



WA Social Work E-News

In the Loop February 2012

President's Report

(As provided to the 2011 AGM)

This report will contain a very brief overview of the events of the past twelve months.

I'd like to commence by thanking the current Board members for their efforts and dedication. The Board has consisted of Dr Barbara Meddin (Vice President), Ms Cindy Gorton (Secretary), Ms Sharon McAuliffe (Treasurer) and Directors, Ms Helen McMahan, Ms Marion Palmer, Ms Tracey Nicolson, Ms Amanda Perlinski. Unfortunately, due to personal commitments, our Treasurer, Wade Sinclair, found it necessary to resign from the position.

I would also like specifically thank two Board members for their work and efforts this year. Firstly, Sharon McAuliffe, who voluntarily stepped into the role of Treasurer when Wade found he could no longer continue. Sharon has worked hard to bring together the new technologies of banking, which I'm sure will benefit the decision making and payments processes. I'm surprised that Sharon has remained so sane!

Secondly, my very grateful thanks to our Vice President, Dr Barbara Meddin, for taking over the President's duties at very short notice, from around the 6th February 2011 until very recently. You may or may not know that my wife and I are survivors of the Kelmscott fires. Our home and possession were totally destroyed, so we have been somewhat pre-occupied with re-establishing ourselves, as well as a home.

Active Sub-committees

The Society has a couple of active sub-committees, particularly relating to professional practice and development. My concern is the amount of work loaded onto the same few volunteers, all of whom I'm sure will suffer fatigue at some stage, if we are unable to recruit more volunteers to each sub-committee. Any member who would like to contribute to the work of the profession through the work of the Society, please see Barbara Meddin or Cindy Gorton after this meeting.

Membership

In 2010, I said that "one of our most difficult areas to achieve good results in has been with the recruitment and retention of members". It was our greatest challenge then and remains so now! We currently have around forty eight members. It seems that our membership plateaus between 38 and 48 members, so any ideas on how this could be addressed and/or improved would be gratefully received. Please address any comments or suggestions you might have to the Secretary, who I'm sure will redirect them to the appropriate person.

Future and Role of the Society

An issue I raised at the 2010 AGM related to the future of the Society. Unfortunately, as a result of my personal circumstances, this could not be pursued further, so I shall be placing it onto the Board's agenda at the earliest opportunity.

For a variety of reasons (e.g. the small and fluctuating number of members and the increasing difficulty in gaining the support of volunteers), I believe that the Board must examine the future role and viability of the SPSW.

Advocacy

The Society continues to advocate on behalf of members, with the latest issue relating to the supervision of students and the payment of membership fees by the Department for Child Protection to the AASW, for those DCP social workers who supervise social work students. Our request has been to be given the same consideration for SPSW members who provide this valuable and important service. The Society is seeking parity on this matter, so you will be informed as soon as some clear resolution has been reached.

Efforts are being made to work in collaboration with the AASW (WA Branch) on matters relating to professional development, policy and practice. The Board remains keen for the collaborative and partnership approach to be established. Further discussions need to occur between the two organisations before anything can be finalised.

Retiring Board Members

The Board determined that there will be a total of ten Board members (including the executive) for the next term of office, which will commence at the conclusion of the elections tonight.

The following Board members were consequently required to retire and are eligible for re-election:

- Brian Dodds (President), Sharon McAuliffe (Treasurer), Cindy Gorton (Secretary), Marion Palmer (Director), Amanda Perlinski (Director), Tracey Nicolson (Director). *(All were re-elected ed.)*

Those not required to retire are:

- Barbara Meddin (Vice President), Debbie Henderson (Director) and Ann McKay (Director).
- *(Leanne Aurish and Paul Argile were also elected. ed)*

In conclusion, I thank all Board members for their dedication and efforts. I also thank the many of you for the phone calls and emails following the Kelmscott fires – it makes a great deal of difference to one's emotional and mental health to know that others are thinking of you in times of disaster. I wish you all a healthy and happy festive season and new year.

