



## **Y Gymdeithas Seiciatregol Gymreig The Welsh Psychiatric Society**

### **Spring Newsletter 2006**

Two events have occurred since the previous newsletter. During last summer links were established with Professor Bruno Millett, the new Head of the Academic Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rennes. He was organising a conference in early November and invited the Society to take part in a Welsh-Breton session. Karl Rice, the secretary, has written about our enjoyable trip to Brittany. Also in November our autumn conference was held at Llandudno and during the general meeting the principles of our new constitution were agreed.

#### **Welsh-Breton Link**

The Congress of the Societe de Neuro-Psychiatrie de l'Ouest took place in Rennes on the 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2005. This happy coincidence with the resurgence of interest in strengthening links between the Welsh Psychiatric Society and Breton psychiatrists meant that there was a Welsh delegation at the conference.

The more experienced French speakers were present for debate on the conference theme 'Genetics, environment, heredity'. The WPS officers arrived in time to participate in the bi-lingual session on the Saturday morning.

That session was a great success. Various speakers referred to the long history of contact between the two psychiatric traditions, initially sparked by the efforts of Dr D A Jones. Dr Yves Thobie then outlined the local development of rehabilitation psychiatry and Professor Keith Lloyd presented, in French (faultless we were later told) a captivating presentation on the metabolic syndrome in serious mental illness.

The proceedings were punctuated by cultural events. We missed the main dinner, which was preceded by a private viewing of the Museum of Fine Art. In an acknowledgement of Celtic solidarity, the reception for the Welsh contingent took place in the Irish pub in Rennes, a very pleasant gathering.

We ended our stay with a thank you dinner for Professor Bruno Millet, our host. Our plan was to learn from him the intricacies of the nearby fish restaurant menu. He and his wife, Christine, assisted us admirably with that, as they had done with all our arrangements for attending the conference.

My expectation on attending my first French psychiatric conference was that there would be an emphasis on psychological aspects and philosophy. The program did not bear that out. There were presentations with titles such as 'Protective factors in early onset schizophrenia', 'Depression, interaction between genes and environment' and 'Types of early intervention in schizophrenia'. One of six workshops did offer what appeared to be discussion on the influence of psychoanalytical theory in the management of psychosis. I was reassured that Dr Thobie's presentation did confirm my expectation, with reference to political and philosophical influences on development of rehabilitation services.

That vein undoubtedly influenced the strangest encounter of our journey. In the spirit of diminishing the apparent international boundaries between our Celtic countries we had decided to stroll onto a train in South Wales and stroll off again in Rennes. This plan worked perfectly. On our return journey, the philosophical thread obliged us to stop for a coffee in "Les Deux Magots" in Paris. It was a delight to have a Jean-Paul Sartre look-alike sit beside us. He was an American who proceeded to warn us about the US-Nazi-Jewish conspiracy existing in the world. Sadly Eurostar would not wait and we did not have time to finish the diagnostic assessment.

## **Autumn Conference**

Within days of returning from Brittany our autumn conference - Innovations in Psychopharmacology was held at the Imperial Hotel, Llandudno. This was well supported - over seventy delegates attended. Again, the same formula was adopted; four speakers in the morning and workshops in the afternoon. The meeting had a real international flavour.

Professor Johannes Thome opened by giving a comprehensive account of a newly recognised clinical syndrome – ADHD in adults. Professor David Healy gave an interesting presentation about the psychopharmacology of bipolar disorders and for me what was particularly fascinating was his account of how the new mood stabilisers have emerged. After coffee Professor Rob Kerwin provided a glimpse into the future when genetic testing will become available to predict how patients will respond to anti-psychotic medication. The last speaker was Professor Sam Keith from Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. He gave an elegant account of the concept of remission in schizophrenia. Sadly despite all innovations in treatment remission is uncommon and the prognosis in acute schizophrenia remains grim. Professor Keith reminded the audience of the importance of convalescence and rehabilitation in a supportive structured environment. Unfortunately after the closure of the large mental hospitals this is rarely possible. This perspective was reinforced this week when I saw a young man with severe chronic schizophrenia who was admitted to a DGH psychiatric unit in 2002 and is still waiting for a long term NHS bed.

During the general meeting of the Society the principles of a new constitution were accepted with the recommendation that the new document should be set out in the same format as the original constitution. Officers were asked to prepare this in good time before the adjourned AGM this year and it is now available on the website, [www.wps.swan.ac.uk](http://www.wps.swan.ac.uk).

