developing the Kirkwood Hospice during the 1980s, he laid the foundation stone in 1986 with his cofounder and became a life president. Alan was also an active member of the Yorkshire Regional Pathology Group and chaired the regional committee for leukaemia research. He retired in 1992. Despite having had two coronary artery bypass operations, he especially enjoyed long distance walking for charity. He leaves a wife, Gwenda; two sons; and two grandchildren.

**N G Graham**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b1669

**James Arscott Raleigh Bickford**



Former superintendent De La Pole Hospital, Willerby, East Yorkshire (b 1917; q St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, 1941; DPM, FRCPsych), d 15 January 2009.

After qualifying, James Arscott Raleigh Bickford was surgeon lieutenant in the Royal Navy (1942-5), serving in destroyers and hospital ships. After demobilisation, he worked at Bodmin Mental Hospital before co-authoring a *Synopsis of Neurology* in Bristol and setting up a psychiatric unit in Dundee. Appointed deputy superintendent at De La Pole Hospital, a large Victorian mental hospital, in 1953, he was superintendent from 1956 to 1981. He unlocked wards, developed

activity programmes, and during the 1960s made several commended films about the hospital's work and philosophies. He was passionate about walking, and with his wife, Margaret, wrote several historical publications. He leaves Margaret and four children.

**Jane Cox, Paul Fisher**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b1664

**James William Bowden**



Former medical superintendent Mossley Hill Hospital, Liverpool (b 1902; q Trinity College, Dublin, 1925; DTM&H, MA), d 24 December 2008.

After house jobs and graduating with distinction, James William Bowden ("Bill") was ship's surgeon for a year and general practitioner in Ireland for two. In 1930 he joined the East African Medical Service and in 1932 the Indian Medical Service, where he remained until independence, retiring a colonel. He came to England in 1948 and was soon appointed superintendent of Mossley Hill Hospital, remaining there until 1967. In retirement he continued to work, including lecturing to the Merchant Navy (1975-80) and as medical adviser to Ocean Fleets until he was 85, when he finally retired. Aged 97, Bill emigrated to New Zealand and was active till his death at 106. Predeceased by his wife, Heather, in 1995, he leaves a daughter and two granddaughters.

**Mitzi Nisbet**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b1685

**James Glen Stewart Buchanan**

Former general practitioner Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire (b 1924; q Edinburgh 1947; DCH, DRCOG, FRCGP), died from stroke disease on 25 January 2009.

James Glen Stewart Buchanan ("Jim") served with the Royal

Air Force in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). He was resident medical officer at Manchester Royal Infirmary before moving to general practice. He continued with his hospital work at the care of the elderly day hospital and assessment ward in Dumbarton Joint and the Vale of Leven Hospitals. An early trainer for the West of Scotland, Jim was later proud of passing the MRCGP in his 50s. After retiring in 1987, Jim continued to work with the Scottish Council on Alcohol (now Alcohol Focus Scotland) as chairman and board member until 1995. He leaves a wife, Elizabeth; two sons; and eight grandchildren.

**Patrick Trust, Gordon Stevenson**

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**Eva Marianne Diamond (née Bobasch)**



Former child, adolescent, and family psychiatrist Maidstone and Brighton (b 1926; q Edinburgh 1949), d 31 January 2009.

Eva Marianne Diamond (née Bobasch) came to the United Kingdom in 1939 in Kindertransport from Nazi-occupied Prague, a refugee without any English. She tried all her life to deal with the scars of the Holocaust, having lost her mother in Auschwitz and having had no contact with her father during her adolescence. She trained in psychoanalytic psychotherapy but worked full time in general adult, child, and adolescent psychiatry in the NHS, including at Shenley and Northwick Park Hospitals. She was also a member of the International Attachment Network, an organisation concerned with the development of attachment theory. Predeceased by her husband, Aubrey, in 2006, she leaves two children and four grandchildren.

**Mario Marrone**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b1588

**Kenneth Hugh Nickol**



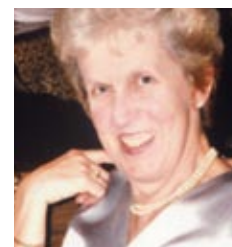
Former occupational physician Ford Motor Company, Essex (b 1924; q The London 1946; FRCP, FFOM RCP, FRIPH), died from mesothelioma on 5 January 2009.

After national service in the Royal Air Force, Ken gained experience in general and respiratory medicine. He joined Ford in 1966 until he retired at 65, for more than 20 years being senior medical officer in the foundry operations. Ken was closely associated with the Faculty of Occupational Medicine from its inception, later becoming chief examiner and a member of several working parties. He leaves a wife, Anne; two sons; and a grandson.

**Monty Brill**

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2009;338:b1671

**Avril Gwendoline Parry (née Clarke)**



Former general practitioner Greasby, Wirral (b 1936; q Liverpool 1960), d 12 October 2007.

Avril found examinations a trial and always expected to fail but never did. She was a general practitioner, continuing after retirement as a locum. Her practice included a higher than average obstetric list with GP deliveries either at home or in hospital. She enjoyed her family life and gave to Merseyside refugees and asylum seekers. She leaves a husband, Glyn; a daughter by her first marriage; and two grandchildren.

**Averil Mansfield**

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