

Divisional Activities

The North West Division

The Division had a busy and successful year in 1979, for which we must largely thank David Enoch, Chairman, Mike Cashman and Harry Eaton, respectively Fellow and Member Representative on Council. The Executive Committee was alive with the business of the College, and among the stimulating and recurring themes discussed were sick doctors, Divisional prizes, the clash between Divisions and Sections and the relationship between the College and the public.

In March the Moss Side and Park Lane Special Hospitals entertained sixty of us. Dr Peggy Heill spoke of her work, and both Professor John Gunn and Dr Malcolm MacCulloch left us with ideas new to many. 'Security may lie in a relationship', Dr MacCulloch reminded us!

The Annual General Meeting at Wigan's surprising Post-Graduate Medical Centre gave an opportunity for local research to be presented by senior trainees of some sophistication. In a concise report of a sound study Dr C. Thomas warned further of lithium and haloperidol interaction.

It has become custom for a subject of general interest to be discussed at each quarterly meeting. Clinical psychology and social work have been reviewed by Dr M. Silverman and Dr P. Harper, and it was generally felt that difficulties in relationships were less common now.

A special meeting, organized by Dr M. Forth and the Secretary—'The State of Psychiatry'—opened the Autumn Term and gave us an opportunity to visit the new Royal Liverpool Hospital.

Mr D. Brandon, North West Organizer of MIND, knocked traditional psychiatry a little, as we had hoped. Karl Sabbagh, responsible for some superb TV documentaries, truly enlightened many of us. Mrs Peggy Pyke-Lees told us of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship and Dr Len Ratoff, an informed local family practitioner, spoke about what the GP could do. Then Dr D. A. W. Johnson gave us an unassailable block of evidence of the progress achieved in psychiatry, and in a stimulating and challenging review, Professor Sydney Brandon revealed our gross limitations and urged doctors to assume control of health services.

In the afternoon, Professor John Copeland skilfully handled one and a half hours of questions and discussion emanating from the ideas of the morning's speakers. Members, speakers and invited guests (professionals and voluntary workers in psychiatry) exhausted some subjects, reached agreement on many matters and left feeling much had been said and quite something achieved.

In October, at Clatterbridge Hospital's new Department of Psychiatry, we were all made envious of those having what most would not dare hope for, particularly when one

learnt of waiting lists of nurses and occupational therapists looking for work.

The Executive Committee continues to plan, developing ideas with the Programme Secretary, Dr Peter Maguire.

IAN B. COOKSON,
Secretary

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Our 5th Annual Conference was held at the University of York on 10 July. The theme being 'Recent Advances in Psychiatric Nursing', the conference was held as a joint event with our nursing colleagues. Over 200 people attended and were treated to six papers of a very high standard.

The conference opened with a talk by Peter Lindley on the development of nurse therapists. Martin Brown spoke about the Maudsley course in detail and showed an interesting video recording of a nurse therapist at work with a patient. In the discussion some concern was expressed that there might be inadequate medical supervision of the nurse therapists in behavioural therapy. He described the original research project and the courses now held at the Maudsley, Graylingwell and Moorhaven hospitals. [See Bird, Marks and Lindley, 'Nurse Therapists in Psychiatry', *British Journal of Psychiatry* (1979) 135, 321-9.]

We then moved on to the world of 'Psychosocial Nursing'. Miss Louise de Lambert, Senior Nursing Officer at the Cassel Hospital, discussed the specialized work done by nurses in the therapeutic community setting. The nurses play an active part in the assessment and management of the patients and their families. The hospital provides a one year post-basic training course in psychological nursing.

The afternoon session opened with a talk by Dr C. P. Seager from Sheffield on courses in higher training run by the Joint Board of Clinical Nursing Studies. While many places were available on the psychiatric courses, take up was unsatisfactory. Area Health Authorities, who set up the courses, seemed often to show little interest and nurses were often barred from attending courses because of lack of funds and difficulty in replacing staff for the duration of the course. More money and resources are obviously needed.

Using the provocative title 'The Vanishing Psychiatric Nurse', the next speaker, Miss Ruth Schrock from Dundee, brought us all down to earth with an impressive and amusing talk. She argued persuasively that all psychiatric nurses should be concerned with the total care of their patients. She felt that nursing specialists, psychologists and occupational therapists were poaching basic nursing skills leading to an