## **New Constitution**

### **Objectives of The Society**

- 1.1 To promote all aspects of mental health in Wales. This will include educational, professional and scientific activity.
- 1.2. The Society is keen to promote fellowship and friendship between members and to foster good links between north and south Wales.
- 1.3. To maintain and promote contacts with colleagues in all the Celtic countries and in particular to consolidate our links with Brittany.

### **Membership of the Society**

- 2.1. Membership is open to all mental health disciplines.
- 2.2. The Society welcomes other members if these will further the aims of the Society.
- 2.3. Intending members should apply to the Secretary who will send a form of application for membership. This form is also available from the Society's website, [www.wps.swan.ac.uk](http://www.wps.swan.ac.uk).

### **Management of The Society**

- 3.1. The management of the Society shall (subject to the directions of the Members) be a Committee consisting of the following members:-

1. PRESIDENT
2. VICE PRESIDENT (S)
3. CHAIRMAN
4. SECRETARY
5. TREASURER
6. CONFERENCE ORGANISER
7. WEBSITE COORDINATOR
8. COORDINATOR OF LINK WITH BRITTANY

### **The Election of Officers**

- 4.1. The officers will be elected at the AGM.
- 4.2. The president will be elected initially for a term of three years but with the option of a further term of two years.
- 4.3. From time to time vice-presidents may be elected. These will hold office for five years. At any one time there will not be more than five.
- 4.4. Nomination for President or Vice President(s) shall normally take place at the Annual General Meeting. These nominations must be made known to the officers in advance of the meeting.
- 4.5. The officers of chairman, secretary, treasurer, conference organiser, website coordinator and coordinator(s) of link with Brittany will be elected for two year and thereafter renewable for further periods of two years as the AGM decides.
- 4.6. The executive committee will consist of the officers and additional co-opted members so that the geographical spread of the membership is adequately represented.

### **Meetings of the Society**

- 5.1. Two conferences a year will be held, one in the north and one in the south.
- 5.2. At these meetings there will be an opportunity to hold a general meeting of the Society. One of these will be annual general meeting (AGM). This will usually be in the spring or early summer. Ten members shall form a quorum.
- 5.3. A Special General Meeting of the Society may be called at any time by the Committee, or, in compliance with a requisition addressed in writing to the Secretary, by at least eight members stating in writing the object for which they desire the meeting to be convened. Ten members shall constitute a quorum.

### **Subscriptions to The Society**

- 6.1. The annual subscription of The Society shall be payable by all members this will be reviewed from time to time at the AGM.
- 6.2. The subscription should be paid by standing order.
- 6.3. Any member who, in respect of successive years, has omitted to pay the annual subscription due, after a special application of the Treasurer, shall be deemed to have lapsed Membership.

## **Reports of the Society**

- 7.1. Minutes of The Society shall be kept and maintained by the Secretary.
- 7.2. The Annual Report of The Society shall be prepared by the Honorary Secretary and submitted at the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.3. The Treasurer's Report and Balance Sheet shall be submitted at the Annual General Meeting by the Treasurer.
- 7.4. The Treasurer will respond to any enquiries from the Inland Revenue.

## **Changes to the Constitution**

- 8.1. No change shall be made in the Constitution except at the Annual General Meeting or at a meeting especially convened for the purpose.
- 8.2. Any desired alteration in the Constitution, shall be proposed and seconded by members present at the Annual or Special General Meeting. Notice of such proposals should be circulated with the Agenda.
- 8.3. No alterations will be made to the Constitution except by a majority of two thirds of the Members present, and the decision shall be by a show of hands or by ballot, if required.

## **Spring Conference 2006**

It is now the middle of March and we are looking forward to our joint meeting with the Welsh Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. This will be in Swansea on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The theme of the conference is Protection, Probity and Choice. There are excellent speakers including Mike Shooter, the past President of the College. Hopefully you will have already had the details and the booking form. If not these can be obtained from Alison Lewis or from our website.

On Friday the Biennial meeting of the Welsh Division is being held while the WPS AGM will be held on Thursday evening 27<sup>th</sup> April at 7.00pm at the Dragon Hotel before our dinner. Our guest speaker at the dinner is Gareth Wardell who was the MP for Gower from 1982-1997. Since then he has been a member of several public bodies including the GMC. He is an excellent speaker and I am sure that we will have a very good evening. In addition we hope that Friday's speakers will be able to join us. Although the dinner is primarily for members of the WPS everyone is welcomed including guests. If the demand is great places may be limited so please book as soon as possible. Again if you have any queries please contact Alison Lewis or Don Williams.

## **Looking further ahead**

Plans are in hand for our autumn meeting in North Wales and next year we are beginning to explore the idea of a joint meeting with our Breton colleagues. This is likely to be in St Malo towards the end of the year.

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