



# Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

NEWSLETTER NO. 8. SEPTEMBER 1989

## THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Many members were very pleased to take part in a two-day joint APMCI/NSF Conference held in June. The Conference was a great success and a real milestone for your Association.

I have to announce another major achievement: SANE (Schizophrenia A National Emergency) has agreed to back our National Development Programme to the extent of £34,383 over the next two years. This will involve the employment of an additional Development Worker. Thank you SANE, and thanks to all who helped prepare this project. National Development requires Head Office support. This involves increasing overheads, which are not easy to meet. We are therefore especially grateful to two Churches local to our London Headquarters where special efforts have been made to help us. We were named as this year's principal beneficiary of the celebrated Strawberry Fayre held annually by St. Etheldreda's Ely Place. A cheque for £2,000 came to hand, for which, many thanks. Over at Bunhill Row the good folk of St Joseph's Church invited a visiting team to a Darts Evening, which netted a splendid £400 for APCMI. Well done! Evidence of local support is invaluable when fund raising so I am doubly grateful to St Joseph's and to St Etheldreda's for the hard work and devotion involved. Other recent benefactors include: £300 from the Provincialate of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus; £500 from the Beatrice Laing Trust and £50 from A.G. Nixon. Please do not miss any opportunities to raise funds for our basic expenses: they continue and we will always be in need of your help.

A well attended APCMI Annual General Meeting for the year ended 31 March 1989 was held within the context of the Joint APCMI/NSF Pastoral Care Conference at Friends' House, Euston Road on June 24th 1989. It was my great pleasure to read an Annual Report containing a long list of achievements for the year (copies available). This combination of an AGM with a conference worked well and may set the style for future years. At this AGM Mr Geoffrey Walker, Chairman of Croydon Branch APMCI - a retired Psychiatric Nursing Tutor - was elected to the National Committee.

Other vacancies on the National Committee have since been filled by: Brother Adrian Tate S.S.J.E., the Simon Community London Chairman; The Reverend Miss Barbara Stanford, Assistant Minister, Bloomsbury Baptist Church and Miss Verity Pink, a Psychiatric Staff Nurse in a London Hospital. The co-optings of Mr Nick Cotton (Dulwich Branch) and Mr Roger Morton were confirmed by the AGM. Roger Morton is now Secretary of APCMI and Nick Cotton was elected Vice Chairman at a recent committee meeting. Surviving committee members comprise: Mr Raymond Finney, Treasurer; Rev. Father C. Cunningham, I.C., Mr Les Campion; Rev. Vernon Muller; Mrs Jane Lindon, Founder/President and Austin Lindon - re-elected as Chairman by the new Committee.

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We are greatly indebted to two former committee members who are no longer with us: Mr Fred Carney of The National Schizophrenia Fellowship who has given much help and advice since foundation and Doctor Gordon Conran who contributed notably to the many committee meetings he attended. Thank you Fred. Thank you Gordon. You have our best wishes for the future.

AUSTIN LINDON

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### THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE MENTALLY ILL

Report on the APCMI/NSF Joint Conference held in London 23rd - 24th June 1989 compiled by the Editorial Staff.

The Chairman of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, Philip Wilmot, opened the first day of the Conference, and the Chairman of the Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill, Austin Lindon, opened the second day. Each complemented the other on the excellent relationship that exists between the two organisations. Austin outlined the work of APCMI and Philip set the theme of the event by reminding us that historically sufferers from mental illness were known as "Children of God".

The opening lecture "The Medical Model from a Christian Viewpoint" was delivered by Dr. John Meehan, Consultant Psychiatrist, St Mary Abbots Hospital, London. He developed his premise that the patient should be treated as a whole person, not just a syndrome, yet at the same time he cautioned us against assuming a too fundamentalist approach to the mentally ill person.

A choice of three workshops followed: "Professional Resources in the Community" led by Trevor Snowden a Senior Nursing Manager; "Residential Resources" led by Sister Theresa Pountney of the Church Army; and "Psychosis in Everyday Life" led by Mike Jackson from the Alistair Hardy Research Centre in Oxford.