Brian J. Dodds (PRESIDENT)

Editorial

Welcome to the Summer 2012 Edition of *In the Loop*. What a busy year 2011 was! The monthly CPE events were hugely successful and although it appears that fewer and fewer of us retain the title *Social Worker* in our role description it seems that we need the on going professional development even more than ever! It enables us to ensure that we keep abreast of developments in the profession and gives us the opportunity to network with our colleagues and maintain our professional identity that is being lost in our agencies. The SPSW has challenged the move to generic titles for Social Workers at the Disability Services Commission for example and although this has not met with success at least workers know that the support of a professional association is behind them. However, if the SPSW is going to be a strong voice for the profession we need to increase our membership. Strength in numbers is essential if *Social Work* is to continue to be a vibrant profession so please talk to your colleagues about joining up. Professional responsibility does not stop with the job title and so even if you no longer have *Social Worker* in your job description it does not mean that you don't still need your professional indemnity insurance. Now that our visibility within agencies is decreasing we need to take the lead in demonstrating the importance of what we do for our agencies and our clients. 20th of March 2012 is International Social Work Day so now will be a good time to plan an event in your agency that will increase the visibility of the profession. So whether your title is Policy Officer, Co-ordinator, Community Corrections Officer, Child Protection Worker or something else, claim your professional identity on the 20th of March and hold an event. Maybe wear a red tee shirt so that it becomes apparent how many of you there are. Hold a lunch or a seminar in your agency and be proud of your profession. Please let us know if you would like us to provide you with membership forms and information about the SPSW to distribute at your event.

Social Worker Part of Award Winning Team!

Winner of last year's Disability Services' Count Me in Award in the category of Education and Training - post school / tertiary education and training was Growing Towards Wellness-training opportunities. Growing Towards Wellness (GTW) is a not-for-profit organisation that provides training, education, employment pathways, work experience and mentoring, horticultural therapy and community integrative programs to a range of people, including people with disability. Horticultural lecturer Jimmy O'Rouke formed GTW in 2006 and was joined by social worker Sanna Andrew, who is now GTW's state manager. Ms Andrew told *In the Loop* "we were also Finalist in the National Disability Awards held at Federal Parliament in Canberra on November 22nd, which was quite an amazing achievement as we are only a very small provider...pipped at the post by Parks Victoria, who actually provide funding to other organisations and manage a massive portfolio, so we were in highly esteemed company...also being just one of 23 finalists chosen from 400 applicants helped to make us feel extremely honoured and privileged. We were also Finalists

in the Mental Health Good Outcomes Awards 2011 (WA) in the Individual Excellence category (pipped at the post by an Associate Professor who has been working in the field for decades....so again amongst very honoured and esteemed company)". Congratulations to Sanna and the team at GTW on all your nominations and awards.

Are You a Fellow?

I would like to this opportunity to invite you to become a Fellow of the Society of Professional Social Workers (SPSW). As Social Workers it is important to keep abreast of the most up to date research, readings and information. It is also important, as a member of the helping profession, to develop both personally and professionally and to contribute to the development of upcoming social workers. Ongoing professional development not only allows you to learn and grow but also provides the opportunity for the development of contemporary and evidence based practice in the social work field. This opportunity will commence on July 1 2012 along with the start of the membership year. The SPSW Fellow recognises those Social Workers who choose to make a contribution back to the profession in the following ways:

- Attend Professional Training (1 point per hour attendance - double points per hour for SPSW sponsored or presented training)
- Post Graduate Education (10 points per course)
- Present non work training (7 points per half day)
- Read professional literature or research (1 point per journal, 5 points per book)
- Publish professional article (15 points refereed, 5 points non refereed)
- Present conference paper (10 points per refereed process, 5 points per non refereed process)
- Professional research or professional submission (10 points)
- Supervision of SW students (10 points per students per semester)
- Conference attendance (1 point per hour of professional content)

Becoming a Fellow is simple. Just accumulate at least 100 points for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) events in at least three of the above nine categories during a given membership year. In addition there will be an annual audit of 5% of the Membership by the Fellowship sub committee.

To become eligible for SPSW Fellowship you will need to:

- Complete your Log Book throughout your Membership Year;
- Acknowledge, in writing, that you have met the CPE requirements in accordance with the SPSW's Fellow Eligibility, all on the SPSW website and
- Keep your log book for at least three years should you be randomly selected for audit

We look forward to as many social workers as possible taking up this opportunity for their personal and professional development. The policy and procedures for becoming a member as well as the log book documents are elsewhere in the newsletter. Alternatively, you can obtain the necessary Log Book and details on the SPSW website:

<http://spsw.highway1.com.au>

Brian Dodds
President

Note: You must return your log by 30th June 2012 to become a Fellow!

Board Snippets.....

