

DIVERSIONAL THERAPY AT BROADMOOR CRIMINAL
LUNATIC ASYLUM.

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SOME 640 men and 170 women patients are detained in Broadmoor. The following account of the diversional therapy applied to their different types of mental disorder may be of interest.

The effect on our closed community is to brighten the monotonous lives of the patients. The games and similar activities stimulate interest, initiative, and a readiness to accept responsibility.

The Medical Superintendent and the Chaplain are assisted in this work by a committee of patients annually elected to represent the views of their respective blocks. This central committee appoints sub-committees to control each undertaking.

Different types of entertainment are required in order to give as many patients as possible an interest in this form of therapy. Outdoor games such as cricket, bowls, football, throwball, softball, croquet, quoits and lawn tennis are provided. In addition there are annual sports and a flower show. Indoors, table-tennis, the annual concert party, the choral society, lectures, dances, the cinema and whist-drives provide entertainment in the Central Hall. A monthly magazine is issued. Cards, draughts and chess are played at all times in the wards, and individual hobbies are promoted as far as is possible.

Some of the above attract patients who are skilled at ball games, some require intellectual ability, and others appeal to individuals who are not particularly good at anything. Some recreations are useful because they draw large audiences of patients. Others again appeal to the outside public, and thus provide important extra-mural contacts enabling neighbouring teams to visit the hospital, and audiences, often containing patients' relatives, to attend the various concerts.

Cricket at Broadmoor has been under the successful control of the Chaplain and his predecessors for the past 70 years. The attractive bowl-shaped ground is partly surrounded by an orchard, and partly by a tree and flower-covered hill. Between 70 and 90 patients of different types attend weekly and watch the matches. On the field they have a picnic tea, and the occasion provides opportunities for men from different parts of the hospital to meet and talk to one another. The first team has at least 4 patients playing, and the umpire, groundsman and other officials of the game are also patients. Besides these week-end matches, which are against good club sides, there are internal games

played mid-week in which, during the season, about 50 patients take an active part. Many are convalescent patients or mild manic-depressives and schizophrenics, with some feeble-minded persons. Few have ever played the game before, but some are able to learn and become creditable and enthusiastic performers. Very few excel at batting, but a number are accurate and skilful bowlers and good fieldsmen. In peace time a proportion of our matches are played away, which gives the patients taking part a desirable change of scene.

There are four rinks for playing *Bowls*. They are kept in excellent order by patient-labour, and the game is, like cricket, played in the summer months. The greens are situated on a high terrace backed by the buildings, and overlooking a view of some 30 miles of open country. About 25 patients are considered good enough to play in the games arranged with neighbouring teams. Their ages vary from 20 to 65, and among them are convalescent patients, manic-depressives, paranoiacs, and feeble-minded persons. At various times 100 patients take part in the internal matches and competitions which are played during every fine summer afternoon or evening. Among the staff are a dozen keen and good bowls players. They coach the patients, and successful results against local opponents are recorded. The game is organized by the patients' bowling sub-committee, which is responsible for selecting the teams and arranging the internal competitions. Prizes are awarded, and the competitors are handicapped so that every player has an opportunity to gain a prize. There is no monopoly among the better players.

Association Football is played from October to the end of January. Fifty patients join in the games, and large numbers attend and watch. As the standard of play is low, the first team is generally strengthened by the addition of two or three male nurses, and teams of secondary school boys or from the lower divisions of local leagues provide the opposition. As these games have to be played at home we are unable to enter competitive football.

Throwball was invented and developed here in the days when football was considered too dangerous a game for our patients. It is played with an Association football, but the patients run with it in their hands and try to throw it into a small goal. Handling an opponent is not permitted—a condition which makes it possible for the middle-aged men to play. It is a good fast game played on a small grass pitch 80 yards long by 40 yards wide for a period of 40 minutes. This enables two matches to take place during a spring afternoon, when this game is played. It attracts a large and enthusiastic following.

Softball is an American game founded upon the principles of baseball. It is exciting, fast and sufficiently simple to be understood and enjoyed by many of the refractory patients. It is organized by a specially selected patient, who is in charge of all the games held in the refractory blocks. He arranges matches in the exercise grounds, and also on Sundays in the summer on the cricket field. Out of 130 refractory patients some 20 take part—among them are paranoids, manics, melancholics, low grade feeble-minded, and those with organic brain disease. About 30 other persons are able to attend and enjoy the comparative freedom of the cricket ground.

Croquet is played by the women patients throughout the summer months, and competitions are arranged by their own committee.

Outdoor Quoits is very popular among the men, and many show great skill at this game.

Lawn Tennis is played upon the one hard court provided by the Institution. It is unorganized, and dependent upon individual effort for its life. It has its enthusiasts, however, and not many summer evenings pass when it is not in use.

The *Annual Sports* are carefully organized. Every patient is handicapped in accordance with his previous "form" in such a way that he must make a special effort if he wishes to win. All ages and tastes are catered for, and the more orthodox events such as the 100 yards are mixed with others such as basket balancing, slow bicycling, etc. A quoit competition tests the skill of the older men. Cigarette prizes reward the successful competitors in the side-shows, and the day ends with nearly everyone obtaining a prize of some sort. The whole event is organized by the patients' committee, and the course officials and stewards are also patients. Only the starter and judges are selected from the staff.

