



Highlights

A Petition

We recently received from Leeds a petition signed by fifty eight people requesting acknowledgement by the Christian Church of the Rights of the Mentally Ill, recognition of their special needs in the Church and the provision of support and care groups. This is a challenge both to APCMI and to the wider church which we trust will be furthered at the next General Synod of the Church of England in February, when, we understand, a motion proposed by one of our members on Community Care of the Mentally Ill will be debated.

Luton Consultation Day

A consultation day following the pattern of the successful one in East London two years ago was held at Luton Methodist Industrial College on Wednesday 4 December. In opening the afternoon session the Bishop of Northampton, the Right Reverend Leo Mc Cartie, quoted from a speech made by Pope John Paul II during his visit to UK in 1983. This highlighted what our brothers and sisters resident in psychiatric hospitals can give us, should we be prepared to receive from them. This message was reinforced by the moving witness of an elderly priest who confessed that, but for his appointment as chaplain to a psychiatric ward, he doubted if he would still be a priest. Those we call the mentally ill provided him with the pastoral care and spiritual strength that the wider church was unable to convey.

A key address in the morning was by one of our founder members, John Foskett, chaplain of The Maudsley Hospital for the past 15 years. He also drew out the 'two-wayness' of the pastoral relationship. Statutory services were well represented by the Bedfordshire Assistant Director of Social Services, Marcia Saunders, and the Mental Health Service Manager, Philip Burgess, both of whom shared their experiences from the platform under the chairmanship of the Bishop of St Albans, the Right Reverend John Taylor.

Our life president opened proceedings whilst Dennis Murray introduced the final session with an analysis of local church response to a questionnaire circulated by him. To select one answer from the seventeen reported in Dennis's analysis is difficult but it is significant that 21 of the churches indicated that they wish 'to be more involved' in the area of Pastoral Care for the Mentally Ill. The one who said 'No' did so out of modesty with respect to their lack of specialist knowledge.

Brentwood Project

We are pleased to announce that funding has been secured for a joint project with Brentwood Diocese. This will enable us, in partnership, to employ a development officer, probably based in Chelmsford, for a two year project. As well as developing our usual activities, the project will address the needs of ex-residents of asylums in bed and breakfast hotels in, for example, Southend.

A London Development Officer

The Mental Health Foundation has awarded us £20,000 over three years to assist in support of a full time development worker, providing we can finance the salary from other sources. We are currently applying to Inter-Church House as agents for the Department of Health initiative, "Opportunities for Volunteering". The emphasis will be on recruiting the unemployed as volunteers. The target area we have chosen is the southern part of the North East Thames Regional Health Authority, i.e. the inner-city, deprived areas of Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Kings Cross. This in, a sense, is our response to the October conference and book "Homelessness and Mental Illness - the Dark Side of Community Care" arranged by CONCERN (Care of the Neglected, Combining Education, Rehabilitation and Nursing).

Chairman's Report

Departures

The last five months have been a time of change for the Association. In July, when it became apparent that we did not have enough money to continue operating as we had previously, the committee reluctantly concluded that we had no option but to make our development officer, Dennis Murray redundant. He was formally notified of the decision at the end of August and left his post at the end of October.

At the same time Austin and Jane Lindon had moved out of London and Austin felt that the time had come for him to pass on the Chair to someone else. This he did at the Committee meeting in October when I was chosen to take over from him.

A further loss was Julian Hopwood, our part time development worker, who left at the beginning of September to continue full time in his work with the Holy Cross Centre Trust.

With three such major losses you may well ask 'Does the Association have a future?' The answer is an emphatic 'Yes' - but it will need hard work and dedication from us all. We are fortunate that we are able to continue employing Christine Kelsey, our Northern Development Officer whose post is funded separately by a grant from SANE. We are also fortunate in having the services of Brother Adrian Tate as Administrator and Treasurer.

The Way Forward

I would like to bring you up to date with the management of the Association. At a committee meeting in September I resigned as Treasurer to be replaced by Brother Adrian. In October, as already mentioned I replaced Austin as Chair of the Committee while Deborah Rolland was elected Vice Chair. Verity Pink took over from John Payne as Secretary and Margaret O'Connor agreed to continue as Minutes Secretary.

It is our intention that the Association will continue to provide support to the existing branches, though development of new branches will probably be at a

reduced level. Adrian Tate will be responsible for the administration of Head Office and developments in the south east. We are very grateful to the Society and Fellowship of St John who have made him available for this work. He will not, however, be able to devote as much time to the association as Dennis did in the past and I will certainly have less time than Austin. Responsibilities will, therefore, have to be less centralised and we hope that particular committee members will be appointed to take responsibility for the support of individual branches. Details still have to be agreed and will be announced in our next newsletter.

The office in City Road will continue to operate at least until the middle of January and, funds permitting, after that time. As in the past, the office is not manned throughout the whole working day but the answering machine is still there and Adrian will deal with your messages as soon as he can.

We are fortunate that APCMI's work in the North will continue almost unaffected by the changes in the South East.

