

**ANNUAL MEETING, 1979**  
**An Invitation to Trainees and Young Psychiatrists**

You are invited to give a 10-minute paper at the Annual General Meeting of the College in Exeter on 10–13 July 1979. There will be one or two special sessions at which anyone below the rank of consultant can speak; abstracts of the papers may later appear in the *Journal* or *Bulletin*.

The subject of a paper should be some investigation the speaker has undertaken, or is in process of carrying out, whether as part of his routine duties or not and whether funded or not. It could deal with some clinical observation or could be experimental and part of either clinical or laboratory research. An unusual case might be acceptable if well worked out and presenting some point of novelty. A historical note would likewise be possible. Clinical trial of a new drug or some variant of existing therapy, pathological observations, or a genetic or epidemiological study would be considered, but papers dealing only with method or with speculative hypothesis would in general not be accepted.

Intending speakers should offer a title and an abstract of up to 250 words (or a script of the full paper) by 1 May 1979, when the organisers will select and notify those chosen. This is to allow time for the accepted papers to be printed by title for circulation to members of the College beforehand. Offers from Registrars in non-academic units will be particularly welcome.

Please bring this notice to the attention to any of your colleagues who may be interested.

Communicate with Miss Jane Boyce at the College.

JULIAN BIRD  
JOHN CRAMMER  
GRAHAM LUCAS  
ANDREW SIMS

*(on behalf of the Research  
Committee and the Programmes and  
Meetings Committee)*

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**REPORTS AND PAMPHLETS**

**Public Relations in Psychiatry**, edited by M. T. HASLAM. Society of Clinical Psychiatrists, 1976. 28 pages.

This publication represents the work of a small study group under the chairmanship of the Editor set up to inquire into the problems of public relations in psychiatry and to 'give guidelines towards improving what is at present an unsatisfactory position'. The booklet, which is 'dated 1976' became available in the summer of 1978.

The group obtained opinions from people concerned with the BBC, with the Independent Broadcasting Association, with the Newspaper Publishers' Association and other newspaper interests including the Press Council, with TV authorities, with the Bar Association, with the Royal Society of Health, with the Editor of *World Medicine*, with the Director of MIND and with three doctors.

There are sections on the Courts and Legal Profession, on the Reactions of Colleagues, on the Reaction of Mass Media and on the Reactions of the General Public plus a section given over to the Editor of *World Medicine*, and the Director of MIND.

A discussion is followed by recommendations. This section proposes the establishment of a standing committee set up through the Royal College of Psychiatrists to maintain liaison with the Bar and to be accessible to the press through a public relations officer. The SCP also recommends that 'consideration should be given to the training of psychiatrists in the writing of reports to Courts and to developing an understanding of related disciplines in the legal and social science areas'.

Whether we should compete with such organizations as the National Association for Mental Health in commenting on 'hot' issues and whether the appointment of a PRO or a Press Officer would help in this remains a question for further discussion. At present the President, the Registrar and the Dean, by virtue of their offices, act as official spokesmen of the College on all matters, whatever their degree of urgency or gravity. The recent issue of the White Paper on reform of the Mental Health Act demonstrates how politically orientated organizations are in a position to react swiftly, whilst the College must await the result of mature