

thanked Dr R. MacG. Aitken for his remarkable success as the previous Chairman.

He announced that the Committee recommended the President in 1979/80 should be Dr J. P. Horder of London.

The Council rose to give Dr Horder a spontaneous standing ovation and his nomination was approved by acclamation. Dr Horder said he was very conscious of his responsibility to the members and fellows, to his colleagues outside the College, to the rest of the profession, and indeed to colleagues beyond our shores.

William Pickles Lecture

Dr Garvie announced that Dr Malcolm Taylor, Trent, was being invited to give the 1980 William Pickles Lecture at the Spring General Meeting in Cumbria.

Membership of the College under the ordinance 3 (d) of the Charter would be conferred on Dr M. Cattell, Secretary of the British Medical Association in Wales.

The Awards and Ethical Committee had decided to rearrange the dates for the Butterworth Gold Medal so that the closing date would in future be 31 March each year, and the awards would be announced by the June meeting of Council.

Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice

Dr J. A. R. Lawson, Chairman of the JCPTGP, reported that there had been a meeting between representatives of this Committee and of the Joint

Consultants Committee, and that he was glad to report that after considerable discussion the principal objectives of the JCPTGP had been agreed by both parties.

It had been necessary to make some concessions to the consultants and these had included the conversion of three places for observers to membership of the JCPTGP, the inclusion of general surgery as an alternative to accident and emergency among the categories of recognized posts, and the inclusion of a consultant on the appeals body.

Dr Donald Irvine also spoke about the long-drawn-out negotiations which had had their culmination in this meeting, and felt that the essential result had been the confirmation of the JCPTGP as the generally accepted authority on standard setting in training for general practice.

Annual Symposium

After discussion with the Chairman of the Research Division executive and the Honorary Secretary of Council, it was decided that in order to give time for adequate preparation, the suggested symposium on research in general practice should be deferred until 1980. Instead, the College would mark the International Year of the Child by a symposium on paediatric subjects.

The meeting ended at 15.50 hours.

PRACTICE ORGANIZATION ROOM

The 'General Practitioner's Office' is the theme of the exhibitions in the

Practice Organization Room during the next few months. It is proposed to explore the role and training of the receptionist, the equipment she uses, including medical records, the equipment and communications systems used by the doctors, and some of the furnishing problems which may arise.

The monographs on different facets of organization in general practice are being updated, and the display cabinets now show instruments which may be carried by the general practitioner.

The results of the practice organization questionnaire kindly completed by many College members have now been analysed and collated in the form of a gazetteer, so that doctors may identify any facet of organization which particularly interests them. Further information about practices which have made innovations is still welcome and questionnaires can be obtained from Mrs J. Mant at 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1PU.

FUTURE COURSES

June 1979

3 to 8 Teaching and Counselling—Part 1 (Across culture).

September 1979

7 to 9 Five Years on in Practice—Part 1. 16 to 21 Teaching and Counselling—Part 2 (Across culture).

October 1979

15 to 19 Five Years on in Practice—Part 2.

MEDICAL NEWS

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

Dr M. G. Sheldon, MRCP, General Practitioner, Banbury, Oxfordshire, has been appointed Senior Lecturer in Primary Care/General Practice in the Department of Community Health at the University of Nottingham.

Dr Sheldon is Treasurer and Research Co-ordinator of the Thames Valley Faculty of the College, and was awarded a 1975 Upjohn Travelling Fellowship and the Upjohn Prize in that year for the best report. In 1976 he was awarded a Stanning Overseas Travelling Fellowship.

He has written articles which have been published in the *British Heart Journal*, the *Journal of Cardiovascular Surgery*, the *Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, and

Age and Ageing. His main interests are audit of clinical care in general practice and information retrieval systems.

THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON POSTGRADUATE TRAINING FOR GENERAL PRACTICE

The Joint Committee on Postgraduate Training for General Practice and the Royal College of General Practitioners have approved the following schemes: Exeter (2nd rotation), Gloucestershire 'C', Harlow, and King's (King's College Hospital Group). The vocational training scheme at Burnley has been re-approved.

These schemes are recognized by the Royal College of General Practitioners for the purpose of the MRCP examination.

BASICS

BASICS (British Association of Immediate Care Schemes) is holding its Annual Scientific Meeting on immediate care at Southampton from 27 to 29 September 1979.

Full details can be obtained from The Research and Education Department, BASICS, 14 Princes Gate, London SW7 1BR. Tel: 01-589 1574.

