



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

Newsletter No.3 June 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

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Our Association consists of carers, either personally concerned or professionals and supporters. As we expand the membership and extend our activities, I am continually meeting or hearing from people whose lives have been touched by contact with Mental Health issues in such a way as to deepen understanding and develop compassion. This is a moving and enriching experience for me as so many of these new acquaintances give of themselves in an admirably selfless fashion. It is a privilege to benefit from their example. There must be many more such people whom we would wish to welcome as members. We should all encourage them to join us.

I am pleased to report an increased participation in

financial support for our work. In April we passed a milestone, for in that month we reached a point where the total of monies received from all other sources actually exceeded the very handsome grants received from our principal supporter, The Cripplegate Foundation. Our initial funding grants from Cripplegate will shortly come to an end and we must hasten to replace this source. Any reader with fund-raising experience which can be applied to our needs is urged to contact me without delay.

Our thanks are due to the many members who sent us more than their basic annual subscriptions. We realise that in some cases the two or three pounds extra represented genuine self denial. We thank the following individuals for donations made privately: The Hon. Mrs Mason; Mrs & Mrs Neville Orchard; Mr & Mrs Peter Padmore; Mr Fred Greenwood; Mr M.F. Coupton.

More than a score of Religious Houses contributed to a total of about £1,000 mainly in response to a Lenten Appeal. This included a gift of £10 from an order of nuns feverishly seeking four million pounds to develop their own area of concern.

Several active members are to be thanked for their special efforts in supporting Howard Hopkins' Marathon Run. These include Mrs Clancy; Anthony Godden; Miss Mavis Archer & the Rev. John Payne.

Grants and donations received during the three months under review included £1,000 from the WRVS Friern Branch; £250 from the Norman Trust; £100 from the St Andrews Carnwarth Trust; £200 from the Cliff Richard Charitable Trust; £50 from Southwark Ordination Course; £50 from Hawkins Charitable Trust; £61.69 from the British Army Overseas Chaplaincy. Every penny mentioned has been committed to our Central Office overheads. We must look elsewhere to finance our projects.

I send you all my good wishes and look forward to seeing many of you at our first Annual General Meeting.

Austin R. Lindon

The FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Association was held on Saturday 25 June at 2pm at the Parish Hall of Our Lady of Victories R.C. Church, Kensington. (By kind permission of the parish priest.) Entrance to Hall next to the Priest's House, Abingdon Road, London W8. (Just off Kensington High Street, Kensington.)

DIARY UP-DATE

February. This month started with a visit to the new Chaplain to Springfield Hospital, South London, the Rev. Tony Yeldham. At the same time I renewed my contact with the hospital Voluntary Services Organiser. On 3rd Jane Lindon, Rev Vernon Muller and I discussed with the Rector of St Marylebone Parish Church the Rev. Christopher Hamel Cooke, details of our forthcoming Inaugural Service. This was followed by the three of us attending a meeting at Church House with the Rev Neville Smith, acting Secretary of the Hospital Chaplaincies Council of the General Synod of the Church of England. Later in the week, I attended a meeting at Friern Hospital with the Islington Social Services Task Force to discuss the possibility of setting up a hospital based Befrienders Service for those patients who are in their discharge programme. This was followed by a Licensing Service for C of E Deacon Mrs Pat Thomas as Assistant Hospital Chaplain to Friern Hospital. The Religious Centre was packed for this moving service. On 8th Jane and I went to Guildford to meet a small group of interested people convened by Mr Jeremy Boutwood, of the Guildford Social Services and R.C. Deanery representative to discuss the setting up of a local support group. That evening Jane and Austin Lindon and I attended the successful second meeting of the Dulwich and Forest Hill Group

which is now well established. Two days later I updated the Voluntary Services Organiser of University College Hospital. We shall be establishing further contacts with the VSO London network. The following week I gave a talk to the Buckhurst Hill, Essex Wives Group on the subject of Pastoral Care for the Mentally Ill. Lady Goodman, President of Kensington and Chelsea MIND came to the Office where she was welcomed by Jane, Austin and myself. We discussed topics of mutual interest and she congratulated APCMI on its pioneering spirit. She has since become an APCMI member. Later in the day, committee member Mrs Ruth McCabe joined me to visit Fr J Gilmore, Director of the Irish Chaplaincy Service in the UK. He runs a counselling Drop-In centre for immigrants in London. On Monday 23rd Jane and I had an important consultation with Professor John Wing, Chair of Social Psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. Professor Wing was very supportive and he undertook to contribute to a set of fact sheets on mental health issues which we hope to publish in due course. On Jane's initiative she and Austin in company with General Loudon, Director, and Mrs Maggie Barnard, Events Organiser, of the Mental Health Foundation attended a meeting at the Unicorn Heritage Head Office in the Barbican with Deputy Chairman Mr Gyles Brandreth. They discussed details of the Mental Health Foundation's Gala Evening to

be held in the new permanent Royal Britain exhibition centre in September. APCMI will benefit from the proceeds. I spent the next day in Maidstone in discussion with the team involved in their pilot project on "Care in the Community" which is supported by local Kent churches. My last meeting of the month was with Ms Angela Casey Voluntary Services Officer for St Pancras General Hospital, London to which is attached a psychiatric unit and day hospital. We discussed plans to offer a befrienders service. I shall be contacting the chaplain in the near future.

