



# Association for the Pastoral Care of the Mentally Ill

An association which supports the mentally ill and their relatives

## NEWSLETTER NO.9 JANUARY 1990

### THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We start the new decade and our fourth year with great promise: SANE is funding a second development worker to help our national expansion; we are increasing our involvement with both the professionals and the churches through events such as the Consultation Day detailed below; new services are being created at APCMI branches; new branches are being opened. If you feel that there is sufficient interest to found a new branch in your area it is up to you to get in touch with us. We will help you to the best of our ability.

I am pleased to report to members that the National Committee, now back to full strength, is working well. Committee members are playing active parts on both Policy and Finance sub-committees besides appearing at the APCMI Branch Forums, the Consultation Day and other functions.

My particular interest is in the further development of befriending services. Those of us who have seen our loved ones' faces light up when we visit them in various institutions and community placements will appreciate and understand the value of friendship and companionship to people with mental illness. I plan to investigate training methods and support systems which will help individuals who wish to take on this rewarding work, and promote this work in the association. I am pleased to hear of progress at our Eastbourne Branch where partnerships are being created between trained APCMI volunteers and relevant professionals for the purpose of introducing the volunteers as befrienders to potential beneficiaries.

The success of our training courses and of the Consultation Day leads me to hope that we will be able to act as consultants in these two areas and so promote good pastoral care practices in the regions.

Our wide recognition amongst other mental health agencies has led to approaches from them for APCMI to help in campaigning for improved mental health services both in hospitals and in the community. This we are pleased to do in the belief that the churches have a duty to ensure good care for people with mental illness; especially the chronically sick, many of whom are drifting into cardboard cities or who are confined in prison.

Our projects need firm funding. We are shortly moving to a larger office. Increasing activity will require more supporting staff and equipment. Please do all you can to support this expansion. Whatever you can do to help will be appreciated. We gratefully acknowledge donations as follows: A.G. Leventis and Co. £1,000; St Peter's Church, Paderborn (BAOR), £237.94; The Dean and Chapter of York Minster, £200; Mr and Mrs N and T Orchard, £150; Croydon Anglican Rural Deaneries, £140.15; St Cuthbert's P.C.C. Wells, £100.00; Mr Hugh Scurfield £100; Rev Gillian King, £63.08; St John's P.C.C. Loughton, £54.76; Chaddleton P.C.C. Leek £50.00; Sisters of Mercy, Rayleigh £50.00; Mr D.H. Datson £50.00; Mr J F Colleiro, £42.00; anonymous donations of £195.06, £100.00, £70.00; and many smaller gifts. We would also like to thank Lord Strathalmond for office furniture and David and Rosemary Linnell for the computer and printer on which this newsletter is being composed.

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We are pleased to enclose an important leaflet "Christians and Community Care", with the publisher's compliments, as it reflects so much of our own philosophy. An APCMI leaflet is also enclosed. Please use it to help increase both awareness and membership.

In addition members will be receiving subscription reminders herewith. Please renew your membership very early in the new year.

On behalf of the APCMI National Committee I wish all readers happiness and success in this new decade.

AUSTIN LINDON

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### EAST LONDON CONSULTATION DAY

For concerned professionals, the voluntary sector and church groups.

#### "Towards Effective Partnerships in Mental Health Care"

Held at the Robin Brooke Centre, St Bartholomew's Hospital, London, December 1989.

The Consultation came into being as a result of an approach made by Jane Lindon, the Founder and President of APCMI, to the Bishop of Stepney, the Right Rev. Jim Thompson. She had expressed her grave concern about standards of mental health care in his area and he shared her views. Together they agreed to plan the Consultation with the co-operation of senior Church workers from the Boroughs of Hackney, Islington and Tower Hamlets, assisted by Lewis Donnelly of Westminster Diocese Social and Pastoral Action and Dennis Murray, APCMI Development Officer.

The aims of the day were outlined in the Programme which was widely circulated in the Districts:

" As a result of increasing community awareness of the changes in mental health care, many churches are striving to develop appropriate responses to the growing numbers of people with mental health needs in their midst. In order to provide an effective pastoral service the Churches seek the active support of both statutory and voluntary agencies.

The East London Church Leaders are conscious of the high incidence of mental illness in their area. They wish to promote good pastoral care practice within the community by encouraging representatives of local church groups to participate in the Consultation Day.

