

ers/course organizers and a local faculty board member.

It would therefore seem to be unrealistic to describe the workshop forum as a useful basis for continuing education for the average general practitioner.

JOHN S. MAKIN

Plympton Health Centre
Mudge Way
Plympton
Plymouth PL7 3PS.

HALF A TICK

Sir,

My master had today told me of the writing in your January *Journal*, p. 55, about that wee beastie the sheep-tick, which is as common as heather in my territory. I am only a poor working retriever, and my Sir never tires of telling me that I have a tiny mind, but I assure you that what mind I have boggles at the suggested method of treatment.

Suppose one day, when you were as usual wearing the editorial vicuna, that you saw approaching you one of your pack brandishing this burning thing to eliminate a minor blemish on that expensive garment. How would you feel? I confess that, if I were to see such a situation developing, I might forget my noble lineage, my instincts and all my up-bringing—and bite the beggar. For I am sure that my beautiful golden coat is quite as valuable as yours.

My Sir has a different method. Aided by Madam, he uses what he calls a quick grab-and-screw with a small pair of Spencer-Wells, which manoeuvre seems to satisfy him and is only momentarily disagreeable to me.

This morning I was speaking about all this to Corrie and Mirk, my two closest neighbours (uncouth sheepdogs, admittedly, but quite decent fellows for all that, and good for a lark on occasions) and when they had finished rolling about at the thought of the fuss that Sirs and (especially) Madams made about such harmless little creatures—"Dammit, when they get fed up, they just fall off and we squelch 'em"—they said that their Sir had heard that to cover the beasties with butter caused their pre-

ture leave-taking. My Sir says that we will try this next summer.

TOSCA MILES

The Kennel
Meiklie House
Glen Urquhart
By Inverness.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COLLEGE

Sir,

General practitioner trainees in Devon and Cornwall held a regional study day in Plymouth on 28 October 1980, attended by nearly 70 trainees, trainers, course organizers and other interested parties. The conclusions drawn are relevant to the future of the College.

During the morning, each of five groups discussed one of the following:

1. Alternative medicines (such as homeopathy, acupuncture and chiropractic).
2. Teaching methods.
3. Counselling.
4. Emotional strains of professional isolation (discussing the problems of depression, alcoholism and drug abuse among general practitioners).
5. Audit.

Each group presented its findings in a plenary session before lunch. The proposed solutions to problems discussed under the above headings required either small inter-practice groups or similar groups for trainees.

The mid-afternoon session was a debate on the motion: "This house believes that an MRCP examination is inappropriate for raising standards in general practice." The motion was won by 56 votes to 12. In summary, speakers from the floor demonstrated a body of opinion against the MRCP exam in its present form, a body of opinion against the concept of an exam for admission to the College and an overwhelming feeling against an exam in any form as a prerequisite for entrance to general practice. It seems that many trainees are afraid that, in the future, the MRCP exam will be to general practice what the MRCP exam is to hospital medicine, not actually compulsory but effectively a prerequisite. The debate result was a

motion of 'no confidence' in such a system.

Prior to the study day, each trainee attending received an information pack and two RCGP pamphlets, *Aims and Activities of the College* and *How to Become a Member*. They also received a proposed alternative scheme for gaining membership of the College; this has as its basis continuing regular attendance at an RCGP sponsored inter-practice general practitioner workshop.

In view of the small group work findings concerning inter-practice general practitioner groups, and the result of the debate, the regional chairmen's group of the Devon and Cornwall trainees would like to stimulate further discussion of this alternative proposal for gaining membership of the RCGP. To this end, the study day report and the proposed alternative scheme will be sent on request from the address below.

T. N. GRIFFITHS

Study Day Organizer

Vocational Training Office
Postgraduate Medical Centre
Greenbank Terrace
Plymouth PL4 8QF.

COLLEGE ACCOMMODATION

Sir,

I feel I must respond to the letter from Dr D. S. Browne (November *Journal*), for since I have been Chairman of Council I have been impressed and encouraged by the large number of commendatory comments made to me about the unfailing courtesy of the College staff in respect of those seeking accommodation from Mrs Larrington, and from those who have experienced it in respect of the service they have received from Jack and Maria White and other members of the domestic staff.

I have no doubt that misunderstandings can occasionally occur and we regret any occasion when this may have happened. I am sure, however, that I speak for the great majority of College members in thanking the members of our staff for all they do, often at the most unsocial hours at the weekend and late in the evening.

A. G. DONALD

Chairman of Council

14 Princes Gate
London SW7 1PU.