



Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

NEWSLETTER NO. 5 DECEMBER 1988

THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

An APCMI Information Leaflet accompanies each copy of this newsletter. Please place this leaflet in good hands so as to publicise the Association and help increase the membership.

Roger Morton, our efficient minutes secretary, has been co-opted onto the management committee. We were pleased to hear of his acceptance and we welcome him.

With great pleasure I announce that this Association received a cheque for £3,000 from the Queen's Silver Jubilee Trust. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales sits on the grant making committee. Prince Charles' well known interest in the care and welfare of young people appears to be reflected in the award. From the Thames Telethon Appeal we received £1,100. Our share of funds raised by the Royal Britain Private View was £1,000 - thanks to the Mental Health Foundation with whom we co-operated, and thanks to those of you who came along or who otherwise gave support. The final instalment of £4,000 came from the Cripplegate Foundation. We are greatly indebted for all the help we have received from this quarter. Other donations included Charities Aid Foundation vouchers from Mr & Mrs N Orchard and from Mr & Mrs J Borgars; an anonymous cheque for £123.00. £47 to our Croydon Branch from International Voluntary Services (Croydon); £365 from the London Musicals Company charity performance of "Lock Up Your Daughters" (for our Dulwich branch).

We are currently meeting our overheads with a reasonable reserve but we must make continuing efforts to raise funds, not just for our basic overheads but for projects in mind which require the employment of further staff. All offers of help are welcome. Thank you for your support to date.

Members will be glad to know that our Audited Accounts for the period to March 31st 1988 are now in the hands of the Charity Commissioners. It seems that only half of Registered Charities fulfil this obligation!

Christmas Greetings to all.

AUSTIN LINDON

"ROYAL BRITAIN"

A Private View of London's most recent attraction the exciting and entertaining "Royal Britain" Permanent Exhibition in the Barbican was held in aid of the Mental Health Foundation on 22nd September 1988 in the Presence of HRH Princess Alexandra the Foundation's Patron.

The initiative came from APCMI who approached the MHF with the idea in the hope that they would like to provide their known and respected expertise and experience to ensure the success of the joint venture. It was agreed that APCMI would benefit from the funds raised. Our President Jane Lindon worked closely with Major General 'Bob' Loudoun, the Director, and Mrs Maggie Barnard, Events Organiser of the MHF, and together they liaised with Mr Gyles Brandreth Deputy Chairman, Mr Adrian Gilpin, Managing Director, and Mr John Sarson, Operations Manager of Royal Britain, who generously offered the venue and staff services free of charge. Courage Brewery sponsored the invitation cards and the wine and finger buffet.

Representing the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill Mr & Mrs A R Lindon had the honour to be presented to HRH Princess Alexandra.

Jane Lindon writes, "it was a wonderful event and everyone enjoyed the evening tremendously. It was well worth the effort put into it. I was particularly impressed at the way in which Princess Alexandra circulated and tried to meet as many people as possible. Her graciousness gave people much pleasure. At the presentation the well informed Princess asked Austin and I about the work of APCMI and she was interested to hear of the involvement of the Churches. On a personal level I was very deeply moved when the Princess indicated that she already knew about our schizophrenic son Adrian. She showed great compassion. On behalf of APCMI my appreciation and thanks to all concerned for a truly Royal occasion".

DIARY UPDATE: HEAD OFFICE NEWS FROM DEVELOPMENT OFFICER DENNIS MURRAY

August Although traditionally a holiday month I was fully occupied at Head Office. Our expansion continued and with it an ever increasing amount of paper work. During the second week I visited the Dulwich Drop-In Centre and participated in the events of the evening; I attended a fund raising event; I spent some time at Broadcasting House and I called on the Islington Voluntary Action Council to discuss our proposed plans in the area. Later in the month I chaired the first proposed meeting of the Croydon Branch Steering Committee. On August 23rd Jane Lindon and I visited the Sternberg Centre for Jewish cultural studies in North London where we met Rabbi Tony Bayford the Principal. We discussed Jewish ethics and their relation to pastoral care of the mentally ill. My final engagement was the regular monthly meeting of the Training Course volunteers support group. Jane was busy finalising arrangements for the Private View with senior staff from the Royal Britain Exhibition and colleagues from the Mental Health Foundation.

