

Defeat Depression campaign

Review of 'The Anatomy of Melancholy', presented at the Royal College of Psychiatrists, 12 April 1995.

Last year the *Psychiatric Bulletin* and the *British Journal of Psychiatry* advertised an entertainment at the College for the Defeat Depression campaign. Among excellent articles like 'A decade of psycho-ophthalmology in West Barset' the notice read very flippantly. We were promised a Dyspeptic Dinner Entertainment by Good-for-Tune and Speakeasy based on Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*: Gone for a Burton'.

The event began with relaxing drinks followed by the performance in the basement. An audience of seventy faced four singers and four actors in evening dress, around a costumed central figure playing Burton. The unaccompanied singing alternated with readings and scenes from plays. The choice and sequencing of the compilation was superb. There were fragments of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Pilgrim's Progress* as well as Betjeman, Dylan Thomas and, of course, *The Anatomy* itself. The songs ranged from Dowland's *Come Heavy Sleep to As Time Goes By*.

After Part 1, 'Melancholy: its Symptoms and Cause' we were released to a buffet supper, returning for 'Religious Melancholy, some Cures, Death and Epitaphs'. Then, following break for dessert came Part 3, 'Love-Melancholy'.

This entertainment was created and driven by the thespian Beric Norman who played Burton. His wife was also one of the actors. Beric is possibly better known to readers in his unusual 'day job' as a Professor of Old Age Psychiatry.

Compilations like this one, put on by major theatre companies, can disappoint because of eccentric selection of material. Beric's show was refreshingly different. Like him, his fellow players retain day jobs but neither singers nor actors showed any signs of amateurism. This performance should be repeated perhaps in association with a major College meeting when more members could attend.

I hope that those who ran, or played bridge to support the campaign, enjoyed themselves half as much as the Dyspeptic Diners of April 12.

KINGSLEY JONES

DEFEAT DEPRESSION CAMPAIGN FUN RUN BATTERSEA PARK, LONDON

11 a.m. Sunday 28th April 1996

Entry Fee £3.00 Distance 2½ miles

All proceeds to go towards the production of
Defeat Depression Campaign
educational material

For an entry form please contact
Christine Gear on 0171 235 2351 ext 131

*A National Campaign organised by
The Royal College of Psychiatrists in association with
The Royal College of General Practitioners*



**Defeat
Depression**