

# BJP The British Journal of Psychiatry psych



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# BJP Psych

The British Journal of Psychiatry

ISSN 0007 - 1250

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*British Journal of Psychiatry* (ISSN 0007-1250) is published monthly. The six issues starting January 2018 comprise Volume 212, the six issues starting July 2018 comprise Volume 213. Orders from non-members of the College, which must be accompanied by payment, may be sent to any bookseller or subscription agent or direct to the publishers: Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, UPH, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8BS, UK, email [journals@cambridge.org](mailto:journals@cambridge.org); or in the USA, Canada and Mexico, to Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, 1 Liberty Plaza, Floor 20, New York, NY 10006, USA, email [subscriptions\\_newyork@cambridge.org](mailto:subscriptions_newyork@cambridge.org). Japanese prices for institutions are available from Kinokuniya Company Ltd, P.O. Box 55, Chitose, Tokyo 156, Japan.

The annual subscription prices (including delivery by air but excluding VAT) for Volumes 212/213 are as follows:

	INSTITUTIONS	INDIVIDUALS
Print and electronic	£518/\$925	£418/\$651
Electronic only	£425/\$652	£271/\$423

Single issues are £50 (US\$89 in the USA, Canada and Mexico) plus postage. EU subscribers (outside the UK) who are not registered for VAT should add VAT at their country's rate. VAT registered subscribers should provide their VAT registration number. Claims for missing issues should be made immediately on receipt of the subsequent issue.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes in USA, Canada and Mexico to: *British Journal of Psychiatry*, Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, 1 Liberty Plaza, Floor 20, New York, NY 10006, USA.

Queries from College members about missing or faulty copies should be sent to Customer Services, Cambridge University Press, email [journals\\_societies@cambridge.org](mailto:journals_societies@cambridge.org), tel. +44 (0)1223 326070.

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Founded by J. C. Bucknill in 1853 as the *Asylum Journal* and known as the *Journal of Mental Science* from 1858 to 1963.

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Printed in Great Britain by Henry Ling Limited, The Dorset Press, 23 High East Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1HD.

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## Cover picture

*Frau mit totem Kind (Woman with dead child)* (1903) by Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945)

Käthe Kollwitz (1867–1945) was a German Expressionist artist. Born in Königsberg, she suffered anxiety as a child due to the death of her siblings. She went on to train at art schools for women in Berlin and later Munich. In her art, she addressed social and political issues, and was a committed socialist and pacifist. In 1933 after the Nazi Party came to power, her work was banned and she lost her academic post at the Akademie der Künste. In 1936 she and her husband were threatened with deportation to a concentration camp, but because of her by-now international stature as an artist, no further action was taken.

This powerful, and indeed disturbing, image of a mother cradling her dead child was produced by Kollwitz in 1903. Her son, Peter, who was seven at the time posed for the dead child. With cruel irony he was to be killed in the First World War at the age of eighteen. Kollwitz never fully recovered from his death. In her diaries, she repeatedly described her loss.

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