September On the 6th I attended the bi-monthly meeting of the National Management Committee where I submitted my report and discussed decision making policies. The following day Jane and I met Orthodox Rabbi Jeremy Rosen of Central London. APCMI seeks the involvement of Jewish communities and we were pleased to share

thoughts and ideas of mutual concern. I hope to address the Synagogue Monday meeting in the near future. That evening I attended a meeting of the Kensington and Chelsea group. On September 8th Jane and I had a consultation with the Director of MIND Mr Chris Hegginsbotham. We were encouraged by his positive response to the work and philosophy of APCMI and his offers of practical help. We shall use the MIND posting to publicise our work and we look forward to liaising with headquarters staff. Several local MIND members have joined APCMI and we remind MIND Branches throughout the UK of our attractive bargain group membership rate of £25.

From the 12th to 26th I was on annual leave during which time the office management was in the capable hands of Jane and Austin Lindon. On my return Jane and I conferred with Assistant Director Fred. Carney and Conference Organiser Pamela Jenkinson both of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship to plan the agenda for our joint APCMI/NSF conference on "Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill". This is to be held on Friday and Saturday 23rd/24th June 1989 in Central London (details to be published at a later date). A particularly important meeting took place on the 30th when Mr Robert Kelly Editor of Geoffrey Chapman invited us to write a practical book on Pastoral Care and a summary of the essentials of the Training Course. Jane will be responsible for the development of this exciting project. The Royal Britain reception took place on the 22nd (see report). On the evening of 29th I facilitated the monthly meeting of the Volunteers.

October Jane and Austin attended a special Sunday Mass, which included the Sacrament of Anointing the Sick, at Westminster Cathedral organised by Guilds of Catholic Doctors and Nurses. The first session of the second London based Befrienders Training Course took place on the evening of the 4th. The following day I attended the monthly meeting of the Kensington and Chelsea group. On the 6th I attended a one day Conference on Forensic Psychiatry organised in Oxford by NSF. It was attended by well over 300 delegates with interests in the field of penal care. That evening I attended a meeting of the Kingston (Surrey) Advocacy Alliance to inform them of our future plans to try and establish an APCMI branch in their area. The following week I gave a talk to a group of hospital chaplains convening at West Park Hospital, Epsom, Surrey. As a result of their keen interest I was invited to speak at a future meeting of the Epsom Deanery Chapter. The next day I attended a steering committee meeting of our Dulwich Branch. Jane and I had a lunch time meeting with Consultant Psychiatrist Dr Russell Blacker at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, a stone's throw from the Office. He is co-founder of the Association of Christian Psychiatrists and he was delighted to hear of our existence. Our data was promptly fed into his computer and we each look forward to developing closer links.

A new Director has been appointed for the Churches' Council for Health and Healing, the Rev. Dr John Young. Jane and I called on him at the Council's Head Office in the Crypt of St. Marylebone Church. The Rev. Dr Young has the unusual distinction of being both an Anglican Minister and a Consultant Psychiatrist. He was particularly pleased to hear of our community based orientation and also our policy of supporting relatives. He feels that the Churches should become more involved in caring for mentally ill people. He invited us to become members of the CCHH and address his Council early next year. The same day we had an appointment with Mr Bruce Garner Director of the Mental After Care Association which has an honourable 100 year old history of caring for mentally ill people discharged from hospital.

They run several community hostels in the South East. They are currently seeking ways of improving relationships with other caring groups in order to provide a more comprehensive package of community care. We found the discussion very helpful. Jane and I attended the SANE (Schizophrenia a National Emergency) Open Day and chatted with the Director David Saint. Our final meeting of the month was with Ms Janey Napier who is special events organiser for National MIND. Janey shares our Christian commitment to pastoral care and promptly became a member of APCMI. We look forward to friendly mutual support.

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REGIONAL ROUND UP

CROYDON

The following appeared in the Croydon Advertiser, Friday November 18th, 1988.

BELIEVING IN SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY OF THE MENTALLY ILL

Sharing the load eases the burden.

Croydon's newest group providing support for the mentally ill and their relatives is just finding its feet. The local branch of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill was only set up five months ago; its parent, the national organisation, is only a year older.

APCMI believes "in the spiritual integrity of the mentally ill". Although a Christian-based group, it is open to all who want to make use of it.

Member of the local steering group, Pam Freeman from Norbury, explained, "Basically we want to get other people interested in the mentally ill and to train to become befrienders." A support group also gives people the chance to talk to each other about their experiences". APCMI say relatives share a heavy burden of care for the mentally ill and have special needs for "support, empathy and compassionate understanding".