March My first engagement was with the Rev Noel Walters when we finalised plans for the Croydon meeting. Later that day I had a meeting with the Chaplain to Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton, Surrey. On 3rd I met Ms Christabel Shawcroft, Senior Social Worker at our local Clerkenwell Neighbourhood Office. As a result I shall be attending a meeting of the Clerkenwell Housing Project in April. The following day, I participated in the second meeting of the Islington Social Services hospital befrienders group. On 7th I met the Rev. Philip Dyson, Area Dean of N Camden who invited Rev. Pat Thomas and myself to give a talk and lead a discussion at his parish assembly in May. The same evening Jane, Austin and myself attended a reception at a Kensington pool for a sponsored swim. The event was very well organised by a local Police

Crime Prevention Officer. A share of the money raised will be donated to APCMI. The following week Lady Hazel Sternberg a prominent charity worker came to see us at the Office. She was able to give Jane and me details of contacts in the Jewish community whom we hope to meet in the weeks ahead. That afternoon, Jane "took tea" with Rev. Mrs Pat Thomas and they had a long discussion on mental health issues and the work of the APCMI. In the evening of 21st Jane and I addressed a large and receptive public meeting in Guildford to launch an APCMI support group. A steering committee has been set up which will meet in late April. Two days later I chaired a meeting of the High Wycombe support group. They have decided to widen their geographical area. The week ended with me updating Lewis Donnalley secretary of the Westminster Diocese Social and Pastoral Action team. I was introduced to one of his co-workers, Fr Chris Webb who showed great interest in our work and hopes to become involved. He is based at Our Lady of Victories R C Church, Kensington, London. Finally this month we had a short discussion with the Rev. Hamel Cooke in the beautiful crypt of St Marlebone Church, after which we were shown around by the Director, Rev Andrew Henderson. Rev. Noel Walters visited head office.

April Head Office was closed for six days over Easter. The first meeting was with Fr Christopher Webb

of Our Lady of Victories RC Church, Kensington. We discussed the setting up of an APCMI meeting in May. On 14th I attended the final meeting of the Islington Social Services Befriending Planning Group at Friern Hospital. Our deliberations will now be reported to the Hospital Task Force. Sunday 17, the London Marathon (see report for fuller details). Two days later I spoke to the Clerkenwell Project Planning Group. Two residential properties for discharged Friern patients are to be opened in 1989 in an area very near to our office. We hope to set up a local support group in the district before then. On 25th, I attended the first steering committee meeting of our Guildford group. On 26th I spent the day at Long Grove Psychiatric Hospital, Epsom at the invitation of the Voluntary Services Officer. She introduced me to key personnel who showed keen interest in our work. They would like to see us developing APCMI in the Kingston & Esher district Health Authority Area. Finally this month, Jane and I addressed the first meeting of APCMI in Croydon (see regional report).

Dennis Murray
Development Officer

Regional Round-Up

Croydon. The first meeting of APCMI in Croydon was held on April 27 and was attended by thirty one people, including representatives from local churches, mental health voluntary groups and the statutory services. Rev. Noel Walters chaired and opened the meeting by describing his work as a hospital and community chaplain in the Croydon area. Jane Lindon then described the founding and early days of the Association. She went on to highlight the needs of mentally ill people and their relatives. After the coffee break, Dennis Murray spoke about the work and services offered by APCMI which was followed by questions from the floor. Those present agreed to convene a steering committee and meet again in the near future. A letter of thanks and appreciation was sent to the Archdeacon of Croydon for the use of St Matthew's House. The Croydon Advertiser reported the meeting in full.

Kensington & Chelsea. The first meeting was an informal get together in the church hall of Our Lady of Victories, Kensington High St. on 17 May. The meeting was attended by fifteen people and chaired by Fr. Chris Webb who had worked hard organising and publicising the event. As well as being attached to the parish he also works as chaplain to St Mary Abbots Hospital and he opened the meeting by sharing some of

his experiences. Jane Lindon and Dennis Murray spoke about the work of APCMI. Considerable interest was shown in mental health issues. It was agreed to meet again in the hope of setting up a local APCMI group.

Dulwich & Forest Hill. The Association's first London support group has recently set up a local Drop-In Centre for mentally ill people and their carers, as well as those suffering from stress. At present the Centre is open every Tuesday evening between 6.30 and 8.30pm at Platform One, a youth Project next to Forest Hill station. APCMI members are grateful to the Management Committee of Platform One for allowing them to use these premises, rent free, thus enabling the Dulwich/Forest Hill group to provide a much-needed pastoral care centre in this part of south London. The group's voluntary service is backed up by the support of other voluntary organisations, professional carers and neighbourhood churches.