The organisers of the event hope that the shared expertise of the delegates, who come from a multiplicity of backgrounds, will result in dialogue leading to future co-operation on mental health care provision, thereby improving the quality of life for consumers of mental health services. The Day has been designed to facilitate individual contributions from all who attend, especially those who reside in and represent the districts."

Bishop Thompson very ably chaired the day which opened with a message that Jane Lindon had been delighted to receive from Professor Trevor Silverstone. It was read out to the delegates by APCMI Chairman Austin Lindon :

"Welcome to St Bartholomew's Hospital. I am sorry that I am not here to greet you in person.

This venerable place of healing had its origins, as you know, as a religious house, The Priory of St Bartholomew, named after an even older establishment in Rome.

With the passage of centuries, the need for the care and comfort which pastoral ministries can give to those afflicted with fear and despair has not diminished. Indeed the work you do is perhaps even more relevant in today's anonymous and fragmented society than it was in the twelfth century when we were founded.

I therefore welcome you both as Head of the Department of Psychological Medicine of St Bartholomew's Medical College and also as someone professionally committed to the well-being of the mentally ill."

After the Bishop's opening address an overview was given by Christina Murphy, Senior Planner Mental Health, North East Thames Regional Health Authority. She was very frank about poor standards of psychiatric care in the three districts, the blame falling mainly onto inadequate old Victorian buildings, lack of funding and difficulties in staffing. She explained that the authority was doing all in its power to improve conditions but she was anxious about future provision and delivery of care. She asked the delegates to make representation to the government, and she made the interesting point that complaints from public agencies such as those present do influence policy makers.

The next speaker was Canon John Foskett, Chaplain Maudsley Hospital, whose talk on Theological and Pastoral Insights included a moving case history of a mentally disturbed young man. He emphasised the need for friendship and a pastoral programme for mentally ill people.

The morning session ended with lively discussion and comments from the floor. Delegates with local knowledge and experience expressed anger and frustration about conditions in their districts, especially Tower Hamlets and Hackney, the two poorest Boroughs in the U.K. Inner city deprivation is a contributing factor to the neglect of mentally ill people. Other contributors criticised the lack of good community care. Representatives from the Churches were seeking a moral and ethical response as well as acknowledging practical and pastoral needs. An awareness of the lack of care and support for families and carers was a recurring theme. Considerable disquiet was voiced about the implementation of the Griffith's Report (March 1988) and the implications of the recent Government White Paper.

After lunch the delegates heard about three examples of Good Practices : a Tower Hamlets Church Action project by Rev. Andrew Mawson; the Community and Ethnic Groups by Myrna Lubin, East London Social and Pastoral Action Officer, representing Hackney; and a Statutory Sector initiative by Trevor Snowden an Islington Senior Nursing Officer. (Marie Lewis, Hackney Deanery Community Resource Officer joined the afternoon team.)

Then followed the most important part of the day, the Consultations. The delegates divided into three separate District Groups to discuss and design the way forward, and to make preliminary plans for future liaison and joint action. APCMI resources were offered to any locally set up projects. At the closing plenary spokespersons outlined these plans. (The planning committee will be convened again to consolidate activity.)



Over eighty people attended, many of whom expressed their appreciation to the organisers for instigating the successful pioneering consultation; considering that it augered well.

We sincerely thank the articulate and caring delegates who supported the Conference through their personal commitment to the well being of mentally ill people, to the alleviation of their neglect and suffering, and with a firm intention to work together on their behalf.

APCMI was pleased to receive the following letter from Bishop Thompson after the event :

".....thank you and the planning group for the tremendous work you did on the consultation. It was one of the best consultations I have attended and achieved its clear purpose and led to important further action. I am grateful to the fruits of the partnership between the churches and APCMI and hope that there may be other occasions and places where this model can be used.

As became apparent from the consultation the distress and anxiety in the field of the support of the mentally ill in the community is a matter of grave concern - for government, for local communities and for the Church. With many thanks for what you gave to the process.

With love and prayers, + Jim.