The SPSW Board members elected at the 2011 AGM are Brian Dodds (President), Sharon McAuliffe (Treasurer), Tracey Nicolson, Amanda Perlinski, Cindy Gorton (Secretary), Marion Palmer, Barb Meddin (Vice-President), Deb Henderson, Paul Argile, Ann McKay, and Leanne Aurisch. The new Board continues to work hard advocating for the interests of Social Workers in WA. Some of the matters with which we are currently dealing are:

- ⤴ The Medicare Rebate for Mental Health Services for Social Workers.
- ⤴ Equity for Department of Child Protection SPSW members supervising students. Currently the Department pays the AASW fees of those staff supervising students automatically but SPSW members need to apply on an individual basis.
- ⤴ The possibility of establishing a Mentoring Group
- ⤴ Our attempts to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the AASW which would see us working collaboratively to address issues and provide some CPE events has to date not met with success but remains on the table.
- ⤴ The sponsoring of a prize for a Curtin Social Work Student which will be called the SPSW Chris Coopes award in honour of our now retired but highly esteemed colleague who has served in many government and non-government organisations.
- ⤴ We have also organised for all members to have membership of Shoprite (see article below)

Social Worker of the Year Awards 2011

The SPSW is a sponsor of the Social Worker of the Year Awards. The 2011 Awards were hosted by Louise Durack, Chair of the Organising Committee at the UWA Club on the 7th of November. Ms Durack, said that social workers played an important and often unrecognised role within our community. "Social work is gritty and sometimes difficult work. But it is work that is vital to the way our community functions. Social Workers help people get back on their feet, help to protect our children, and help to foster stronger families and communities across the state."

The winners of these prestigious awards were:

- ⤴ Richmond Fellowship WA – Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Award: Dawn Bessarab.
- ⤴ Dawn works at Curtin University.
- ⤴ KPMG - Agent of Change Award: Natalie Hall.
- ⤴ Natalie works for Parkerville Chdn & Youth Care.
- ⤴ Department for Child Protection: Head, Heart and Hands Award: Julie Dickinson.
- ⤴ Julie works for Curtin University.
- ⤴ GESB - Rising Star Award: Felicity Creagh.
- ⤴ Felicity works for The Department for Child Protection.

- ⤴ Edith Cowan University – Rural and Remote Practitioner Award: Ida Curtois. Ida is 'semi-retired' but involved in roles as a Jury Officer at court and an Advocate for prisoners.
- ⤴ 2011 WA Social Worker of the Year: Felicity Creagh. *Congratulations!*

Accolades for SPSW Locum Register

The Locum Register continues to be very popular with advertisers who continue to find it a very effective way of filling vacancies, "better than advertising in the West Australian" said one. So if you are looking for a job or an employee why not contact Tracey Nicolson, SPSW Board Member on tracey.nicolson@gmail.com All SPSW Locum Register forms can be located at <http://spsw.highway1.com.au>.

Social Workers in the News

Liberian Social Worker Wins Nobel Peace Prize

Liberian social worker Leymah Gbowee is one of three Nobel Peace Prize winners.

According to this [CNN article](#), Gbowee led a women's movement that protested the use of rape and child soldiers in Liberia's Civil War. She mobilized hundreds of women to pressure delegates to sign a peace treaty in 2003.

Gbowee shared the prize with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who was elected after the civil war ended, and Yemeni activist and journalist Tawakkul Karman.

The three women accepted the prize...during a ceremony in Oslo, Norway.

Gbowee, who earned an associate's degree in social work from the [Mother Patern College of Health Sciences](#) in Monrovia and a master's degree in conflict transformation from [Eastern Mennonite University](#) in Harrisonburg, Va., said her work has just begun.

"There is no time to rest until our world achieves wholeness and balance, where all men and women are considered equal and free," Gbowee said.

Reprinted from SocialWorkersSpeak.org. Website of the NASW (USA)

Memberships

Remember your SPSW membership year now runs from July to June. A renewal form for the 2012-2013 year and the Vero Declaration will be sent out to you all by early May with payment due by 30th June. Receipts for the 2011-2012 membership year will be sent out prior to this date.



A big thank you to Sharon

Thanks to the wonderful work of Sharon McAuliffe our books are now straight and we know who has paid what! Sharon volunteered her services as Treasurer when Wade Sinclair was unable to continue in this role. Thank you for your patience if you waited a while for receipts! The good news is that after all the calculations were finally done the Association is in a financially sound position. We need to find a better way of completing some of our financial transactions so there may new ways of doing things this year!

About ShopRite

What is ShopRite?

ShopRite began operations in August 1996 to provide a discount buying service and other important services to union and association members.

We have expanded over the years and today we support over 170,000 members who utilise ShopRite to benefit from discounts on a wide range of products and services.