Guildford. A report of the Guildford Group's activities will appear in the next newsletter.

South Bucks (Formally High Wycombe) See details in Diary update.

Training Course

After the success of the Spring Volunteer Befrienders' Training Course, we are pleased to report that the arrangements are under way for our second course to be held in the autumn in Central London. Inquiries welcomed. On completion of a course we encourage befrienders to meet on a regular basis to share their experiences in a confidential and supportive setting. These group sessions are led by the Course Co-ordinator and form an important part of our policy of care for the carer. All those enrolling for our training courses should be aware of this on-going commitment.

Considerable interest and appreciation of the course continues to be shown by many people who are directly concerned with mental health issues, and some support groups are looking forward to the time when they can organise their own training. For details S.A.E. to the Course Co-ordinator at Head Office.

Other News

We are frequently asked for information on all aspects of mental health care from a cross section of individuals and from professionals, voluntary and church groups, and we are pleased to be acting as a referral resource. Some of these people are working with us on those

projects which we jointly develop.

* The Friern Project Proposal is before the Hospital Authorities. We hope to hear from them within the next few weeks.

* A set of Guidelines for groups is now being prepared in draft form and the management committee will be deliberating over them in the next few weeks. They should be ready by Autumn.

* Work is progressing on our set of fact sheets written by experts. These will form part of our resource pack on Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill.

* As well as individual membership APCMI now offers group membership at the attractive cost of £25.00 per annum. The offer is open to any church group, hospital group or any group associated with mental health; such applications to be approved by the management committee. (Please contact the Development Officer for an application form.)

Mars London Marathon

We were delighted when Howard Hopkins our office neighbour offered to run in on our behalf for a second time, (members will remember his splendid achievement last year in a half marathon) and we were very

impressed when he told us he was going to run twice as far, this time in the Mars London Marathon. We are pleased to report that Howard ran the race in a personal best time of three hours forty six minutes and we extend to him our congratulations and deep appreciation. We thank all of you who have contributed to the marvellous sum of £1,300 so far received. If you still have sponsorship money to send, please forward it as soon as possible.

Austin and I went to an advantageous spot in the East End where we could see the runners both going and coming. We cheered everyone in sight and enjoyed the happy and carnival-like atmosphere. Austin took some excellent black and white action shots with his camera, a set of which we presented to Howard as a memento. Gail and Dennis Murray supported the event by mingling with the large crowds in the Festival Gardens.

Later in the week we thanked Howard's wife, Jackie, for her indefatigable efforts in collecting sponsorship monies and we took some photographs of Howard proudly wearing his medal.

Jane Lindon

We welcome comments, letters, articles or book reviews for inclusion in the newsletter.

Our thanks to Nick and Gail Cotton for the production of this newsletter.

Copy deadline for the September issue....Monday 1 August 1988.

FRIERN HOSPITAL - journey's end or a new beginning?

I was very apprehensive when I began my new job as Assistant Chaplain at Friern Hospital one fine, cold day in February. I had not worked in a Psychiatric hospital before, nor had I any close dealings with people who had mental illness, except for a few I knew were 'put away' for treatment. I was aware of my anxieties about 'lunatics' and 'asylums' as I entered the hospital, now no longer hidden behind high walls and locked gates but just as isolated by the walls of our fears and prejudices. I soon realised that for some Friern had become journey's end - like Arthur. He was committed to Friern in 1919, suffering some trauma after the madness of the First World War in which he served as a young soldier. He died, after 66 years inside, as I kissed him good-bye and told him that we loved him.

For others, Friern is a temporary resting place, an inn, on the journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, for the victims of our fractured and divided society. Some have been robbed of all they possess - their hope, their meaning, their identity; others are ill-equipped to cope with our success-oriented and goal directed society. They have come to the end of one road and are needing respite and help to find another.

Some leave Friern and go back to their lives to con-

tinue the struggle despite an often crippling and recurring illness. A few leave with new insights and fresh hopes to start over again. For still others, Friern is not the place for them to live and yet they need help and sustenance to enable them to participate as fully as possible in community life. After many years here some residents have begun a new life in family-style accommodation within local communities with staff on hand to help and advise - but where they are encouraged to be involved in the day to day tasks of daily living. The reaction of those around them ranges from hostility to resentment, fear or indifference to sympathetic concern and, occasionally, acceptance. Lack of experience, sometimes poor planning, more often unrealistic expectations has meant that mistakes are made by all concerned. We have to continue the struggle to learn because the ideal, where the sick and vulnerable members of our society are accepted and valued as part of our whole, is the Gospel of Christ.

Perhaps it is from those who are diseased that we can learn more about our own disease, as individuals and as a society, and only then, in openness and acceptance do we have the real hope of becoming whole.

Rev Mrs Pat Thomas
