

Dear Member,

Welcome to this latest edition of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Newsletter, No. 21, June 2006.

In this issue we have texts of three of the talks given at the one-day programme on 'Spirituality and Religion in Later Life' on December 14th, held jointly with the Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry. My thanks go to Rev'd Julia Head and Professor Susan Benbow. Other presentations from that meeting are awaiting research publication but the proceedings of the conference will be found in 'Old Age Psychiatrist', a quarterly publication of the Old Age Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry, which can be downloaded from the College website.

Also in this issue are reports of the talks given at the SIG March meeting on 'Psychosis, Psychedelics and the Transpersonal Journey'. Our thanks to Drs. Nicki Crowley, Tim Read and Ben Sessa. Dr. Crowley's talk was based on the paper for which she was awarded the SIG Essay prize, 'Psychosis or Spiritual Emergence? - Consideration of the Transpersonal Perspective within Psychiatry', which is published in this Newsletter.

Speaking of the essay prize, may I draw your attention to the 2006 prize? Full details of when and how to enter are given on the homepage of the Special Interest Group but I mention it here because submissions will need to be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group, c/o Sue Duncan at the College, by 1st October. So now is the time to start writing!

Other contributors to this Newsletter include Professor Mohamed Salem, who recently joined the Executive, and who has written a searching and comprehensively referenced paper on 'Religion, spirituality and psychiatry', and Laura Harrison, who offers an interpretation of multiple personality disorder according to the esoteric school of Alice Bailey. We are gratified to be able to encompass such diverse approaches to spirituality under one roof!

On 28th April, the ISPS (International Society for the Psychological Treatments of the Schizophrenias and other Psychoses) see www.isps.org/uk, held a conference at 15 Belgrave Square, sponsored by CHT (Community Housing and Therapy Trust), see www.cht.org.uk on 'Psychosis and Spirituality - Continuity and Discontinuity'. Speakers were Isabel Clarke on 'Continuity and discontinuity: cognitive science and psychotherapeutic perspectives', see www.scispirit.com/Psychosis_Spirituality Laura Liverotti, on 'Spiritual emergencies: kundalini awakening and psychotic episodes', Dr. Susan Mitchell on 'Practical Spirituality', and Dr. Glenn Roberts on 'Spirituality and varieties of Psychotic Experience: What do we mean and Why does it matter?' Our President, Professor Sheila Hollins opened the meeting and on behalf of the Special Interest Group, I was invited to outline the work of our Group in the College. It is very encouraging to find so many colleagues working in Mental Health who share the same concerns. It is hoped that the Proceedings of the day will in due course be available for download from the ISPS website.

As to forthcoming events, at the College Annual Meeting in Glasgow, on Tuesday July 11th, Drs. Sarah Eagger and Larry Culliford will be holding a workshop on 'Meditation – Keeping Mind and Body together'. On Wednesday,

July 12th, we have our business meeting, and later in the day, a session entitled 'United in spirit: the place of spiritual enquiry in the clinical assessment', with speakers Larry Culliford, Rob Merchant and Margaret McCathie, followed by a workshop led by Sarah Eagger.

Our next SIG programme will be held at the College on November 24th with the eye-catching title, 'Sanity, Sex and the Sacred: Exploring Intersecting Realms.' Full details of the programme are contained in this Newsletter and application forms will be available to SIG members in the next issue of News and Notes.

As always, I would like to encourage you to let me have any articles you have written that you would like to see published on our Website, as Word or rtf files to sduncan@rcpsych.ac.uk and headed 'for the attention of Dr. Andrew Powell'.

With best wishes,
Andrew Powell (editor)