

## News from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

As I write this, the time is 24 hours to 2006 and although you won't receive the newsletter before 1<sup>st</sup> January, I would like to wish you all a very Happy New Year.

The SIG continues to be active and growing and we have an interesting programme planned for the year ahead that Andrew Powell will tell you about in the newsletter.

We had an enjoyable joint meeting with the Old Age faculty in December with some particularly thought provoking and moving presentations. I especially liked Julia Head's exploration of our response to pain and suffering. I would recommend reading the transcripts of that meeting which will be available in due course on our website.

We say goodbye to our treasurer, Gill Broster, and secretary, Julian Candy, who have served us so well over the last few years in carrying out the necessary tasks to keep the SIG operational. Heartfelt thanks to them for all they have done. We also welcome Tim Read as the new treasurer and Chris Findlay as the new secretary.

As well as working on the programme of events, the executive continues to be busy with educational objectives for the new curriculum that will encompass an awareness of and capacity to explore spiritual issues within the therapeutic encounter. I feel we need to develop more educational workshops on what specifically we mean by this; at this year's AGM in Glasgow we will be doing exactly that. We have also produced a college leaflet on spirituality and mental health (which you can read on the home page of the college website) and a draft guidance document for trusts. Many thanks to Larry Culliford for his specific work in this area.

I have been pleasantly surprised by the response of my own mental health trust to questions about the development of a spiritual care policy - they asked me to chair a committee to develop it. There may be others in a similar position and I would be interested in sharing expertise in this area.

Although we have many members, we don't really know much about the membership. We thought it might be useful if you were willing to complete a brief questionnaire in order for us to find out what areas you would like to SIG to cover. Of course we also had an ulterior motive, and that was to discover what skills there were in the membership and whether or not you wished to volunteer them! More of this to come...

We look forward to seeing those of you who can join us at our next meeting in March. I find the SIG meetings very special. They feel quite different from all the other meetings I attend - very nurturing and reflective. Do join us if you feel you need a 'thinking space' in your busy clinical schedule.

Best wishes for some reflective time in 2006,

Sarah Egger