The Friday afternoon lecture was given by Canon John Browning, Chaplain at Middlewood Hospital, Sheffield, on "Pastoral Resources". He emphasised the changing face of psychiatric chaplaincy and encouraged us to look at our own roles when providing pastoral care. This type of support is a two way process - receiving as well as giving - and it is an important part of spiritual counselling.

The afternoon workshops looked at important pastoral issues: "Worship with the Mentally Ill", "Holistic Care", and "Spiritual Healing"; led respectively by Rev. Mrs P. Thomas; Michael Endacott, a Director from the Institute for Complementary Medicine, and the Rev. John Barker.

On the second day the first talk was given by Mrs Jane Lindon, Founder/President of APCMI on "Breaking Down Barriers". She approached her subject from the point of view of the consumer of the various services (good or bad) which are available to mentally ill people and their relatives. In particular she highlighted the great need for Church involvement. Most boundaries serve a purpose, but we must tackle the problems surrounding the barriers that society erects for itself. She challenged all agencies in the field of mental care to look carefully at these structures.

Some of her comments were echoed by the concluding speaker the Rt.Rev. Peter Selby, Bishop of Kingston who warned the conference to be aware of the current political undermining of our tradition of good quality



professionally run services for the seriously disadvantaged. He also stressed that the Churches' role was primarily the provision of spiritual and psychological help to mentally ill people, and taking a lead in changing public perceptions.

The two sets of workshops on Saturday dealt with the practical application of Pastoral Care and were run as were the others by experts in the field; "Problems in Pastoral Ministry"; "The Pastoral Needs of Relatives"; "Pastoral Care and Practise"; "The Role of Befrienders"; and "Ethnic Needs and Realities".

The Conference attracted over seventy people from a wide background who were very appreciative and who made a lively and deeply caring contribution to all of the events. BBC Radio 4 covered the proceedings which resulted in a report on "The Sunday Programme".

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### PASTORAL CARE OF THE MENTALLY ILL FROM THE VIEW OF A SCHIZOPHRENIA SUFFERER.

To create an environment within the Church parish which is inviting to the mentally ill person I think we have to revise our whole idea of Church communities. Essentially the Church is a community of believers and more specifically prayers. This is what should distinguish it from other forms of secular community. When individual Christians begin to take prayer seriously it can change and transform their lives. When groups of Christians pray together informally more things begin to happen and the sharing aspect of Christianity begins to be made manifest. This may be old hat to many committed Christians, but how many parishes of whatever Church do make attempts at serious community living? The ethos of modern society is more often than not emulated in the Church situation - every man for himself - status, career, bank balance and holidays abroad. This does not inspire a hospitable, welcoming Christ - orientated community for the mentally ill. The opposite seems to be the case: the most weak and sensitive get crushed in the ruthless pursuit of money.

The victory for the mentally ill will come when prayer-filled, self-disciplined Christian communities are strong enough to offer pockets of resistance to the socio-economic status quo; and are able to offer sanctuaries, and are prepared to take us seriously on a long-term, open-hearted basis, feeding us with acceptance, care and attention. Many other groups in society are also longing for this too. We need more than tea, biscuits and a chat. We need a full-blooded Christian embrace. We need sanctuary-sanctuary-sanctuary from the world and all its vicissitudes. Injections by themselves are grossly inadequate in my opinion. If the present government is intent on pulling down the Welfare State where else are we going to find help? The Church should have a much more important role to play. It is about time it reasserted itself in its historical role as peace - maker. It still is a vital force in the recuperation of those suffering from disturbances and disorganisations of the mind. The gap between insanity and so-called normality is very thin. So let us continue with Christ and the interpretation of man's soul as body, mind and spirit in the face of increasing psychological warfare.

As well as seeking a cure for mental illness we should also seek for an explanation as to its place in the order of things. Assuming that it is not a mark of God's wrath, the Christian interpretation presumes that suffering and illness has a purpose in itself and is a mark of God's favour, even to the extent of it being a kind of redeeming sacrifice. Can Schizophrenia be interpreted as a form of martyrdom? To find a spiritual explanation for mental illness must surely be a chief aim for any pastoral consideration and response.



