

Friends of South West Wales Faculty '150 Club'

WHEN the President announced at the Exeter Spring Meeting last year that the Royal College would be in need of funds to furnish and refurbish rooms in the newly acquired No. 15 Princes Gate, the seed of an idea which had been planted at Welsh Council began to germinate. After much Presbyterian heart searching, and after sounding the reaction of Welsh Council and South West Wales Faculty Board members, it was decided to proceed with the venture of establishing a Friends of South West Wales Faculty, RCGP '150 Club'.

The scheme was approved at a meeting of the Board at Haverfordwest in November 1977, and a draft letter, which was approved by the next meeting of the Faculty Board in Swansea, was sent out in February 1978 addressed to fellows, members, and associates of the South West Wales Faculty. The letter explained the reason for the scheme, which was to help furnish No. 15 Princes Gate and perhaps to establish a continuing flow of money for local faculty or Welsh Council purposes. Several examples of clubs of this kind were quoted and it was hoped that fellows, members and associates, and perhaps a few grateful patients, might be pleased to sign for three years. Partners of members, members' families, surgery staff (for example, in the name of the practice administrator or secretary) were also suggested as possible contributors. There would be a draw with prizes of £250 or more, and smaller prizes given out at six monthly intervals. A minimum of 100 participants were needed to make the scheme viable and a 9p stamped addressed envelope was enclosed with the letter.

It was felt that the scheme would save a great number of coffee mornings for members' wives (thus avoiding any deterioration in the 'college wife syndrome' described some years ago!) and in any case would almost certainly be a better money raiser.

Sixteen completed forms, or promises of completed forms, were collected at the Swansea meeting, each order committing the member to paying £12 a year for three years up to May 1980 (some members felt that an open-ended bankers order was not acceptable). Within a few days there were 16 further bankers orders including five from one practice and three from a retired doctor. There were only a few after that and the response from the faculty membership was rather poor; very few had appealed successfully to patients, staff, and families.

In order to make the scheme worthwhile, therefore,

over 70 patients were approached in one town, mostly from one practice, and although this appeal took four weeks to accomplish, the response was excellent.

A rough analysis of participants is shown in Table 1.

It was explained in the letter that should the scheme not prove viable then the bankers orders would be returned to the senders. It was important that bankers orders were sent to the scheme organizer so that they could be numbered and the response assessed.

Once it became apparent that the scheme was viable a Secretary was appointed, a retired bank official, who was a patient of the organizer. A solicitor, who was a patient in the main practice and had family connections with a faculty board member, was also a valuable appointee. He drew up a Constitution with the help of the Secretary of a similar scheme run by another organization in the town. It was necessary for the Club to be registered under the Lotteries Act, 1976 within three months of its formation. An auditor, a bank manager from outside the faculty area, was also appointed.

The Constitution was straightforward and a management committee was formed consisting mainly of the Faculty Board Officers and six paid up members of the Club—now known as the 150 Club—as the 100

Table 1. Analysis of the participants involved in the scheme.

Patients	59 (including 5 dentists, 3 chemists, 1 solicitor and 1 undertaker)
Non-faculty board members	22 (including 5 from one practice, 4 from another, 2 trainees, and 3 from a retired doctor)
Faculty board members	17
Members of primary care team	6 (including 5 from 1 practice and 1 from another)
Members of a doctor's family	3
Consultants	2
(70 participants were from one practice)	
Stamped addressed envelopes not returned by faculty members	60 approximately (the strength of the faculty is approximately 100)

mark had been reached by the time the draw was organized. It is possible that more forms will be received in time for the next draw, as the Club is now entitled to take up to 150 members.

The first draw took place on Friday 5 May 1978 at a hotel in Swansea with a sponsored buffet meal to which members of the faculty board and their wives were invited. The first prize of £250 was won by the wife of the Secretary (to her considerable embarrassment), the second prize of £25 by a patient, and the three prizes of £12 each were won respectively by the retired doctor and two more patients from the same town, one of whom was the local funeral director. Fortunately it had been explained beforehand that as three quarters of the club

membership were from one small town there could well be a bias in that direction!

As a result of this favourable response more than £600 will be available in the first year and a similar amount or more in each of the following two years. There is no reason why the scheme should not continue beyond 1980 if the participants agree. In fact some schemes have quite long waiting lists once they get off the ground.

Should any Faculty Secretary be interested, further information can be obtained from Dr J. Owen, 159 West Road, Nottage, Porthcawl, Mid-Glamorgan, Wales.

JOHN OWEN

The general practitioner and social worker workshop

A CONFERENCE on "Marital dysfunction in general practice" was organized by the General Practitioner and Social Worker Workshop in Manchester from 21 to 23 April 1978.

Dr Mike Chatterton, Department of Social Administration, University of Manchester, spoke on "Family professionals—ideology, research, and treatment", during which he made some interesting points challenging some of the assumptions often made about the 'nuclear family'. The first day ended with a showing of a film *Sexuality and Communication* (Ortho Pharmaceuticals Ltd), which skilfully combined information about human sexual responses with demonstrations of verbal and non-verbal communication between husband and wife, and couple and therapists.

Sexual problems

The Saturday morning session was devoted to sexual problems. Dr Ray Goodman, General Practitioner and Psychosexual Therapist, Manchester, presented an entertaining account of the history of sexual beliefs, mores and theories from the earliest recorded times to the present day. He ended by discussing some recent animal research on the development of different 'sex centres' in the brains of the male and female fetus. The following speaker, Dr Tim Betts, Department of Psychiatry, University of Birmingham, described the situation which led to the formation of a clinic for the treatment of psychosexual disorders, and the training of professionals from various disciplines in this clinic. Two programmes were organized, one consisted of three-day theoretical courses, and the other involved one year of supervised instruction in the clinic. Despite the use of training staff in a service role, the clinic was virtually overwhelmed by referrals. The final speaker in this session, Mrs Joan Woodward, Brook Clinic, Birmingham, described her approach, emphasizing the necessity of dispelling the image of a clinic or consulting room with its medical overtones. A discussion ensued.

Marriage guidance

Saturday afternoon was devoted to "Marriage guidance in a general practice setting". Dr Roger Thornham, General Practitioner, Stockton-on-Tees, described the five-doctor group in which he worked, and then Mrs Kathleen Powell, Marriage Guidance Counsellor, presented data relating to her work at the practice and at the local marriage guidance council. She pointed out similarities in the people seen and the range of problems presented, as well as the differences, such as the length of each counselling session and the number of interviews, both of which were higher on average in general practice, which could be taken to imply a large unmet need. There followed a lively discussion, including some controversy about professional versus voluntary workers, during which the role of the voluntary worker was stoutly defended, especially in view of the relative lack of professional resources.

The final speaker, on Sunday morning, was Mr Christopher Clulow, Institute of Marital Studies, London, who spoke on "Marital interaction and first encounters". Mr Clulow commented on the large percentage of clients who contacted his unit for an appointment but failed to take up the offer of help from the Institute. A summing up of the Conference was then held under the chairmanship of Mrs Jean Gough, General Practitioner and Social Worker Workshop. A largely unspoken but recurring theme throughout the weekend was the large amount of unmet need in marital and sexual problems, which it is hoped may be better met after this meeting.

The Third Annual General Meeting of the Workshop was also held during the course of the Conference at which Mrs Jackie Kerr, Mrs Sandra Perez, and Dr Len Ratoff were elected to the Committee following the resignations of Mrs Eileen Ineson, Mrs Yvonne Horsfall-Turner, and Dr Ged Keele.

HEATHER SCOTT
Honorary Secretary