



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

Newsletter No.2 March 1988

APCMI Objective

"The object of the association shall be to promote the relief of persons suffering from the problems of mental illness and their families by the provision of pastoral counselling and care appropriate to their individual needs to enable them so to develop their spiritual, physical and mental capacities that they may realise their full potential as individuals and participating members of society and so that the condition of their life may be improved" - Extract from the Constitution

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Again it is my pleasant duty to congratulate everyone concerned with the development and steady growth of APCMI. We have entered a period of consolidation and are concentrating on our current projects and mid-term plans. In order to promote our expansion we must have substantial funding. The grant making bodies prefer to give to practical projects and we now have three attractive ones to present to them: the Training Course, the Friern Hospital Project and the setting up of Support Groups. However, we must look to the membership to raise extra funds for day-to-day running costs such as printing, rent and rates and telephone. We suggest payroll giving, church collections and covenants as examples of individual enterprise. We cannot contemplate refusing pastoral support to anyone in need because of lack of money, so please can we look to you for help? We also look to you to encourage an increase in our

membership. Please continue to pray for our success.

We thank the following: The J.W.Laing Trust, P.H.Holt Charitable Trust, Sir Samuel Scott of Yews Charitable Trust, Sir Sigmund Sternberg and St. Mary's School, Ascot for grants and donations and Edna Hunter of Hunter Estates for a photocopier which has proved to be of inestimable value; and Gail and Nick Cotton for the production of our newsletter.

Austin Lindon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

After I had been talking to a group of people recently, a pretty young woman came up to me and explained that she suffered from schizophrenia. She went on to say that she had had no pastoral support from her church and had only met with incomprehension and judgemental comments from her fellow Christians. Finally she said to me, "You have given me new hope". I may never meet her again, but I shall never forget her. There are many others like her who are now aware of APCMI and believe it to be a Christian voice speaking out for and taking a stand on behalf of the mentally ill; at the same time it is endeavouring to provide an active service of friendship and pastoral care.

It is heartwarming for us at head office to discover that many people from all walks of life who are not necessarily "religious" or church members, are very supportive of our work and recognise the great need for our pioneering mission. We are encouraged by the wonderful people who are coming forward to offer their voluntary services and who are bringing their expertise and gifts to the service of APCMI. We are also pleased by the positive recognition we have received from professional carers and statutory personnel working in the field of mental health. They too are turning to us for advice and including us in their deliberations and plans for improved community care. Our thanks to those of them who are participating as lecturers in our Training Course.

Of necessity most of our activities are based in London and the Home Counties (as a Yorkshire person I know that this can seem to be an unfair bias), but from the very beginning the aim has been that APCMI should be a national association. Members will appreciate that this will take time, effort, organisation and funding on a large scale. We will get there God willing - with your help.

Jane Lindon

DIARY UPDATE

August. The first meeting this month was with the Chaplain to Springfield Hospital in S London and the hospital Voluntary Services Officer. We discussed the viability of local community residents visiting and

befriending the patients in hospital prior to their discharge. On Friday 7th, I discussed local issues with the Senior Social Worker at St Bartholomew's Hospital Dept of Psychological Medicine. Barts is close to our office and famous as being the oldest hospital in the UK. On Wednesday 12th I met the Voluntary Services Organiser at University College Hospital who invited me to address a London-wide body of Voluntary Organisers in 1988. The same day I had a further meeting with a representative of the Social and Pastoral Action Group of Westminster Diocese to keep them in touch with our developments. The following Wednesday I accepted an invitation to visit the Day Centre run by Camden MIND to meet the staff and users of the centre. We now have a regular flow of information between our two organisations.

Between August 20th and September 15th, Austin and Jane Lindon ran the office whilst I was on honeymoon.

September. On my return Jane and I went to Warlingham Park Hospital in Surrey to see the part time C of E Chaplain, the Rev Noel Walter who is also Community Mental Health Chaplain for Croydon. He was particularly interested in APCMI's commitment to developing community based pastoral support. We planned to have further meetings. On Monday 21st I had a meeting with the Rt Rev Jim Thompson, Bishop of Stepney who gave us his support in approaching clergy in his pastoral area. The following day was spent in Oxford consulting with several agencies as a follow up to an earlier

meeting. On 23rd to develop further the Friern project, the Rev Vernon Muller arranged a consultation with the Chaplaincy team from the Hospital. In the evening Jane and I were invited to address the RC Brentwood Diocesan Social Welfare Commission Executive where we were given a very warm and encouraging response. APCMI will be working closely with the Commission in the future. Wednesday 30th was spent at Friern Hospital working on the project which will be submitted for funding to the General Manager in the New Year.