Is it not correct to say that the sufferings of illness and disease often serve to reorientate people's lives and those around them into spiritual health and social unity, that sacrifice is an anchor for society? In considering the pastoral approach to mental illness and its "cure" we should not strive to force sufferers into equality with "normal" citizens because that could detract from a more honourable and meaningful status and a more extraordinary role. The Kingdom of God is perhaps more amenable to the participant who is willing to suffer voluntarily and accept his limitations in good faith. In doing so he may be bringing others around him closer to God. Certainly the schizophrenic has as much right to saving grace as any other individual within the context of his illness. The symptoms of despair, isolation, depression, loneliness and paranoia can be superseded in my opinion by the Passion, Death and more importantly the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Whether this resurrection of the mind and spirit takes place in a lonely bedsit, unemployed and dependant on Social Security is largely irrelevant. Whatever the circumstance or situation God redeems and provides meaning for people's lives however divorced from the norm. It is this inherent meaning that the pastor and carer should take into account in the Pastoral support of the mentally ill. (Especially when it contradicts the political and economic ethics of consumerism!) How many so-called "normal" roles in the commercial and recreational sector are blatantly immoral and socially destructive? The mentally and physically sick are a large minority group who can reject the insanities of the age and provide constructive alternatives and life styles.

ANDREW F. WOODS  
MANCHESTER: JUNE 1989

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## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

### DULWICH/FOREST HILL

The Drop In Centre has become well established in the area, with referrals from local clergy and professionals. Because of the increasing number of clients using the Centre, the Group is now looking for more people to join it's volunteer rota. (Contact Head Office on 01 - 253 9524 for details)

The London Musicals Company raised £600 for the Drop in Centre at their charity evening on 4th August. This student company gave an excellent performance of Vivien Ellis's twenties musical 'Mr Cinders' with Joe West, son of Timothy West and Prunella Scales, in the leading role. The cast also included Hamish Nichols and Hilary Day, student volunteers at the Drop In Centre. An extremely enjoyable evening's entertainment was followed by a buffet supper and wine.

Apart from their work at the Drop In centre volunteers have talked to and visited a number of local groups/hospitals including:

Forest Hill & Sydenham Rotary Club who recently gave Dulwich APCMI a GENEROUS DONATION OF £1,000.

West Lewisham Anglican Deanery Meeting

Occupational Therapists at the Maudsley Hospital

Voluntary Helpers at the Maudsley Hospital

Already planned for the autumn:

An outing for clients and volunteers in September.

A rota of clergy of all denominations. This means that a local clergyman will be available at the Centre once a month.

A programme of speakers and discussions

GAIL COTTON

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#### GUILDFORD

Some of the participants who were on our Befrienders' Course are already making good use of their skills: Two of them are regular visitors to the group homes in Guildford: another is in the process of starting an afternoon drop-in/friendship club for people who are lonely and isolated. Hopefully this project will start in September, with the positive involvement of the Resettlement Occupational Therapists, who see APCMI as allies in providing warm friendly clubs.

In Godalming, "Friday Night at the Cellar" continues and a regular band of people come along to have a chat and a joke and receive encouragement from John Vallat and his helpers.

The Relatives Support Group now has a phone number as a contact point, Guildford 38936 and the Co-ordinator has already been talking to parents of young mentally ill people, especially undergraduates, with a view to eventually bringing some of them together as a group.

On September, 15th we are holding a social evening at the United Reformed Church in Portsmouth Road, Guildford, when a few local Branch members will be sharing their experiences, and anyone will be welcome to join us.

It is hoped that there will be another Training Course in early 1990; and when this is certain we will be trying to encourage more members of local Church communities to come along and become better equipped in the pastoral care of the mentally ill.

The summer has been a time of quiet activity, but in the Autumn we will be aiming to get to grips with making a more concerted effort to recruit more volunteers.

