

## *The College*

### SPRING QUARTERLY MEETING 1987

The Spring Quarterly Meeting was held in the Natural Philosophy Building at The University of Aberdeen, Scotland on 7 and 8 April 1987 under the Presidency of Dr Thomas Bewley.

#### BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting was held on 8 April 1987, attended by 54 Members of the College.

The meeting approved the election of the following Honorary Fellows:

Professor George W. Brown, Professor Alfred Meyer, Professor Erik Strömngren, Dr Charles Michael Bromiley Pare and Professor Nigel Walker.

#### MINUTES

The minutes of the Winter Quarterly Meeting held at The Royal Society of Medicine, London on 27 and 28 January 1987 and published in the *Bulletin*, March 1987 were approved and signed.

#### REGISTRAR'S REPORT

Although it is only two months since I last presented my Report much has happened at the College and there are several matters I would like to bring to your attention.

Council met on 18 March to work their way through a lengthy agenda. They agreed that a Special Committee be set up under the Chairmanship of Professor Rawnsley to look at Psychiatric Practice and Training in British Multi-Ethnic Society. Its term of reference will be firstly to explore the training of psychiatrists and the practice of psychiatry in British multi-ethnic society and, secondly, to investigate questions of discrimination against trainees, other doctors in psychiatry and patients on grounds of race. The Committee has been asked to report back and make recommendations in 18 months time.

Council approved a discussion document on Community Treatment Orders and agreed that initially it should be circulated to a small number of relevant organisations for comment. This report recommends amending the Mental Health Act to include a provision for giving medical treatment outside hospitals.

The Constitutional Sub-Committee, convened to consider amendments to the College Regulations, presented their Report to Council. Several changes to the Regulations were approved. A notice will shortly be appearing in the *Bulletin* concerning the availability of the new Regulations.

Council debated at length on the criteria for establishing Specialist Sections and Groups. Several members of the College have expressed a wish to set up special interest groups. It is obviously important to encourage and foster such endeavours but, at the same time, College resources are not infinite. Therefore, Council asked the Constitutional Sub-Committee to explore the matter in some depth and report back to Council in June.

Professor Griffith Edwards, Chairman of the Special Committee on Drugs and Drug Dependence, attended Council to introduce his report. It was agreed that the report should be published as a book entitled '*Drug Scenes: A Report on Drugs and Drug Dependence by the Royal College of Psychiatrists*'. The book should be available in the Autumn and it is planned to hold a major press conference to ensure maximum publicity.

Council formally adopted the Resolution on South Africa passed at the Business Meeting of the Winter Quarterly Meeting. It was agreed that this should be published in the *Bulletin*.

Council received a Memorandum, produced by Dr Michael Pare, on the activities of the College's Public Education Department over the past year. Various projects have been initiated. A list of 200 experts classified according to expertise has been drawn up to encourage the media to approach the College, rather than other sources, for information on any topic relating to psychiatry. Lunchtime and breakfast meetings are held when representatives of the press, radio or television are invited to intensive briefings on complex subjects such as Childhood Learning Difficulties, Suicide in Young People, Alcohol and Young People. There was a press briefing yesterday in Aberdeen, which was very successful to judge by the media coverage. The Christmas Lecture for schoolchildren was so many times oversubscribed that Professor Clare repeated it last week and once again it was very well received. Professor Gunn will be giving the Christmas Lecture in 1987. Council agreed that £25,000 should be allocated to the Public Education Department for 1987/1988.

Council agreed that, subject to planning approval, a fourth floor should be added to No. 17 Belgrave Square. This will house the Journal Department, the Public Education Department and various other offices which as a result will leave better accommodation for the scientific and

committee functions of the College. New lighting and heating systems will also be installed throughout the building and the kitchen will be enlarged.

The President will be convening a small Working Party to prepare a College statement on the various problems with confidentiality which are causing much concern to the membership.

The Court of Electors met in February and approved the Report on SHO and Registrar Training in Social and Community Psychiatry prepared by that Section. This will shortly be published in the *Bulletin*. The Court is discussing the various possibilities for increasing the activities of the College overseas and will be preparing a report in due course. Council approved the Notes of Guidance for

Regional Advisers: Consultant Posts in Alcohol and Drug Dependence, and has agreed that this will be published in the *Bulletin*.

I would like to thank Dr Fowlie and all his staff for the excellent hospitality they have offered the members of the College during our stay in Aberdeen.

Elections will be held shortly for the Office of Dean, for members of Council and for the Court of Electors. The closing date for nominations is 15 April. Finally I am sure you would all like to join me in congratulating Dr James Birley on his election as President.

PROF. R. G. PRIEST  
Registrar

## *Private Care for the Elderly Mentally Ill*

Report of a Working Party of the Section for the Psychiatry of Old Age

The principal recommendations in this report are as follows:

1. Those who seek to enter private care with the assistance of public funding should be offered careful medical, psychiatric, nursing and social screening, wherever possible before admission.
2. To assist in this process, an attempt should be made, in collaboration with representatives of the Royal College of General Practitioners, the British Geriatrics Society, and the Association of Directors of Social Services, to develop a screening procedure which would reliably indicate medical, psychiatric, and social needs.
3. Mentally ill old people resident in private homes should be offered surveillance, treatment and rehabilitation by local psychogeriatric services who should also offer counselling to managers and care staff in homes which accommodate such patients.
4. The level of financial support for residents should be determined more flexibly, so that the amount paid reflects both the nature of a resident's needs for care, and the local cost of providing this to an acceptable standard.
5. Methods should be found to bring the statutory and non-statutory sectors closer for the purpose of planning care for the elderly infirm.
6. Where provision of private care greatly exceeds local need, the implication for the local health service should be very carefully considered in planning applications for the development of residential or nursing homes.
7. A third party inspectorate should be created to monitor standards of care nationwide.
8. Emphasis upon private care in homes for the elderly should not deflect attention and resources from the need to develop better treatments and rehabilitation for those with mental illness, nor the need to provide more effective systems of care to the patient's own homes.
9. Consideration should be given to extending the period of notice of closure from three to six months.

### **Introduction**

Care for large numbers of old people in private homes, but at the public expense, is a recent phenomenon. In 1978, just 7,000 were so supported, receiving benefits averaging £15.71 per head, the total cost to the Exchequer being £6m. Six years later, the number had increased sixfold to 42,500, and the annual cost had risen to £190m.

This development has proceeded at different rates across the nation, being fastest in the South-East and in traditional retirement areas. Where the expansion has been rapid, marked effects on the management and discharge of elderly mentally ill people from psychiatric departments have been reported by members of the College Section for the Psychiatry of Old Age.

In response to this new situation, a working party of the Section was established and set certain tasks, which were as follows:

- (i) To examine the rate of expansion both locally and nationally;
- (ii) to collect information on the effects of a growing private sector upon psychogeriatric practice and the care of the elderly mentally ill;
- (iii) to study Government legislation concerning the registration of private residential and nursing homes;
- (iv) to consider ways in which standards of care might be monitored;
- (v) to review documents (a) supportive and (b) critical of the growth of private care at public expense;
- (vi) to consider the longer term implications of a development which might lead to a situation where the private sector became the largest care giver, at least within institutions, to the elderly mentally ill.

### **Method**

The working party met four times, and took oral and written evidence.