October. This month began with a policy discussion held with the Warden of a long stay home for men in West London. It was agreed that befriending would be by invitation from the house community. On Wednesday 7th, I spent several hours at the Surbiton Headquarters of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship where I participated in a staff induction exercise. My grateful thanks to Fred Carney the assistant Director and his staff for sharing their experience and "in house" procedures. On 9th and 12th I had meetings with Percy Aggett and the Rev J Marlow. Mr Aggett is a social worker in the City and Hackney area health district who specialises in alcohol and drug dependancy. Rev Marlow is the Islington Anglican area Dean and he would like to arrange for Rev Muller and myself to address deanery priests in the New Year. On 13th our booking of premises at Heythrop College (a school of Theology attached to London University) was formally confirmed. Our thanks to the Principal - we are delighted with our Training Course venue. As representatives of APCMI Jane and Austin attended a one day con-

ference hosted by the Brentwood Diocesan Social Welfare Commission. Bishop Thomas Mahon gave us his support and looked forward to our involvement in the diocese. On 28th Jane and I addressed a group of professionals including chaplains from Homerton General Hospital in Hackney. We discussed how APCMI might provide an educational service to hospital staff. We shall be following this up in several parts of the country over the next few months. At the end of the month we had a visit from a research graduate representing the Oxford based Alister Hardy Research Centre which studies religious experiences. As a result of this very exciting discussion, Vernon Muller has agreed to represent APCMI if joint ventures are arranged. On the evening of 29th, I took part in a parish education programme designed by Vernon Muller for parishes local to Friern Hospital. Vernon hopes that this will become a working model for other areas.

November. A further discussion with Rev Noel Walter. He developed the idea of APCMI acting as an umbrella organisation. On 10th, I met Pamela Lewis, Chair of the Executive Committee of the Social Welfare Commission of Brentwood Diocese to discuss our future involvement in her area. The next day I attended the AGM of the Howard League for Penal Reform which amongst other issues is concerned with the treatment of prisoners who have mental health needs. On 12th I addressed members of the High Wycombe APCMI Support Group. On the following Saturday, I joined Austin and Jane who are members of the NSF, at the AGM of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship where I manned an

APCMI display stand. We were grateful to Judy Weleminsky, the Director for mentioning us in her address and to Lord Young of Dartington the guest speaker who showed considerable interest in our work. On 17th, I updated an Islington local authority representative and the next day, Jane attended the AGM of the Mental Health Foundation at the Cafe Royal. She was able to give information to people from both statutory and voluntary sectors. On 19th Jane and Austin attended a symposium on "Understanding the Mentally Ill." Given under the auspices of the Institute of Medical Ethics, this event was held at Guy's Hospital Medical School.

On 23rd, I attended a meeting of the Islington Task Force Team of Friern Hospital. We looked at the feasibility of having our Befrienders Service based at the Hospital. On the same day Jane and I attended an open evening at the new Regional Secure Unit based at Hackney Hospital. This unit will have 8-12 highly disturbed patients. On 24th, I met the vicar of St James's Church Clerkenwell, the Rev James Roberts who is involved in the setting up of two Group Homes for patients discharged from Friern Hospital. We hope to support him. Finally this month, we attended a Consumers Forum of psychiatric services centred in City and Hackney AHA area. We shall attend future meetings.

December. The first meeting of this month was at Claybury Psychiatric Hospital with the Anglican Chaplain, the Rev Michael Pritchard and Mr A Ross, a senior administrator. This coincided with an open day and exhibition detailing com-

munity services in Essex to be provided when Claybury closes in the early nineties. On 2nd, I attended a conference jointly organised by the National Schizophrenia Fellowship and the Richmond Fellowship, to explore ways in which both organisations can have a closer working relationship with each other. On 7th, Jane, Austin and I addressed an inaugural meeting organised and convened by Gail Cotton and Valerie Onslow at St Peter's Benedictine Monastery, Dulwich, London to set up a support group in the area. As a result of this successful meeting attended by over thirty people from a wide background, it was agreed to arrange a second meeting. On 9th, Les Campion, the Rev Noel Walter and I discussed plans for an inaugural meeting for the Croydon area to be held in April '88. My final meeting of the year was with a team of professionals who are training residential staff to care for Friern patients discharged into the community. I was invited to lead a discussion with staff members on the religious and spiritual needs of the patients sometime in the New Year.