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL IN MEDICAL EDUCATION

For over 20 years Graves Medical Audiovisual Library has been in the forefront of medical education concerning the use of audiovisual material, mainly in the form of tape-slide.

In 1978, an experimental scheme was

launched in association with the BLAT Centre for Health and Medical Education, to make videocassette programmes available for loan. This scheme is steadily growing in popularity as more postgraduate centres and medical schools acquire videotape recording and videocassette recording equipment.

This year sees yet another experimental venture by the Library—the use of microfiche. Long used by industry to replace old fashioned stores stock cards, and for overseas catalogues, microfiche provides a medium whereby a large amount of information or illustration can be condensed onto a postcard-size negative.

To assess the potential demand for microfiche, the Library has purchased a few copies of audiotape-fiche produced

by the American Society of Hematology.

As the cost of copies of good quality colour microfiche is relatively low, compared with the cost of an equivalent set of colour slides, this makes audiotape-fiche programmes a valuable tool for the individual or small groups engaged in medical education.

INSTITUTE OF FAMILY THERAPY

Clinical Workshops in Family Therapy, intended for those who have already attended an introductory course and have some clinical experience in family therapy, will be held on Wednesday mornings for 20 sessions, beginning on 10 October 1979. Enquiries should be made to the Course Secretary, Institute

of Family Therapy (London), 5 Tavistock Place, London WC1. Tel: 01-388 3872.

SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

British Rail is planning to increase the no-smoking accommodation in both Inter City and local services. London Transport have announced that they are considering a complete ban on smoking on buses and on the underground; one major airline has recently extended facilities for non-smokers and others are considering doing so.

There has been a marked increase in the provision for non-smokers in restaurants and catering establishments, and nearly all London theatres now ban smoking, as do a growing number of shops.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRAINING STAFF

Sir,
A joint Working Party set up by the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Association of Medical Secretaries met for discussions in February 1978, and since that time has held further meetings.

Terms of reference are as follows:

1. To suggest a national syllabus from both organizations for basic and continuing training of secretaries/receptionists in relation to general practice.
2. To promote co-operation between RCGP local faculties and the AMS in the arrangement of local courses.
3. To assess training facilities.

Particular points under discussion are:

- a) Facilities for in-service training for people already in post.
- b) Formal links at regional level.
- c) Publicity.
- d) Career structure.

Decisions taken so far include the following:

- a) That AMS syllabuses be the basis for all training for medical secretaries and receptionists in general practice.
- b) To facilitate arrangements of in-service training and maximum co-operation at local level, names and addresses of honorary secretaries of RCGP local faculties and AMS regional representatives have been exchanged.

c) Publicity—Lists of colleges of further education offering full and part-time courses for receptionists and medical secretaries will be published. 'Ad hoc courses' will be publicized as and when information is received. Co-operation of all those involved in planning and running such courses is being sought to assist in feed-back and evaluation.

d) To provide an opportunity for a career structure for general practice medical secretaries and receptionists the possibility of offering middle-management courses for practice secretaries is being explored.

At present we feel there is very little information about the scale and scope of existing non-examined courses for medical receptionists and secretaries for which appropriate certificates are available. The Working Party will be grateful to hear from any member involved in the planning, running, and assessment of any such courses, whether they are successes or failures.

Further meetings of the Working Party have been arranged.

ANNE PLUMLEY
General Secretary
Association of Medical Secretaries

STEPHEN OLIVER
Chairman
Joint AMS/RCGP Working Party
14 Princes Gate
London SW7 1PU.

Sir,
Your editorial on training staff in general practice (*March Journal*, p.131) rightly points out that most surgery receptionists have been trained in post and have acquired their skills by experience. In making a case for training such staff you suggest that this is a task best handled by the local faculties.

Apart from mentioning Anderson's course for medical receptionists, you have failed to notice other successful courses which have already taken place. In the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire faculty Dr E. H. J. Cotter ran a course in Welwyn Garden City in 1975/76 (Cotter, 1978). Similar courses have taken place in Watford in 1976/77 and in Bedford in 1977/78.

In all these courses finance has not been a problem as the small fee necessary to cover expenses has usually been met willingly by the receptionists' employing doctor. Attendance at the courses has been high and receptionists have gained confidence and insight by sharing problems with colleagues, as much as in the content of the sessions.

A. J. BALFOUR

Reference

- Cotter, E. H. J. (1978). In-service training of practice receptionists. *Update*, 16, No. 4, 475-479.