

JOSEPH BOOTH LEE

1901 - 1974



"I think it's a good idea to learn in an old car." "Oh, but it wasn't an old car when I started." Image courtesy of Tom Thrift

Joe Lee was an extremely popular and important cartoonist who commented on the political and social events of his times. Although not specifically a motoring cartoonist, transport came into his subject matter. There are at least three 1930's cartoons about the Brooklands Race Track at the Brooklands Museum and I have seen a cartoon about the Anglo American Veteran Car Rally held in the 1960's (Could have been a cartoon for the programme?). These show quite a lot of detail and understanding, so possibly he was a motoring enthusiast?

Joe Lee was born near Leeds in 1901 and attended Leeds College of Art. He moved to London and had his first cartoon published in The Bystander magazine in 1920 and in 1921 worked as a political cartoonist for Pall Mall magazine. After the demise of that magazine he

worked for many magazines and newspapers. In 1934 The Evening News published the first of his cartoons, an arrangement that was to continue until his retirement in 1966. These were mainly under the titles of 'London Laughs' or in the war years 'Smiling Through'. He had the distinction of becoming the longest running daily cartoonist.

Besides his cartoons he also illustrated children's comics and produced advertising work including some for British railways.

His work is at a large size for a cartoonist on art board at around 18 x 12 inches. He worked in black and white with pen/ink and watercolour sometimes using a blue wash to give depth.



Courtesy

London Evening News

“Come clean, Mr. Emmet, it isn't a genuine Veteran Car at all . . .
you made it up yourself?”

London Laughs 1951 Image courtesy of Malcolm Jeal

Joe Lee died in March 1974. Interesting cartoon alongside published in London Laughs magazine in 1951 of one cartoon artist (Joseph Lee) poking fun at another cartoon artist (Roland Emmet). (Emmet was famous for his weird and wondrous devices)

FURTHER REFERENCES

<http://opal.kent.ac.uk/cartoonx-cgi/artist.py?id=104> Website of University of Kent giving details about Lee.