Easy to use

To make it easy for ShopRite members to find the product they want at the best possible price we have set up a dedicated **ShopRite Call Centre on 1300 650 214**. We also provide an annual Savings Directory to all members each year and the ShopRite web site that you are currently viewing.

Why Use ShopRite?

There are many ways that ShopRite can help you save money. Why pay more than you need to?

Whether it's through our Electrical & Gas Buying Service, our Motor Vehicle Buying Service, our Trader Network, or other benefits such as Cash & Carry access for members, you will SAVE when you shop with us!

Save Time

Don't spend all weekend at the shops, just bring us your best price on electrical and gas products and we'll negotiate amongst our various suppliers for a better deal, saving you time and yes most of all money.

Our motor vehicle consultants will search for a great deal on the vehicle you are looking for and save you hours of hassle negotiating with car dealers.

Service with a smile

We pride ourselves on our friendly and efficient customer service.

To get the best use out of our Electrical & Gas Buying service **follow these four simple steps:**

1. Go shopping and decide on the item you would like;

2. Get the make, model number and price of the item;
3. Call ShopRite on **1300 650 214** or complete a web site enquiry and give us the details;
4. We'll contact our suppliers and give you our price either the same day or the next business day;

What can ShopRite do for you?

Many of the advantages of our shopping service are sometimes unclear to members.

First, check to see that you are eligible to use the ShopRite service. If you are eligible you can start saving immediately on the following products and services:

- ⤴ Electrical or gas - white and brown goods
- ⤴ Motor vehicles - new and used
- ⤴ Some professional services e.g. dental, optical, etc.
- ⤴ An extensive trader network covering many products and services
- ⤴ Financial services including home loans, car loans and personal loans
- ⤴ A range of insurance products
- ⤴ Travel

Got a Question?

[Click here](#) to view our *Frequently Asked Questions*. If you can't find the answer to your question, call us on **1300 650 214** and we will be happy to help you.

Continuing Professional Education – An Exciting Year to Come

SPSW's Continuing Professional Education calendar for 2011 was a roaring success with a range of day long workshops and evening forums. Members and others from the human service sector attended workshops on a range of topics including Working with Clients with Personality Disorders, Having Awkward Conversations with Children about their Parent's Mental Illness, Engaging and Working with CaLD Clients and a two day workshop on Supervising Staff. Most workshops were oversubscribed and were run more than once during 2011 to cater for those who wished to attend.

Three evening forums were presented which covered topics such as an update on the new Child Advocacy Centre held on site in Armadale, Diversionary Alternatives to Prison for Clients with Disabilities or Mental Health Problems, and An Insider's View of the Coroner's Court and Office presented by the Deputy State Coroner.

SPSW also presented several customized training workshops for four different government and non-government agencies in 2011.

While 2011 was a great year for SPSW CPE activities, **2012 will be even better!** This year's program will kick off with a late afternoon workshop on March 7th on Enhancing Early Brain Development in Children presented in partnership with N'gala. (See registration flier attached to this Enewsletter.)

Also to be presented again on July 10th will be the workshop on Working with Personality Disordered Clients. **2012 workshops** will include:

- Child Pornography and On-Line Offenders – How Do We Keep Children Safe – Skills for Practice (April 12th)
- Working with Indigenous Clients (June 20th).
- One day Mental Health Symposium(Aug)
- Advanced Supervision Workshop - Managing Poor and Substandard Performance (Sept 19th and 20th)
- Managing Your Career(Oct) – designed both for those just starting out their careers as well as more experienced professionals who are contemplating a career change.

If all these workshops were not enough the CPE committee has, to date, planned forums on Bamboo MicroCredit and another on Working in a Remote Indigenous Community.

Also two agencies have already contacted SPSW to present a total of 4 customized training workshops during 2012. ***If your agency is looking for specific training initiatives, feel free to contact us to scope, source and present the workshops designed especially for your agency.***

We look forward to seeing you at one of our outstanding 2012 workshops or forum. If there is a topic you'd particularly like to see presented, just let us know and we'll see what we can organize.