JEREMY BOUTWOOD

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#### CROYDON

The first AGM of the Croydon Branch was held on Monday 26th June at St. Matthews' House in Croydon. Geoff Walker has now become Chairman and we acknowledge the debt we owe to Barbara Vigar for so expertly guiding us through the first year.

At present there are two carers' support groups in Coulsden and Norbury and people are being befriended, both carers and sufferers, by members of the Croydon Branch.

A volunteers' training course has been set up from 4th October - 29th November to be held at the Community Health Council Office at Croydon General Hospital; There has already been a lot of enquiries about the course. After the course, the committee are considering setting up a Drop-In Centre.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank Dennis Murray for his help and



guidance throughout, which has proved invaluable on many occasions. We realise that we are only beginning. With God's help we hope that the association will bring friendships and comfort to many people and that we can make the problems of mental illness more clearly understood by the people we come in contact with.

P.E. FREEMAN

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#### KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA BRANCH

The support group for relatives monthly meeting continues at Our Lady of Victories Church, Kensington, every first Wednesday with an invited speaker every month. The calibre of the speakers is to be praised and thanks are due to our May and July speakers, Dominique Augustine, Community Psychiatric Nurse, St. Mary Abbots Hospital, Kensington and Fr. David Barnes, Psychologist, Catholic Chaplaincy, Gower Street, respectively.

Our monthly committee meetings continue at More House Chaplaincy. However, we have to report sadly, that Fr. Digby Samuels has now resigned from the Committee due to a year's sabbatical. We thank him most deeply for his compassionate and practical support and wish him all the very best. We shall miss him.

Progress with our plans for a proposed local drop-in centre continue. The chair had a meeting with members of staff of MIND at their drop-in centre, Earl's Court, in late July. Our Branch's application for use of the same premises, one night per week, for an APCMI drop-in centre has now been put before MIND committee and a favourable outcome is expected/prayed for. Helen Shaw, Development Officer for MIND, said we shall be hearing from them in the near future.

STAN MCGOWAN

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#### EASTBOURNE

At Eastbourne, Branch organisation continues. Mr Ian Watling the Health Authority's Community Services Manager is co-operating with us and help is coming from MIND and other Voluntary agencies. We have held meetings at the District General Hospital, and at Avenida House, a Health Authority Day Centre. We were invited to send Befrienders to private care homes, and asked to look in on a day centre in central Eastbourne so as to assess needs.

Eastbourne District's mental health needs in relation to targets set by the World Health Organisation were the subject of a report published last November. We are studying the report along with the APCMI commissioned papers available at the June joint conference.

Four APCMI "Find-Out" meetings were held during the Summer, and thirty people showed interest in helping us provide a pastoral service. Topics discussed included: the expectations members might have of APCMI; the expectations APCMI might have of members; qualities of character appropriate to volunteers; case foundation data; the role of the befriender and his relationship with professionals.

The Steering Committee has drafted the Branch's terms of reference. A Befrienders Training Course is to start in October, and the training team will be Fr. Geoffrey Nixon; the Rev. Ted Houghton, Chaplain to Hellingley Hospital; and Juliana O'Carroll, a Counsellor.

The Branch's first fund raising event was a great success. £140 was raised. Great performances were given by Jim Couza; "Pane Barrier" - a sixth form Jazz Band; and the Eastbourne Folk Club. The show was enjoyed by all.

ANDREW SOMERVILLE  
BRANCH SECRETARY

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#### HEAD OFFICE UPDATE: MAY - JULY

We receive many invitations to attend events and conferences and on some occasions we are asked to address them. We see this as important promotion of the work of APCMI.

Jane Lindon and Dennis Murray attended a one day conference held at Runwell Psychiatric Hospital, Southend, Essex, organised by the Mental Health Services Manager and the Hospital Chaplain. It was encouraging to see a number of local clergy and lay representatives present who were seeking to examine their roles as they related to the patients. It was impressive to hear that some of the wards had been adopted by local parishes who give ongoing pastoral support, arrange visits, remember birthdays etc. The services of APCMI were introduced to all those present and warmly acknowledged.

