AIMS For a better birth...

ARM Midwives and AIMS Picket UKCC Dinner

AIMS Journal, 1995/6, Vol 7 No 4

Ishbel Kargar, ARM midwives and Chris Rodgers and Sandar Warshal from AIMS picketed the UKCC formal dinner evening at the Marlborough Hotel in central london on 7 November 1995.

Their aim was to attract the attention of members of the UKCC and Baroness Cumberlege, who was to be a guest at this function, to the diminished role of midwives on the UKCC. We were appalled at the plan to eliminate the long established Ethics Committee as well as plans to merge Midwifery Education with that of Nurses.

The night was cold and the wind she did blow. We were hoping to stand in front of the hotel until all the guests arrived. We expected that the members of the UKCC would see our banners and hand held signs “Save Midwifery Education' and “Keep the Ethics Committee” and come over for a chat. Not a bit of it. I am sorry to say Mary Uprichard the Chair of the UKCC rushed by without a second glance as did most of her team. Several stalwarts of midwifery did come over and talk to us and offer support. So did herds of American female tourists who said "If it is for midwives, I support you." as they left the hotel.

We continued waiting but no Baroness Cumberlege appeared. Eventually a very junior member of the Hotel staff tried to move us along as we were 'obstructing' the doors. Ishbel pointed out that in fact the doors were seriously obstructed by large pot plants not by us. At this point I growled in my threatening American voice “beat it buddy" and he did.

Just as we were despairing that frostbite would arrive before Cumberlege, she appeared. She emerged from her car, saw our banners and immediately came over to us. She listened to our brief explanation politely wished us luck and entered the hotel.

It felt like a hollow victory at the time. Later we found out that in fact the Ethics Committee is to be saved although midwifery education as a unique entity will not. In short, it is always best to make a small effort rather than let the moment pass. I still get perverse satisfaction when I picture the hapless lad retreating into the hotel defeated by strong and determined middle aged campaigners.

Sander Warshal