Don't forget, if you are seeking the Fellow credential, you should be completing your CPE log which has recently been sent to you. If you need one, please contact our membership secretary, Cindy Gorton, cindy.gorton@bigpond.com or myself on waybob@bekkers.com.au

Dr. Barbara Meddin

On behalf of SPSW's Continuing Education Committee
Tracey Nicolson, Jan Snook, Paul Argyle, Marion Palmer
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A Slight Diversion

Following on from Helen McMahon's wonderful story "It All Started with a Moose" about her 2009 Churchill Fellowship journey across Canada that featured in the last edition, I thought I would provide something in similar vein about my own Count Me In Scholarship trip around the UK earlier this year. I now appreciate how difficult it must have been for Helen to condense her experiences into a single page of text! I apologise for not having managed the same! Those of you who attended the Forum in October will have heard many of my findings and if anyone wants the full report I am happy to provide it and so I shall attempt a less formal abbreviation here.

On **Monday 21st March** I travelled to London and ensconced myself in a small hotel in Bloomsbury. The following day I found myself in surprisingly reasonable condition given the exceedingly long journey. After the first of many English breakfasts which are clearly designed to provide the energy to cope with the vast number of stairs to be encountered in this country and a brief orientation to my surroundings, it was off to my first appointment via the "tube". My visit to Alison Giraud-Saunders, Co-Director, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities proved to be a very good place to start. Alison was able to provide a great overview of the political and policy context underpinning services and a framework for how they are provided.

Wednesday - a short walk from my hotel found me at the offices of *Respond*, a non-government agency providing treatment services to young people and adults with intellectual disabilities who have either been sexually abused or are at risk of or convicted of sexual offending. My discussion with Richard Curen confirmed that the issues associated with this population are very much the same irrespective of the cultural context. This specialist service, providing structured risk assessment and specialist long term community treatment for these offenders is something that is seriously lacking in the Western Australian context.

Thursday - Met with Mark Freeman from Offender Health and Phil Shackel, North West Specialist Team Lead, at Victoria Station from where we travelled by train to Highdown Prison. Following a tour of the prison we met in a well appointed conference room where we were served coffee and "home" made biscuits by a very professional waiter. This was not like any prison I had been in before! Impressed though I was nothing prepared me for the lunch that followed our meeting. Highdown has a restaurant called "The Clink" which is open to members of the public and provides high quality training in all areas of food preparation and service to prisoners to facilitate their employment in the restaurant industry on their release. Walking into the restaurant from the prison was a most surreal experience. One moment you are in a typical prison environment and the next in an up market restaurant, precise in every detail other than the cutlery being made of plastic and the non-service of alcohol. The menu and standard of the food reflected the surroundings. This is certainly a project that could well be replicated in Western Australia. To return to the purpose of our excursion however, Mark informed me about the project that he has been running for the last six years for Department of Health, offender health and the National Learning Disability Steering Group which aims to identify people with learning disabilities in the criminal justice system and provide training to prison officers and others in the criminal justice system about learning disability. Mark and his colleagues have put together a screening tool for the identification of people with learning disabilities in the criminal justice system – the Learning Disability Screening Questionnaire (LDSQ).

Friday – Met Ann Norman at the Royal College of Nursing together with Professor Bob Gates from Herts University who is chairing a group writing a report on the educational framework for Learning Disability Nursing. Learning Disability (LD) Nurses are the main service providers in the field in the UK, filling a similar niche to Social Trainers in Western Australia but with degree level qualifications. With de-institutionalisation in the 1980s a large number of people with complex needs ended up in the private sector in community residences with few or no LD nurses. Sounds familiar! In the afternoon I took a train to Caterham in Surrey to meet with Phil Boulter, Clinical Nurse Consultant at Oaklands House which provides a community

based treatment and support service for people exiting hospitals or prisons who may have Mental Health Act restrictions or are at high risk of offending and who have mental health and learning disabilities.

Week 2 Monday - Travelled by train for an overnight stay in Nottingham, definitely Robinhood territory, where I met with Neisha Betts who has been the project officer for the Learning Disability Awareness Training for staff working with Adult Prisoners. We met in a lovely restaurant in a converted church. She presented me with copies of a number of very useful documents resulting from her project. While waiting for my appointment with Neisha I discovered Nottingham's Galleries of Justice Museum which enabled a glimpse into the past and an opportunity to see how much British justice has changed in the last century. Sadly Nottingham Castle is not the medieval construction I had expected but an eighteenth century confection which contains an art gallery and museum.

