

### **Wessex Branch Meetings—1978**

- 21st September Cigarette dependence and its treatment.  
Mr. M. Raw, Addiction Research Unit, London.  
Venue—Portsmouth.
- October Workshop Management of children and adolescents with behaviour disorders.  
Dr. B. Brown, Tennai School, Birmingham.  
Venue—Winchester.
- 24th November The Teacher—Child Interaction Project.  
Mr. W. Yule, Institute of Psychiatry, London.  
Venue—Southampton.

(Further details from ROD HOLLAND, Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley Abbey, Southampton).

### **Study course on social skills training with adolescents**

October 7-8, 1978, Tennal School, Balden Road, Harbourne, Birmingham, B32 2EW.

A 2-day non-residential course for Professionals interested in developing social skills programmes with adolescents. There will be lectures, video-tapes and workshop sessions. 40 places available with a fee of £18 inclusive of coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. Applications stating qualifications and experience to Mr. S. Spence, Study Course Governor, Tennal School, Balden Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B32 2EW.

## **Correspondence**

### **The role of the nurse therapist**

The strength of the BABP lies in the common aim shared by members of various professions. In that context, it would seem worth while from time to time to look at ourselves as behavioural psychotherapists and see how we can or should function. The proportion of nurses among our membership has been rising rapidly and they may now constitute the second largest profession in the Association. With this increasing interest in behavioural treatment among nurses, there has been concern in several quarters to establish the nature of the nurse therapist's role. As we all know, the interest in some quarters has not seemed particularly benign and it is not, therefore, surprising that some of our members took exception to the seemingly rather cavalier announcement that the Association would be setting up an enquiry into the role of the nurse therapist. One of the letters published in the last issue of this Bulletin implied that this is a matter that must be dealt with by the profession itself. Although that must be true of any formalization of role, it seems ridiculous to rule out this Association as a forum for discussion, since all members are concerned with the progress of behavioural psychotherapy.

So—to specifics. As is normal Association practice a working party was convened by one Branch—in this instance Birmingham Branch. The convenor was a nurse therapist as

was a majority of the working party. No specific remit was given by the Executive Committee and the Working Party was about to gather general views from interested parties, in particular from nurse therapists and from training courses. Apart from these mailed requests (which have not, I think, as yet gone out) an open invitation appeared in this Bulletin. That nurse therapists were excluded from the request was a clerical error—a weak excuse but believable to anyone reading to the bottom of the announcement since inclusion is then implied.

Thus, this was not a sinister exercise. It happened to arise at a time when nurse therapists were feeling justifiably angry; and certainly more information should have been supplied. I hope that our membership will now see this as a worthwhile enquiry and that everyone will be prepared to give their views.

ANTONIA WHITEHEAD

Dear Sir,

**re: Treating Drug Takers**

In the introduction to his paper “Treating Drug Takers” (Behavioural Psychotherapy 6/1 January, 1978), Roger Paxton quotes me as saying that “People who take heroin, morphine and other drugs of this type are . . . feckless and irresponsible and even chronic and untreatable” (Bewley, 1973).

I wrote nothing of the sort and would like to reproduce in full the two sentences which have been misquoted, since I would not wish readers of “Behavioural Psychotherapy” to assume I am either foolish, opinionated or a therapeutic nihilist. I wrote:

- (1) “Since the feckless and irresponsible are more likely to use drugs and develop complications from the use, doctors should be aware of their responsibilities, and the responsibility for dealing with tiresome . . . patients should not be avoided.”
- (2) “Since much illness is chronic and untreatable, alleviation and continuing support may be more important than curative programmes.”

Neither of these states that opiate users as a class are “feckless and irresponsible” and “chronic and untreatable”. The first sentence implies that *some* of them *may* be feckless and irresponsible, not that *all* of them *are*. The second sentence does not refer to opiate users at all, but to a general principle of medical practice which is relevant for opiate users as well as other people.

Might I suggest an old-fashioned behavioural remedy for this author. He should be given 100 lines to write out:-

“When I quote from papers, I should do so correctly”.

Yours sincerely,  
THOMAS BEWLEY,  
Consultant Psychiatrist