

THE WELSH PSYCHIATRIC SOCIETY

Y GYMDEITHAS SEICIATREGOL GYMREIG

Autumn Newsletter 2006

Spring Conference 2006

This was a joint meeting of the Society and the Welsh Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists. It was held in Swansea on the 28th April.

On the preceding evening the Society's AGM was held at the Dragon Hotel. The new constitution was accepted and the main outcome of the meeting was that Professor Bill Fraser was elected as President. Mike Shooter and Professor Mike Owen were elected as Vice Presidents. This was followed by a dinner. The chief guest was Mr Gareth Wardell, a former Labour MP for Gower, who gave a lively entertaining address. His talk covered his parliamentary activity, his work with the GMC, his interest in Mental Health issues and this was interspersed with amusing anecdotes about his elderly father who is over ninety but still working as a barber in Tumble – an old mining village.

Eighty people attended the conference. The glorious sunshine outside encouraged the delegates to enjoy the cool of the Dylan Thomas Centre where the morning commenced with a lecture by Mike Shooter and Professor Richard Williams, on "Doctors Behaving Badly?" This centred on the interaction of the General Medical Council with doctors accused of "bad" behaviour and the impact on those falsely accused. The second lecture was by Dr. David Baldwin on "Unlicensed Applications of Licensed Psychotropic drugs". This was followed by a lecture by Dr. Andrew McCulloch on "Public Mental Health – What Does it Mean for Wales?" The final lecture of the morning was "Assessing Mental Capacity" by Professor Matthew Hotopf.

The Biennial meeting of the Welsh Division of the Royal College of Psychiatrists followed lunch.

The afternoon sessions were an expansion of the morning topics in workshop format, led by the morning speakers. The most popular session was "Doctors Behaving Badly?" where Mike and Richard elaborated on the topic of interaction with the GMC. Mike told us that the GMC was keen to learn from us how they could change their procedures, which have been lacking in consideration for doctors who are the subject of their investigations. Much discussion ensued.

The afternoon sessions ended and we returned to the Swansea sunshine, hoping we could save a bit for Llandudno in November.

Karl Rice

Llandudno Meeting, November 10/11 2006

Details of our conference on Friday, the dinner in the evening and the joint Welsh - Breton meeting on Saturday morning have been circulated. Please make every effort to come. Llandudno is a charming resort and is best described as a mini Brighton. Running parallel behind a long wide promenade with splendid hotels is the main street with a good cross-section of interesting shops. It's a town that has retained its charm and has not been spoilt by the march of ugly urban modernisation.

Our meeting will be particularly interesting as on this occasion there is an extra component. We are expecting a party of 25 colleagues from Brittany and their spouses/partners. Their visit is being organised by Lundbeck France.

On Saturday afternoon from about 2 till 4 there is a seminar/lecture by Dr John Sharkey a consultant psychiatrist from Jersey in the Channel Islands. It is a personal development programme called "My Beautiful Career" based on Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" but adapted to a career in psychiatry. It is an interactive and stimulating presentation, which was well received at this year's American Psychiatric Association meeting in Toronto. Lundbeck will be organising any translation help that will be necessary. If very popular, numbers may have to be limited.

In the evening there is a dinner at the Quay and Spa hotel at Deganwy, which is adjacent to Llandudno. The food and the entertainment will have a real Welsh component. On Saturday morning there is a visit to the lovely small town of Conway and its impressive Norman castle. Our Breton colleagues will have to leave at noon to return to Manchester airport.

The Society is keen for as many members as possible to take part in these additional activities that have been laid on for our Breton visitors. If you want further information please contact Alison Lewis on 01792 602355 or at a.lewis@swansea.ac.uk.

WPS ARCHIVE

Excellent news. During last year's meeting in Llandudno I was given an old cardboard box full of bulging files. The box was faded but I could just make out that it was from the Wine Society and addressed to Huw Bevan Jones.

The 29 files contain all the papers relating to the Welsh Psychiatric Society from its formation in 1960 and up to 1988. Thanks to everyone who has looked after all the papers and we are particularly grateful to Neil Davies who had looked after the box in his office at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd.

Sian my secretary has catalogued the files and when she was doing this she commented on how polite and gentlemanly the overall tone of the correspondence

was. The next step is to provide a permanent home for these documents. Further news in the next newsletter.

WPS 50th Anniversary

During the weekend of October 21st 22nd and 23rd 1960 the inaugural meeting of the Welsh Psychiatric Society took place at the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl. This popular coastal resort is halfway between Cardiff and Swansea.

Therefore by the end of October 2010 the Society will have been in existence for 50 years and it will be timely for this achievement to be celebrated.

NEWS

DENBIGH

After being vacant and becoming derelict for 20 years Denbigh Hospital is being redeveloped. The building and the site will be transformed into a variety of residential units and a business park. At least this will safeguard a splendid Victorian building but many local people are disappointed that it is not being converted to a museum and community facilities.

CARMARTHEN

The same process is happening at St David's Hospital, Carmarthen, alas the hospital is no more. It is to be sold to Carmarthenshire County Council. There are already plans for office accommodation and a new court for Carmarthen. However there will be a continuing psychiatric presence and the name is being kept on. A small number of acute units will be retained under the name of Hafan Derwen, St David's Park.

Naturally for the closure policy to take place there has been a drastic reduction in the total number of psychiatric beds, particularly in rehabilitation and continuing care. Mirroring this reduction is the huge increase in the prison population. All the jails are overcrowded and more are being planned and built. Sadly this increase in the prison population is related to the aggressive discharge policy of chronic patients. There is no doubt now that the closure policy was excessive and was undertaken without the build up of alternative facilities for patients with severe enduring mental illness. Clearly the baby has been thrown out with the bath water.

Mrs Olga Riordan

Mrs Olga Riordan has just died. She was the wife of Dr Tom Riordan a very well known Welsh Psychiatrist who was the last physician superintendent of Cefn Coed Hospital, Swansea. He was the first treasurer of the WPS. Despite advancing years he is still in good health and was able to attend one of our recent meetings with his daughter Dr Ann West who is a consultant child psychiatrist in Carmarthenshire.

Don Williams