Tuesday - While geographically close to Nottingham, Britain's high secure hospital, Rampton is a challenge to get to by public transport. Buried deep in the English countryside it took me two trains and a taxi ride to arrive at my destination. Rampton has recently completed a new unit for people with learning disabilities and mental health problems. The level of security here underlines that these patients are extremely high risk to themselves or others. However, the aim of the unit is clearly not simply containment but treatment and was purpose built at a cost of thirty five million pounds (fortunately completed just before the economic crash)! Every possible facility and professional service one could wish for was available. (I couldn't help but feel very sad on a recent visit to Graylands where the staff told me that their patients would soon have access to computers! We are clearly still in the last century here!) In the evening I travelled back to London, this time to Camberwell to enable me to be within walking distance to King's College the following morning in order to attend a seminar on Improving Skills in Working with Mentally Disordered Offenders with Learning Disabilities. This enabled me to see another side of London - very different to Bloomsbury! And what a weird hotel! Run by people from Kazakstahn it boasted a wonderful restaurant and also had a Turkish bath, a nutrimecics clinic and some very dodgy plumbing!

Thursday - With a couple of days I had not managed to fill in my schedule, my head spinning and a suitcase full of clothes I had not found anywhere to wash I retreated to my cousin's home in Slough to borrow her washing machine and computer! Following this I set off for a long weekend in Wales to follow up some ancient family history and some amazing castles. From there it was off to Bristol to meet with the Avon Forensic Learning Disability Team. The team covers a wide urban and rural area with a total population of 1.1 million people and provides consultancy for the local LD teams and also provides individual and group therapy including sex offender treatment which runs over sixteen months and a thinking skills group which runs over six months. Their approach to substance misuse is to work jointly with drug and alcohol services. They also work jointly with Police and Probation and Parole to try to prevent prolific offenders revolving through the criminal justice system. I also met a worker from the Bristol Prison Service who interfaces with the Community Mental Health Team as a Learning Disability specialist. She works across the court and prison system but most of her time is spent in the prison where she conducts screening assessments, establishes whether offenders are already known to services and identifies their needs. She provides the linkage between community based services and prison staff and connects people with services including education or

employment, ensures that their personal care and medical care needs are met, facilitates their access to the team Psychiatrist for reviews and to the re-settlement officer in relation to their housing needs.

Then it was off to Wigan in the North West. Andy Greenwood picked me up from my hotel for a day at HMP/Young Offenders Institution Hindley. Hindley caters for young offenders from 16 to 18 years of age. Andy is a specialist learning disability nurse who is a part of the prison's Mental Health Team which also includes psychiatric nurses, a speech pathologist and substance use counsellor as well as a team leader. I was curious as to the role of the speech pathologist in the institution and learned that sixty percent of young offenders have poor social language skills according to Australian research by Pamela Snow from the Centre of Rural Mental Health at Monash University and that even at this age language skills are able to be improved which increases the young person's motivation, decreases their difficulties in understanding and improves their ability to formulate expressive language. The speech pathologist also assists those with stammers and speech difficulties which may or not be associated with learning disabilities or acquired brain injury and provides consultancy to prison staff. Seventy percent of those with communication difficulties are less likely to re-offend after having therapy. The Hindley team have also developed their own screening system for young offenders as they found that the LDSQ has limited application to this age group. The next day Andy introduced me to the North West Forensic Practitioner's Forum. This group is comprised of practitioners from around the region working in the area of Forensic Learning Disability.

After a weekend wandering amongst the daffodils in the Lake District it was off to Scotland where I visited similar services in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh before traveling to Preston for the 10th International Conference on the Care and Treatment of Offenders with a Learning Disability at the University of Central Lancashire. It was just amazing to see how much excellent work is being done in this field in the UK. Delegates were treated to a wonderful performance of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" by Mind the Gap Theatre Company which employs both able bodied actors and actors with disabilities, a highly relevant piece of work. While in Preston I also visited New Focus, an innovative community based service for people with learning disabilities and a forensic history or at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system. The service accommodates individuals in privately rented houses and provides them with drop in support similar to the services provided in Western Australia. All service recipients undergo thorough risk assessment and have individual management plans in which they participate. I also visited forensic services at Calderstones Hospital before heading south to Kent where I visited similar services and also Professor Glynis Murphy at the Tizard Centre, University of Kent where we were joined by Jenny Talbot, Author of the No One Knows Report which investigates the experiences of people with learning disabilities in the justice system. My travels were punctuated by the Easter break which gave me the opportunity to take the Eurostar to Paris where my daughter joined me for an amazing few days before returning with me to London. Our last day in the UK was the day of the Royal Wedding (I had booked my flights before the announcement was made I should add). Did we cram into Hyde Park with millions of other people? Oh no, not us. We went shopping in a London divest of people and then I finally realised a life long dream - we went to a play at the Globe Theatre!

Amanda Perlinski (Ed)