

Dear Member,

Welcome to this latest edition of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Newsletter, No. 18, June 2005.

We include in this issue the texts of talks given at the joint meeting of the Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine and the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 'Healing from Within and Beyond: The Therapeutic Power of Altered States', held on Monday 9th May. Some 80 people attended this programme, for which we had extremely positive feedback. Our thanks to the speakers, Dr. Nicola Crowley, Professor Peter Conradi and Professor David Aldridge for their excellent presentations, and for the summaries of their talks, which are provided in this Newsletter.

The next event in our calendar is on Wednesday, 22nd June, at the College Annual meeting in Edinburgh on 'What is the relevance of Spirituality to Psychiatry today'. We have two guest speakers. The first is John Swinton, Professor in Practical Theology and Pastoral Care in the School of Divinity, Philosophy and History and founder of the Centre for the Study of Spirituality and Health in the University of Aberdeen. The title of his talk is on 'Why Psychiatry Needs Spirituality'. Our second speaker is Peter Gilbert, Visiting Professor in Health and Social Care at Staffordshire University and Project Lead for the National Institute of Mental Health (England) (NIMHE). The title for Peter's talk is 'Give me Strength! Infusing Spirit into Organisations: feedback from the NIMHE Project'. Both John and Peter have made distinguished contributions to the field Spirituality and Mental Health and we are very much looking forward to their presentations. If you are at Edinburgh, be sure not to miss these talks!

The autumn one-day programme for SIG members will be held at the College on 21st October. The title of the programme is 'Special needs, special gifts - learning disability and spirituality'. Further details are available in the Newsletter.

On December 14th, the Special Interest Group is jointly holding a one-day conference jointly with the Faculty of Old Age Psychiatry at the College on 'Spirituality and Religion in Later Life'. See the Newsletter for further details.

Lastly, our Chairman Professor Andrew Sims is standing down. When Andrew took over the chair from myself, he explained that due to his many other commitments, he would not be able to hold office for more than two years. We readily accepted this rather than lose his good services and we have not been disappointed. Andrew has held office with both enthusiasm and all the skills that befit a past president of the College, and we are delighted that he will be able to continue with us on the Executive committee. In the meantime, we have given serious thought as to who may be willing to stand as our next chair and we are confident that Andrew's successor will be someone to guide us with all the care and discernment that this office requires.

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 rcpsych@rcpsych.ac.uk and headed 'for the attention of Dr. Andrew Powell'.

With best wishes,
Andrew Powell (editor)