

The College

The Future of ECT

The College report on ECT, published in November 1981, has stimulated much discussion, with improvements both in practice and in training. A free poster, 'How to Give ECT', has been widely distributed. Careful clinical trials of the last few years have confirmed that ECT is an effective and valuable treatment for depressive illness and for schizophrenia, but, of course, it is not a panacea, and a few patients are even made worse by it. Some memory impairment is a common side effect. There is obviously still a need to define the predictors in the patient for good response and to make the treatment more quickly and more often effective, as well as abolishing side effects.

On 18 October 1982 the College's Research Committee held a closed all-day meeting to consider in some detail what further research is needed; a later meeting will examine what part the College should play in furthering this. The group of about 30 included psychiatrists (Drs R. P. Snaith, R. Palmer, J. Pippard, C. Freeman, A. Robin), anaesthetists (Professor A. R. Adams), medical physicists (Professor J. Linehan, Professor H. J. Terry), physiologists (Dr A. M. Halliday, Dr P. B. Fenwick), pharmacologists (Professor D. Grahame-Smith, Drs Brian Meldrum, W. R. Deakin) and biochemists (Professor H. Bachalard), among others. The sessions were chaired by Professor K. Rawnsley, Sir Desmond Pond and Professor A. Sims.

Participants were invited to report on the induction and spread of epileptic fits (natural and artificial), the effects of convulsant and anti-convulsant drugs, the flow of electricity through the head, the monitoring of fits, and the immediate effects of a fit and also the long-term effect of a spaced series of fits on cerebral blood flow and permeability and on changes in neuroreceptors. It became clear that very much more needs to be known about the strength, wave form and duration of the electrical current impulse(s) which provoke a fit, and every step in present practice needs some reconsideration in the light of the latest scientific knowledge. It is hoped to publish a report in due course.

The Hunter-Macalpine Library

Members of the College will know that following the death of Dr Richard Hunter in November 1981, the library of psychiatric literature and ephemera amassed by him and his mother, the late Dr Ida Macalpine, came on the market. This unique collection, adjudged by experts in the field to be the finest in private hands in the world, commanded, understandably, a very considerable price.

Efforts were made to raise the necessary monies to pur-

chase the collection for the College, with, unfortunately, no success. There was a real fear that the collection might cross the Atlantic and it was with some degree of relief, therefore, that we had news recently that it had been purchased by the library of the University of Cambridge.

We are assured that after it has been assembled and catalogued, the collection, which is to be known as the Hunter-Macalpine Library, will be made accessible to bona-fide students.

HENRY R. ROLLIN
Honorary Librarian

Professor Michael Gelder

At the meeting of Council on 20 October 1982, Professor M. Gelder was elected to succeed Professor T. Lynch as Vice-President.

College Library

The Librarian is most grateful for the many generous gifts of books received by the library. During the past six months the following members have kindly donated copies of their own works:

Dr J Bowlby *Attachment*
Dr S. Crown *Practical Psychiatry*
Dr A. Dally *Inventing Motherhood*
The Morbid Streak
Mothers
Why Women Fail
Dr P. Dally *Psychology and Psychiatry*
Prof M. G. Gelder *Agoraphobia: Nature and Treatment*
Dr L. B. Kalinowsky *Biological Treatments in Psychiatry*
Dr G. Langley *Reminiscence Theatre*
Prof R. J. Mathew *The Biology of Anxiety*
Dr C. Ounsted *One Child*
Dr A. H. Reid *The Psychiatry of Mental Handicap*
Dr D. Steinberg *Using Child Psychiatry*
Dr A. Stevens *Archetype: A Natural History of the Self*
Dr T. G. Tennent *Forensic Psychiatry: An Introductory Text*
Dr D. Wheatley *Psychopharmacology of Old Age*
Dr J. A. Whitehead *Mental Illness and the Law*

Closed for redecoration

The Library will be closed for redecoration for approximately three weeks during January and February. Please contact the Librarian, Mrs Floate, before visiting the Library.