

The College

Winter Quarterly Meeting, 1990

The Winter Quarterly Meeting was held at the Royal Society of Medicine, London on 23 and 24 January 1990 under the Presidency of Dr J. L. T. Birley.

Business Meeting

The business meeting was held on 24 January 1990, attended by 36 Members of the College.

Minutes

The minutes of the Autumn Quarterly Meeting held at Kensington Town Hall, London on 26 October 1989 were approved and signed.

Registrar's Report

The second White Paper on care in the community was published towards the end of last year. A working group had already been set up to discuss the implications of the Griffiths Report and the Government's initial reactions to that report. This group has remained in operation to consider the second White Paper called *Caring for People*. The College has produced a report which has been sent to the Social Services Committee on Community Care which summarises the reactions to the White Paper and the preceding Griffiths Report. Our major concern is that funding will not be increased since it has been found that the total revenue expenditure on mental illness has remained static from 1974 to 1986, despite mental illness being designated as a priority care group.

The Mental Health Act 1983 'Code of Practice' had also been laid before Parliament and will remain there for 40 Parliamentary sitting days. As with the White Paper, this means that the College has very little time to respond. However, in general the College feels that this 'Code of Practice' is a considerable improvement on the original draft code. However, a comment in the preface that implementation of some recommendations would depend on the availability of resources was a source of considerable concern. Since it is also said in the Code that failure to follow it could be referred to in evidence in legal proceedings, these two statements could put psychiatrists in a very difficult position. Another problem with the code is confusion about the use of the term, 'Manager' which has now much changed its

meaning in recent years and in particular since the introduction of the first White Paper *Working for Patients*.

A new Special Committee on the treatment of perpetrators of child sexual abuse has been set up. This Committee is intended to be small but members from the College with an interest in psychotherapy, forensic psychiatry and child and adolescent psychiatry are included, as well as representatives from the Department of Health and the Probation Service.

Much discussion on 'Community Treatment Orders' has persisted throughout the past two years since the publication of the Mental Health Act Commission's Second Biennial Report. In view of the general support from the Mental Health Act Commission in the recently published Third Biennial Report and the interest expressed as well by other bodies, such as the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, it has been agreed that the College should take the initiative in creating discussions about the possible implementation of such Orders.

Medical Audit continues to be an important topic and the Working Party set up by Council in 1988 is shortly to be re-convened and intends to produce a further document based on a wide range of examples of good practice in audit.

Last summer was exceptionally hot, and the staff on the top floor of the College had a struggle to survive in temperatures of well over 90° on many days. Air-conditioning was installed over Christmas and we look forward to testing it in an equally beautiful summer this year.

Next year, 1991, will be the 150th Anniversary of the origins of the College. We are planning to celebrate this and already have a number of ideas. We welcome further suggestions on how to commemorate this important anniversary. We would like to hear from members or about members who may be able to participate in our celebrations. For instance, we are looking for jazz players, cabaret artistes and a clown. The South Western Division will be holding a meeting in Gloucester in the self same place that a body called the 'Association of Medical Officers of Hospitals for the Insane' was formed in 1841. Events which will recognise how the College has grown in scope as well as in numbers will take place, I hope, to make 1991 a memorable year.

Dr ANN GATH
Registrar