a sterile anachronism. In this respect a body like ASME is of the greatest importance. Already its activities have generated a great deal of enthusiasm throughout the country. In arranging a meeting such as this one it can cause the interchange of ideas from all parts of the country and by comparing and contrasting activities in different areas it can generate pressures for improvement. The greater the proportion of those engaged in medical education who are members the more effective the body will become.

REGIONAL ORGANISATION

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The South East Metropolitan Region comprises the county of Kent together with East Sussex and a corresponding sector of London.

This area is bounded largely by the Thames and the Channel and so is fairly clearly defined. Communications are good, as main roads and railways radiate from London to all the coastal towns: the greatest distance, from London to Folkestone, is 70 miles while Tunbridge Wells, in the middle of the region, is about 30 miles from Woolwich, in the London suburbs, and from Brighton, and 45 miles from Canterbury.

It should therefore be possible to produce a reasonably coherent, overall plan for postgraduate education in this region. This paper gives a very prosaic sketch of this plan, which may serve as the basis for discussion of regional organisation.

It is in Brighton, Woolwich and Canterbury that major postgraduate centres are being developed. Special units function at all three; all will have Accident Centres and at the Brook Hospital at Woolwich there are already Regional Neurosurgical and Thoracic Surgical Centres which draw cases from a large part of the Region. There is a large mental hospital near each one, each of which may be expected to make its contribution to postgraduate activity in its area. At Brighton and Canterbury there are, of course, new universities, the first having a particular interest in the biological sciences and the second in the social sciences. These might be expected to increase the opportunities of the medical centres for extending their work to include some of the basic and para-medical sciences.

For some years a number of Commonwealth postgraduate students have been attached to the Brook and Lewisham hospitals by the British Postgraduate Medical Federation, for whole-

time instruction in clinical medicine. At both the Brook and at Brighton, in addition to the regular courses for general practitioners, a new type of course has been started this year—an advanced course for general practitioners who had previously attended two or more courses at these hospitals. From the records at the Federation it was possible to find the names of all those who had done so and personal invitations were sent to them to take part. Both courses were filled in this way and were planned with this audience in mind, so that both material and discussion were rather more sophisticated than usual. This type of course might become a regular feature of the work of larger centres.

Dr. Horder had already spoken of the training course for general practitioners at Canterbury. Arrangements are also being made for short rotating supernumerary attachments for general practitioners, in hospitals in East Kent, using the facilities at several of the larger hospitals in different groups in turn. Just as the Brook has formed a close link with Lewisham, Canterbury has been working in collaboration with the South East Kent and Thanet groups and may be expected to develop activities for the whole of this area. Ashford, 14 miles away, in the S. E. Kent group, is likely to be developed eventually as a new town: this will greatly increase the population of the area and it is tempting to look forward to the whole of East Kent being brought under an Area Health Board so that all services, including postgraduate medical education, might be planned on this local basis.

These three centres may be expected to make the major contributions to postgraduate education in the region. It is hoped that all will develop fairly large reference libraries and will also eventually be able to help other centres in
their educational programmes, possibly by supplying speakers and material. Both the Brook and Lewisham hospitals have been fortunate in receiving grants from the King’s Fund, and an excellent centre has already been opened at Lewisham. Brighton have received £15,000 from the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust and has been able to more than double this sum with local support: a major centre is under construction and will be opened next spring. Only Canterbury have been unsuccessful in obtaining a capital grant from any source: we can only hope that, in view of the exceptional interest of the programme which they have developed and the clear evidence it provides of fresh thinking, they will be more fortunate before very long.

The other groups in which Clinical Tutors have been appointed are Medway, Dartford, Farnborough and Hastings. We are hoping to include Orpington and Sidcup (both due to be rebuilt before very long) and Tunbridge Wells soon. In the latter group, of course, a great deal of postgraduate and research work is already being done at the Queen Victoria Hospital at East Grinstead. At the new Medway hospital (which is being gradually upgraded from the old R.N. Hospital, Chatham) an excellent centre is being made out of the small separate building which used to contain the officers’ billiard room and a large ante-room: these are being turned into a small lecture theatre with a club-room and library. At Joyce Green Hospital, Dartford, an old ward block has been converted into a small centre.

Formal postgraduate teaching, meetings and discussions are taking place in nearly all the other Groups in the Region. Some, like Bermondsey and Camberwell, are now closely linked with teaching hospitals. Others, like Greenwich, face early rebuilding and at St. Alfege’s there are plans for a teaching centre for both doctors and nurses in the new hospital.

The whole of this regional activity is under the surveillance of the Regional Postgraduate Committee, on which there are representatives of the teaching hospitals, the Royal Colleges and the College of General Practitioners. The Committee exists to define objectives, coordinate activities and allocate resources. We have two teaching hospitals in this region and they take a close interest in regional education. As the Colleges are represented, the committee should have cognizance of all that goes on in the various specialties but unfortunately this has not always been the case. It should surely be able to prevent the appointment of a plethora of tutors in one centre and to maintain a reasonable balance between the different interests at each one, as so many of these are clearly complementary to each other. It is apparent that a strong Regional Postgraduate Committee, representing all interests in this way, is essential if co-ordinated progress is to be made towards an objective for the region as a whole.

THE STOKE POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL CENTRE


*Area Director of Postgraduate Medical Education (for North Staffordshire)*

We have in Stoke a compact Medical Centre consisting of two large General Hospitals, providing just over 1,300 beds between them, and a new Central Out-patients’ Department situated about equidistant from both; the Medical Institute is sited here and is about 400 yards from each hospital. The population dealt with by all services is about half-a-million, and a further quarter of a million are supplied by some of the services. There are about 200 general practitioners in our immediate area in contract with the Executive Councils as principals. The consultant staff in the Hospital Group number 75 and there are 100 members of the junior hospital staff, half of whom are below the rank of registrar.

For the past four years, we have run a two week Course in Advance Medicine advertised nationally. The “home team” have occupied the morning sessions and most of the afternoons have been occupied by visiting speakers—we have found that the occasional inclusion of a College censor is a good draw. Local medical staff have found the sessions given by visiting physicians very stimulating, and I have had the assistance of committee of the Group phy-
Proceedings of the conference on the postgraduate medical centre. Regional organization.

A. A. Lewis

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