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### APCMI TRAINING COURSES

#### A Progress Report

Three training courses have been running during the Autumn, one each by Croydon and Eastbourne and one by Central London - now into its third year. Fifty-five people attended the courses with an excellent average attendance rate of 88%. Dennis Murray continued as course co-ordinator for Central London and he acted as adviser and guest lecturer to the others.

It was decided at committee level that the original London model could be used, subject to local needs. The courses were planned in order to encourage participants to develop their inherent skills under the guidance of a professional team drawn from the fields of mental health and pastoral care. Each gave lectures on their own specialities which were followed by general questions and discussion. After coffee group sessions and experiential exercises took place. This proved to be a popular format. The courses are run one evening per week for nine or ten weeks.

Eastbourne concentrated on befriending as the central theme of their course for this branch seeks to establish a befriending service. Croydon members broadened the content of their course as they wish to involve volunteers in such activities as support groups and a drop-in centre. The London course was run on similar lines to Croydon's, offering a wider range of skills for volunteers.

One positive factor emerging from the courses is the wide age range of participants. This is greatly encouraging and it is hoped that a number of mature volunteers will emerge at Branch level.

As well as offering specialised training for volunteer work APCMI

courses are also attracting people who would like to learn more about mental health issues. The Association welcomes enquiries from other agencies who may wish to take advantage of its educational resources. It takes this opportunity to warmly thank the guest lecturers, all of whom have freely given of their valued expertise.

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#### APCMI BRANCHES

Dulwich, Croydon, Guildford, Kensington and Chelsea, and Eastbourne are well established Branches and they are to be congratulated on their steady growth and development. The "hands-on", dedicated voluntary work of the Association is done mainly by members at Branch level and we are proud of their achievements. Two new Branches have opened : one in Kingston-on-Thames and Esher, and one (our Northernmost) in York. We look forward to publishing details of their progress in our next newsletter. In the meantime we send them our good wishes for the future. Two exciting developments are at the planning stage in Essex, and we have a request from the Social Services in Liverpool to set up a Branch.

Head Office hosts a "Branch Forum" which convenes regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest. Each branch sends representatives who welcome the opportunity to meet and learn from each other.

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#### THANK YOU

- to Mr Peter de Figueiredo who comes to Head Office one half day per week on a voluntary basis to help with clerical office duties. His skills are most welcome. Some of you may remember Peter's moving contribution to our BBC Radio 4 Broadcast.

- to Mrs Jillian Gorven for the professional survey and follow-up report she produced for the East London Consultation Day. Her voluntary contribution added greatly to the success of the day and it will be a valuable resource in the future. Congratulations Jillian on a most readable and interesting document.

- to Committee member Rev. Vernon Muller, Chaplain, Friern Hospital who promoted the work of APCMI at an International Conference on Pastoral Care held in Assisi. Vernon took with him a large number of our Information Leaflets for distribution among the delegates, many of whom he reports, showed considerable interest.

- to Mr Bruce Jockelson and his staff of the quality City printing firm "Jockelson", who, as a generous donation produced and printed the attractive programme for the East London Consultation Day.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENT

A reminder that the annual subscription for members is now raised to eight pounds (unwaged concessions available). Inevitably, due to the effects of inflation, costs are rising. We have kept this figure as low as possible.



## "MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD"

Many readers have been kind enough to compliment us on our Newsletters, mentioning how they enjoy reading them and congratulating us on the content. Although they are expensive to produce and distribute commensurate with our slender resources, we nevertheless put their production high on our list of priorities. A national organisation such as ours needs to promote and publicise its existence as well as disseminating information and news. All members receive regular copies, but in addition we have a mailing list of individuals and groups whom we consider will be interested in our activities. We always include newsletters in our funding applications. May we request you please to pass on your copy to anyone who might be interested to know more about our work. Supplies of our Information Leaflets are available free of charge (S.A.E. Please).

Our published collection of commissioned papers and addresses written by experts in the field is selling well at Conferences. Copies are available in a presentation folder, price £3.00 including post and packing, from Head Office.

APCMI is also frequently invited to write reports and articles for other journals. This invariably results in enquiries being made.

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We would like to thank our mental health colleagues who willingly publicise our events in their newsletters.

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## APCMI OBJECT (from the Constitution)

"The object of the Association shall be to promote the relief of persons 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 to so 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 conditions of their life may be improved."

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Edited by Jane Lindon \*\* Produced by Austin Lindon