Austin Lindon manned an APCMI information stall at the Strawberry Fayre.

Dennis Murray addressed a group of ordinands and local ministers who were attending a training course on Hospital Care at the General and Psychiatric Hospitals in Wakefield, Yorkshire.

Dennis Murray presented a report on the work of APCMI to the National Council of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organisation with Branches and Conferences nation - wide, who work with the poor and marginalised in our society. His address was given a warm response, with particular appreciation shown for APCMI's training and educational resources. The two organisations plan to maintain good working relationships.

Dennis Murray addressed a well attended exploratory one day conference which had as it's theme "Long Term Christian Healing". The conference, held in Leytonstone, London was organised by Harry and Dorothy Johnson, APCMI members.

Jane Lindon attended a one day conference which reported on the work of the Team for the Assessment of Psychiatric Services at both Friern and Claybury Hospitals. Whilst much of the content of the conference was presented in statistical form, some discussion took place on such topics as "Needs for Care", "Old and New Long Stay", and "The Economics of Community Reprovision".

The Head Office Management Team attended a meeting of CONCERN, a new association founded by a group of mental health professionals to monitor and research into Psychiatric care and practice within the N.H.S., and to act as a pressure group when necessary. Dennis Murray was elected onto the Committee

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Discussions are in progress with interested parties from the following areas who wish to involve APCMI in forthcoming events; Berwick-upon-Tweed, Wells, Bexley, Essex, Dorset, Liverpool and Manchester. If you live locally to these and would like to know what is being planned, contact the Development Officer at National Head Office.

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It is regretted that due to the industrial dispute by British Rail, the planned Manchester meeting had to be cancelled. Our apologies. It is intended to hold the meeting later in the year

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Welcomed to Head Office on a part-time basis: Mrs Jillian Gorven who has generously offered her voluntary services for the next few months. Jillian is a psychology graduate with market research expertise and she is currently designing a survey form to promote our East London Consultation Day.

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On the occasion of our joint conference with the National Schizophrenia Fellowship "Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill" we published a collection of commissioned papers and addresses written by experts in the field. Contributors include: Rev. Dr Martin Israel; Prof, John Wing; Rev. Mrs Patricia Thomas; Mrs Faith Bowers; and Rev. Anthony Yeldham. Copies are available in a presentation folder price £2.50 including post and package from Head Office.

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS: DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

##### Wednesday 6th September

The next meeting of the Kingston and New Malden Branch of the Association will take place on the above date at 8.00 p.m. in the Vestry room of Norbiton Church (St. Peter's) London Road Kingston. All welcome.

##### Thursday 28th September

APCMI Development Officer Dennis Murray will be guest speaker at a meeting held at 7.30 p.m. in the Parish Hall, St Bonaventure's Church, 119 Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol. All welcome.

##### Friday 6th October

Jane and Austin Lindon together with Dennis Murray will travel to York to speak at a meeting to launch the York Branch of APCMI. The meeting will be held at 8.00 p.m. in All Saints Lower School Assembly Hall, Nunnery Lane, York. All welcome.

##### Consecutive Tuesday evenings 3rd October to 28th November

The London based Volunteers Training Course will be held on the above dates at Heythrop College, Cavendish Square W1. Contact the Course Co-ordinator at National Head Office for prospectus and booking details.

##### Consecutive Wednesday evenings 4th October to 29th November

The Croydon Branch Volunteers Training Course will be held on the above dates (see Croydon Branch Report for details)

The Eastbourne Branch Volunteers Training Course takes place as above.

##### Monday 6th November

The next Branch Forum will be held on the above date from 7.00 - 9.00 p.m. at "The Meeting Room" 114 Mount Street, London W1 to which representatives from each of the Branches are cordially invited.

##### Monday 11th December 1989

The East London Consultation Day on "Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill" will be held from 10.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. at the Robin Brooke Conference Centre, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London EC1, on the above date. Details and programme from APCMI National Head Office.