January. On 4th, Jane, Gail Cotton and I had an editorial meeting to discuss the production of this and future newsletters. Two days later, a further discussion on the Croydon meeting took place. The following day, Jane and I had a working lunch with David Berry who is a Christian Counsellor to people working in the Arts and Media. This is a very interesting field of work and we agreed to help each other in areas of mutual concern. At a conference in Chelmsford on 14th, Jane, myself, Pamela Lewis and Canon Paul Brett, the Anglican Director of Chelmsford

Diocese Social Welfare Commission, discussed the launching of APCMI in both Chelmsford and Brentwood (RC) Dioceses. Initially eight hundred of our leaflets will be circulated. Canon Brett requested APCMI to write an information leaflet on Mental Illness to add to a series on Social Need and Welfare. We shall be working on both projects over the next few weeks. On 15th I discussed with the Mental Health Officer for Hampstead, George MacAllister, the possible setting up of a support group in his area. Our last meeting of the month was with the RC Bishop of Northampton, the Rt Rev Francis Thomas in whose diocese our High Wycombe group lies. The Bishop congratulated us on our work and gave us his support in publicising APCMI in his diocese.

Dennis Murray

VOLUNTEER BEFRIENDERS TRAINING COURSE

The first of our Volunteer Befrienders Courses is under way at Heythrop College, Cavendish Square, London W1. We have an attendance of nineteen, some of whom travel long distances. As well as APCMI members who hope to become befrienders, we have welcomed a group of Salvation Army Officers who work in Hostels and a priest who cares for destitute men in Brighton. The course has been very well received and appreciation has been expressed for the valuable contribution made by Dr Martin Israel and the team of speakers. The course content and the calibre of lecturers have been widely praised by

many professionals working in the field of Mental Health who have assured us of the great need for a course of this kind. We plan to run a second course in September and as APCMI expands, we hope to organise similar courses in the regions.

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

The High Wycombe Group has an active membership of at least ten. (Three of them are attending the Training Course) Vivienne Nash has worked with dedication as Co-ordinator for which our warm thanks. When appropriate, we visit groups in an advisory capacity and we look forward to seeing this group in the near future.

The Dulwich District Group had its second planning meeting on Feb 7th and a steering committee is now in operation.

The Diary gives details of progress in the Essex area. Plans are underway for a group in Croydon. Keen interest has been shown in the Brighton and District area and we are currently making a feasibility study.

Head Office will give help and advice to any member wishing to set up a group or participate in any way in group activities. Contact Dennis Murray, the Development Officer.

"THINK-IN" DAY

On November 28th, a group of APCMI members met at the new London premises of the NSF to discuss the nature of support groups with special regard to the needs of APCMI. The day's events were organised by Dennis Murray who designed the programme and acted as co-ordinator. Lunch was provided by Jane and Austin Lindon.

Discussions were lively. Austin Lindon and Brother John Ogilvie on behalf of their respective groups gave excellent summaries at the end of each session. The first hour was spent considering the meaning of community based support groups. The second session looked at studies made by two other agencies, Cancerlink and NSF to see how they are established and how they operate at local branch level. From these papers the following headings were discussed: the Philosophy of a Group, the Group Function and Ethical Practices and Issues. The third session which took place after lunch addressed the subject of Set Up, Management and Community Development of APCMI support groups. The final session a "Review of Your Time" acted as a summing up of the day's activities.

The main conclusions of the 'Think-In' were:

1. Community based pastoral support groups are needed and should be an important aspect of the work and service of the Association.

2. They should be serviced by a local management or steering committee which should seek to involve a minister of religion and a mental health professional in its stewardship of the group.

3. The local group should have a good working relationship with the Association's central office.

4. The principle aim of the group should be to provide Pastoral Care and have a clear spiritual image in its choice of venue and activities.