A National official said: "We are pioneers working towards a better understanding of mental health problems, and a greater awareness of the spiritual, psychological and creative needs of mental sufferers". The APCMI aims to provide a focus for members, volunteers and their beneficiaries. Volunteers will make hospital and home visits and will be provided with training to help them carry out their work. The group would also provide information advice and referrals to other organisations.

APCMI is directed at all types of mental illness. Mrs Freeman is concerned over the possible consequences of the community care strategy being brought in by the health authority. "I think that unless things are very precisely monitored, it could be very dangerous.

"People released from hospital care may still be very disturbed; they may be so used to living in hospital that it is difficult for them to adjust to the community." Often, people will turn against their carers and the people they are with".

To launch their bid for members, the group wrote to 200 local churches, who they believed might form centres.

KEITH MORRIS

GUILDFORD

SUMMARY OF THE OPEN MEETING HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER

1. This meeting officially opened the Guildford and District Branch of APCMI. The Steering Committee was formed at an Open Meeting on March 21st 1988. This has met several times, and a ten week training course for befrienders has been organised to begin in January 1989.
2. There is a self-help support group in Godalming for ex-patients, which has developed separately from APCMI, but was inspired by it. Also a Drop-In has been started in Godalming, which was an APCMI initiative. This is held one evening a week in the Cellar Coffee Bar. It is open to anyone with a problem, or a sympathetic ear, to drop-in for a chat. There have been as many as 22 people in one evening, which was rather too noisy! and as few as 7, being mainly members of the group.
3. The Bishop of Dorking, speaking on 'The churches' involvement in mental health care raised the following points: Many churches, and individual churchmen are interested in healing, but the emphasis is usually on the physically sick. There is still a good deal of uncertainty, lack of information and even fear, in dealing with mental illness. What can the church do?
 - (a) Support those who are already active in helping the mentally ill.
 - (b) Clergy should be better equipped.
 - (c) Try to change attitudes in society.
 - (d) Learn more about the subject by doing the training course.

The need is great, and will become greater as psychiatric patients are sent out into the community. Will ex-patients find as much help and support in the community as they did in hospital?

4. Rev. Chris McKenna, a psychotherapist, speaking on 'The qualifications for a befriender', made 3 main points as necessities for befrienders.
 - (a) A lively sense of empathy - knowing when to talk, and when to be silent etc. We must be where they are and feel with them.
 - (b) Mental illness can last a very long time and enthusiastic helpers can loose heart. It is therefore important that they have endurance, or in Christian terms, faith.
 - (c) Befrienders must have a life of their own. In the Gospels, Jesus was continually helping people, but he made time to get away on his own to pray. We too must find time to read, pray and play, so that the enthusiasm remains.

DULWICH AND FOREST HILL

The first general meeting of the above branch of the Association was held on Wednesday 9th November at Platform One Community Centre. Dennis Murray was in the Chair. About 40 people attended the meeting. Nick Cotton, one of the founder members of the group reported on the activities so far: The Drop-In Centre opened on Tuesday 24th April and had been open every Tuesday since then. There has been from one to six visitors on any one night and so far there had been a total of about 80 visits. The group believes that the need is such that they may have to expand. There is a continuing need for more volunteers to help with the running of the Drop In. Local interest has been shown and members of the branch have addressed Occupational Therapists at both the Maudsley and Hither Green Hospitals as well as a local Christian Workers Group and the staff at the Kirkdale Adult Education Institute. The following were duly elected to serve on the local committee; Chairperson Mrs Gail Cotton; Vice Chair Dr Gordon Conran; Treasurer Mr Nick Cotton; Secretary, Ms Valerie Onslow with Rev. Michael Bray, Ms Daphne Cowan, Ms Catherine O'Leary, Ms Mary Dunne, Mrs Evelyn Sumption.

Jane Lindon Founder and National President, then gave a short address about the work of the Association and its Central Office. She said that there was an increasing amount of interest being shown in the Association and many requests have been received for the Association to speak on its work. The development of the branches and groups throughout various parts of the country was evident of the need and the support which was there. The Rev. Michael Bray concluded the meeting with prayer.

KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

A small group of members continue to meet at 7.30 on the first Wednesday of every month in the crypt of Our Lady of Victories Church, High Street Kensington. They hope to establish a steering committee. Posters and information circulars have been sent to all Churches in the area. All are welcome to join this local group.

SOUTH BUCKS

Unfortunately the proposed September 5th meeting had to be cancelled which has caused a short delay in further development in the area. In common with other branches local members are seeking the daytime involvement of voluntary helpers and resources.

