Roy
Porter : A Great Historian

A Symposium

The January meeting of the Lewisham Local History Society is taking a slightly different format in that there will be several speakers. The meeting on Friday 30th January will be in the form of a symposium dedicated to the memory of the distinguished historian Roy Porter who died in 2002.

The reason for the society’s focus on Roy Porter is that from his birth in 1946 until 1959, he lived in Camplin Street in New Cross Gate and attended the nearby Monson Primary School. In 1958 he went to Wilson’s Grammar School in Camberwell. He studied history at Cambridge where he graduated with a double first in the Historical Tripos. He was a lecturer in history at Cambridge until 1979 when he joined the Welcome Institute for the History of Medicine as a lecturer in the social history of medicine. In June of 2008, Lewisham Council placed a plaque on his former home in recognition of his achievements.

The speakers at the meeting which is at the Lewisham Methodist Church in Albion Way, will be friends and former academic colleagues of the distinguished social and medical historian. Roy in fact commanded several fields of history - 18th-Century British ideas and society, the history of geology, London, medicine, madness, quackery, patients and practitioners, literature and art. He had over 200 books and articles published. The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine has said that the legacy of his prolific output has been the wealth of knowledge that he has left for future generations to enjoy and understand. From 1999 to 2000, Roy was the Director of the Welcome Institute for the History of Medicine.

The year 1994 saw the publication of his book LONDON : A SOCIAL HISTORY. This was described by David Canadine in The Independent as making the whole unique history of London comprehensible and accessible in a way that no previous writer has ever managed to accomplish.

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