5. For the time being the Association and its work should be seen to be Christian-Judaic in its orientation with a long term aim of expanding its services to other religions when resources have increased. However, no-one should be turned away from any group because of their spiritual beliefs.

The day ended with a short prayer.

A full report of the "Think-In" Day can be obtained from the Development Officer. (SAE)

The management Committee are at present working on a set of guidelines for support groups, and the thoughts which were expressed in the "Think-In" day are being taken into account in their formation.

We are planning further "Think-In's" on a quarterly basis on subjects relating to Pastoral Care. Details will be announced in future newsletters.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Guilford Deanery Meeting Monday March 21st at 8pm in St Joseph's Church, East Gate Gardens, Guilford. APCMI have been invited to address this community meeting.

Croydon APCMI Inaugural Meeting Wednesday April 27 at 7.45pm at St Mathews House, 100 George St, Croydon. All are welcome.

IN MEMORIAM

Mrs Iren Szalay

A member of APCMI who greatly loved one of our young beneficiaries and whose prayers helped to support him and his family. May she rest in peace.

Letter from Patricia Rhodes APCMI Member

It seems to me that the APCMI has been with us for some time because so much has been accomplished in such a short time. As one of the sufferers who has in the past written letters to the Catholic press, various churchmen etc, stating that so little was being done by the Church to help the mentally ill, I am now so happy that the spiritual needs of those of all faiths or none, are being met by those working for the APCMI.

I am glad that families who have a mentally ill member are receiving support. I am especially glad that the dignity of the sufferer is respected.

There are a number of sufferers who live a lonely life in hospitals, bed-sits or even on the streets. Some of the wanderers are people who have been discharged from mental hospitals (where many have been for years) and have to leave due to the closing of wards and lack of staff.

The befriending of patients on a one-to-one basis is a great step forward and the special course at Heythrop College will do a lot to meet such needs.

I pray that those caring for mentally ill relatives and carers who come forward to help

where needed will be helped and strengthened in the valuable work they do.

BOOK LIST - Recommended by the Rev Vernon Muller

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey (Picador) - A lovely novel giving excellent insights into issues raised by mental illness.

A Listening Ear by Paul Tournier (Hodder & Stoughton) - Short talks by a great Christian psychiatrist.

Man's Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl - The author underwent the most devastating suffering in Auschwitz and other Nazi prisons and out of this he forged an understanding of the meaning of life.

The Stature of Waiting by W H Vanstone (Darton, Longman & Todd) - An excellent study of the passion narratives results in the best understanding of suffering I have come across.

Some Day I'll Find You by H A Williams CR. (Fount Paperback) - When a friend of mine was a political prisoner in South Africa, I sent him this book. Harry William's autobiography shows, with some lovely touches of humour, how he coped with his own madness.

Watching for Wings by Roger Grainger (DLT) - Roger is chaplain to Stanley Royd mental hospital. He attempts to relate mental illness to theology. I found it heavy going, but the gems it contained made it all worth while.

OUR SON

Our Son Our Son
What have we done
To cause such pain,
Has so much love
and effort been in vain

In childhood you were free and gay
In the old fashioned way;
At times, of course, you were sad
But then so was every other lad

In adolescence - God what a word
And, even more, what a time!
However, you survived the jump
And learned to ride and sail and ski
And, we thought, to be free.

The sixties seemed such lots of fun
The mini skirt and Bob Dylan,
The music and, no doubt, the pot
And nine to five was ruled out.

The emphasis was love, not work.
But study, yes - Ancient Greek.
Stop, stop, we should have said,
And learn to use your hands not head,
Because with hindsight now we see
Your mind was one of frailty.

And now careers just leave you cold.
If only we could be so bold
To ask the Lord some favours few -
The power to communicate with you,
To see the light come through the pane,
To understand your spirit too,
Make sure your identity comes true.

And last but by no means least
Some shelter, but without the Beast
And indeed without Nietzsche.
Lay them to rest and start anew,
And perhaps you could help a few
Who have suffered just like you.

Ruth MacCabe

Please pass on this Newsletter to other interested people and help to encourage an increase in our membership.

Subscriptions paid ^{after} ~~before~~ October 1st in any year are recorded as valid until December 31st of the following year. Please renew your subscription now if you joined before 1.10.87.