EAST SUSSEX

The first public meeting of APCMI in this area will be held in the Department of Psychiatry, The District General Hospital, Eastbourne on Friday December 2nd at 8 p.m. It has been convened by the RC Chaplain Fr. Geoffrey Nixon of Our Lady of Ransom Church. Formerly Fr. Nixon worked with mentally ill people at Best Beech St. Mary's residential community. He has been a friend and member of APCMI from its inception. Development Officer Dennis Murray will address the meeting.

FUTURE PLANS

ESSEX Plans are in progress to launch a publicity campaign through the good offices of the co-terminus Dioceses of Brentwood (RC) and Chelmsford (CoE). Our Information Leaflets will be distributed to all the clergy. We hope to set up local services in the county.

Local people are encouraged to get in touch with their parish priest or contact Head Office. Inquiries are welcomed from all interested parties.

KINGSTON

Preliminary meetings are under way in the Kingston area. These should lead to the establishment of a local group. For more information contact Head Office.

OXFORD, LEEDS, DEVON

Considerable interest is being shown in these areas. In order to collate our information please contact Head Office and we will look into the possibility of setting up a local group. The Development Officer will be pleased to assist and will address locally convened meetings.

CONTRIBUTIONS

It gives us pleasure and encouragement at Head Office to receive written contributions such as prayers, letters, articles and poems. From time to time we hope to publish some of them in the Newsletter. They will not necessarily be chosen on literary merit (although many display a gifted style) but rather because they reflect in mood and content the spirit, hopes and sorrows of the people who look to us for help and support, and the aspirations and insights of those who endeavour to help them.

A CHRISTIAN PRAYER FOR USE BY THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE MENTALLY ILL AND THEIR RELATIVES

Almighty and Holy Trinity, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, King of the Universe, we bow before you and offer our highest praise. May our act of praise show forth in our lives.

You revealed to John the Baptist the nature of your Messiahship through your miracles of healing. You showed that your Kingdom had already come to this earth.

O Holy Spirit descend upon each of us. Come and dwell in our bodies, our minds and our souls, enabling us to go forward in your Holy Name to counsel those in need of your healing influence and power, especially those of your children who are mentally ill and also their dear relatives who suffer with them. Graciously assist the work of all those who care for them, and restore full health and a vigorous

life to your children in need that they may spread your kingdom on this earth.

Bless empower and strengthen all those within our Association who give generously of their gifts, time and energy. Permit O Lord this work to develop and spread so that we may eventually see the day when the kingdoms of this world will wholly become the kingdoms of Christ Jesus our Lord and Master. Amen.

DR GORDON CONRAN
VICE CHAIRMAN APCMI

NO ROOM: BY CAROLE IRVINE

There is no room at the Inn, no room, they said
He was nailed to the Cross and they thought He was dead;
He sat in the gutter swigging the drink
She went mad with despair and over the brink
He had a bell round his neck and cried "unclean"
She was sucked from the womb and had never been
A human-being understood and accepted
But one who was only despised and rejected
The flotsam and jetsam washed up by the tide
O Incarnate God with us abide
I am mentally ill, they do not understand
Take me O Christ by Your loving hand
There is no room in the Church for one such as I
And is this not the reason You had to die?

Recently two members of this Association approached us to discuss the needs of families who are bereaved as a result of suicide. They both felt that there were particular needs both in the short and long term that such families might have to face. They inquired if the Association would be prepared to consider the idea of a family support group being formed as part of the Association's work? Whilst no decision has been made about this request as yet the views of the membership would be appreciated. Any information or comments you have will be treated with sensitivity and in confidence. Please contact us at Head Office.

FACT SHEETS

To be published shortly by APCMI three helpful factsheets by eminent authorities in specialized fields with titles as follows:

1. PASTORAL CARE OF THE MENTALLY ILL
by Reverend Dr. Martin Israel M.B., M.R.C.P.
2. COMMUNITY CARE FOR PEOPLE WITH A MENTAL DISABILITY
by Professor J K Wing M.D. F.R.C.Psy; PhD. Director M.R.C.
Social Psychiatry Unit, Institute of Psychiatry.
3. PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL ILLNESS
by Dr V.L. Nimgaonkar and Dr D. Cassar

Further details to be announced in our next Newsletter.

DEADLINE DATE FOR MARCH '89 ISSUE OF NEWSLETTER MONDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 1989.

APCMI OBJECT (from the Constitution)

"The object of the Association shall to be to promote the relief of person suffering from the problems of mental illness, and also 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 they full potential as individuals and participating members of society and so that their condition of life may be improved".