Our district is a rural one, and gardeners are good and many in number. One hundred male and 18 female patients have plots of ground of their own. On these they produce fruit, flowers and vegetables. These they either eat, sell, or give away, and many of them grow for exhibition in our annual flower show which is held in the Central Hall, where good staging arrangements are provided, and displays are of quite a high standard. At the same time painting, modelling, sewing, fancy work and knitting are exhibited, as well as a large stall with goods to sell for charitable purposes. Side-shows in the charge of patients are provided, and all day long patients, and in the evening, many of the local public view the exhibits and purchase many of the articles. The profits are sent to a prescribed charity which is, on occasion, the Benevolent Fund that helps the indigent patients.

Of the indoor diversions *Table Tennis* is very popular and is arranged in "Clubs," each of which draws its membership from a prescribed part of the Institution. During the whole of the winter "leagues" and individual matches take place on three or more evenings a week. Once a month games are arranged between the best patients' team and visitors from neighbouring towns, and the standard of play is sufficiently high to attract a large number of patients as spectators. The umpire is selected from the staff and the scorer and ball-boys from the patients. As this game requires both nimbleness of mind and of body the numbers who are efficient is limited. The best players are mostly convalescent patients, mild manic-depressives and some paranoiacs. During the dark evenings it gives entertainment to about 70 men and 30 women.

The *Concert Party* called the "Broadhumorists" consists of about 25 selected male and female patients. Others serve as dressers, scene-shifters and the like. On two evenings a week in the winter months a stage-play written by a patient is rehearsed. These meetings are looked upon as social occasions and have therapeutic value, and considerable perfection is thereby attained without staleness. The production takes place in March and April, with three performances to different classes of patients and twelve to the public. Over 3,000 people attend. The dresses are made in the Institution's shops and are

a special and very attractive feature. The scenery is painted in the upholsterer's shop by a patient under the skilled supervision of the Master. He and his patients control all back-stage operations. The music is directed by a male nurse who is a musician, and the Institution's band forms the orchestra. The Medical Superintendent personally controls the production. It is mainly the convalescent and manic-depressive patients who take part in this form of entertainment, and is valuable because it helps to reduce the local prejudice against mental illness in general and Broadmoor in particular. It also has found us friends in many fields who have been able to help us in a variety of ways. Thirdly, it has enabled the patients to collect over £300 annually for charity. In addition to the above a smaller party visits some of the surrounding villages and gives a specially rehearsed concert during the winter months.

The *Choral Society* is a particularly worth-while entertainment. It is organized by a musical member of the staff, and caters for many patients who seem to have little other interest. The number of performers is 50, the women providing the more skilled half. Many of the patients are frank psychotics, and often depressed, deluded, irritable and difficult in daily life, but are responsive and obedient to the conductor and sing correctly and well. They rehearse in the Central Hall on two evenings a week during the summer months and give four performances to the patients and to local audiences. Among these patients are some who are capable musicians and have good voices. The standard of their performance is, for an amateur production, quite good.

An *Evening Lecture* is arranged once a month in the winter and is given by an experienced lecturer on travel, scientific, political, or other subject of general interest. About 300 patients attend, and interesting discussions generally take place. There is a good deal of musical talent in the district, and musicians, concert parties and choral societies also give freely of their services to the patients. These performances are much appreciated.

Evening Dances are held four times a year on a somewhat elaborate scale. The Hall is decorated skilfully by the Matron and her assistants. The women wear their best frocks and many appear in evening dress, while the men put on their best suits. Eighty male parole patients attend, with a rather smaller number of women patients. The Medical Superintendent and the Medical Staff with their wives are present and dancing goes on from six to eleven, with two intervals for refreshments.

The *Cinema* is shown once a week during the autumn, winter and spring. On Friday evenings there are two houses, at each of which 200 of the better patients attend. On Thursdays performances are given in the refractory wards and 130 of this class of patient are present, so that nearly three-quarters of the population of Broadmoor goes to the films. The projector in use is a 16 mm. Gebescope, and the films are non-inflammable. Educational and feature films alternate, and both are very popular.

Four major *Whist Drives* are arranged for players of both sexes during the winter months. Smaller drives are also organized for the separate blocks.

"*The Broadmoor Chronicle*" appears once a month. A patient is Editor, and the editorial committee consists entirely of patient members who are interested in this kind of work. The whole life of the hospital is covered as far as

possible with critical and factual articles. There is a monthly "leader," with competitions, descriptions of entertainment and sport, jokes on topical and local subjects, cartoons depicting Broadmoor's eccentricities and peculiarities, poems, and advertisements from local tradesmen. Production costs are covered by the sale of copies to patients, their friends, and members of the staff. The magazine is popular, as it enables the patients to express their many and differing points of view to the administration.

These activities have considerable therapeutic value. They are indirectly paid for by the patients from the institution canteen without calling for assistance from public funds.

Finally, I would add that these observations are published by permission of the Home Office, but do not necessarily represent official views.