Fund Raising

Fund raising continues to be our major problem, as it is for many charities at the moment. We have recently received an anonymous donation of £5,000 which will help towards our running costs. We are also grateful to a number of branches who have made a grant or a loan to Head Office from their own funds. If other branches feel able to make a contribution this would be much appreciated.

Funding has been secured to set up a joint project jointly with the Diocese of Brentwood to establish centres of support for the Mentally Ill in Essex. Discussions continue to establish funding for a London Development Officer.

The Association can look forward forward to 1993 with cautious optimism but we will need hard work and dedication to be successful.

Nick Cotton
Chairman

Acknowledgements

Austin Lindon, in support of Jane, has played a key role in the development of the Association. He has supervised the administration and done the lion's share of the fund raising as well as having substan-

tial involvement in publicity and promotion. Having worked on the committee for three years I have become aware of the amount of hard work he has put in.

The Association should be grateful to Austin for all he has done. I am deeply aware that he will be a hard act to follow and I shall certainly need all the support you can give. Austin's advice and support through his continuing membership of the Committee will be invaluable.

Dennis Murray has been involved with the Association from its inception, first as a volunteer member of the steering committee and then, when funds became available, as the salaried Development Officer. Throughout this time we have been conscious that Dennis was underpaid but the Association never had the money to pay what he was really worth. Despite this Dennis has worked many hours beyond the call of duty and I hesitate to think what overtime we should have paid him if all his hours had been counted.

Within a week or two of being told he had to leave, Dennis had landed himself another job. Even for someone of his ability this takes some doing in the present economic climate. We wish him well in his new role as Croydon's Volunteer Organiser for Mental Health. It is good to know that Dennis will still be involved with the Association through his membership of the Merton Branch.

Julian Hopwood was our part time development worker and divided his time between APCMI head office and the Holy Cross Centre Trust in King's Cross. Sadly for us Julian has now left APCMI to become full time Director of the Trust. While he was with the Association he has done sterling work for APCMI - his specific role has been to promote awareness of the Association and to develop the services it offers in specific areas of central London.

Letters

From Austin

On the fifth anniversary of the first public meeting in the crypt of St Giles' Cripplegate when those present unanimously agreed to establish this Association, I stand down as Chairman of the National Management Committee. Five years is a long time to hold such a post and I thank all those Committee members who elected me each year. I especially thank all who supported the work of APCMI by gifts and donations, by personal involvement, and in particular, those volunteers who carried out the work of the Association, often in difficult circumstances. APCMI has covered a great deal of ground in its short life, largely due to the dedicated commitment of two people: our founder Jane Lindon whose creative vision has, over the last five years given direction and inspiration to our cause, and Dennis Murray, whose unflagging efforts not only built up our network of branches but also involved him in a myriad of mental health activities whilst at the same time holding responsibility for the administration of our Head Office. I have been a close witness to the remarkable input of these two people - much of it otherwise unseen and unrecognised - and I know that the membership has a great deal to thank them for.

Jane and I have now retired away from Central London so it is appropriate that our future APCMI activities should be on a regional rather than a national scale. Members and other interested parties within striking distance of our new home in Peterborough may wish to contact us by telephone on 0733 893406.

Austin Lindon

From Dennis

"Saying goodbye is never easy" Those were the words voiced at the recent Tower Hamlets Training Course when I led an evening on ending relationships. I did not know then that my own "goodbye to APCMI", at least as an employee, would be so near to that event.

The words are so true for me as most of the past five years of my professional and a considerable amount of my private life have been involved in the foundation and development of this Association. During that time I have been privileged and blessed to have had the opportunity to work with so many committed, gifted and talented people, both at National and local levels, within the Association. I leave you greatly enriched for that.

Thank you for all of your kindness extended to me over the past five years. To those of you who have recently written or phoned with personal messages of support, and who contributed to my leaving gift, I am deeply grateful.

I can assure you that I shall not be losing sight of the continued work of the Association as I look forward to working as a volunteer Committee Member of my local Branch.

Goodbye and God Bless

Dennis Murray.

Lonely Moments

I walked out of the underground station and into the bright crisp daylight of a January afternoon. The streets were busy - it was Saturday. I made my way along the road avoiding the shoppers as much as possible. I was in no mood for pushing and shoving politely - no mood for "Excuse me! I'm sorry!". I felt angry at having to give up my Saturday afternoon to acknowledge an act of negativity.

I approached the hospital as it towered above me. The front doors wouldn't open so I used a side door. I approached the reception desk but there was no one there. "Bloody marvellous," I thought. "Now what?" I heard a voice from behind call, "Can I help you?" I turned to see a young woman dressed in a uniform using a public telephone. "Yes," I replied impatiently, showing my displeasure at her not being at her desk. "I'm looking for Ward 9". She placed her hand over the mouth-piece. "Go straight down the hall, take the lift to the ninth floor and turn left" she directed. I nodded and forced a "Thank you".

Clutching my potted plant and 'get well' card I hurried towards the lift annoyed by my own pomposity. "Why, oh why," I thought "did Clive do this stupid thing? What on earth would he look like? Would I be able to cope with seeing him? Jumping from six floors up is not exactly caring for ones looks".

Followed the directions I found myself just inside the entrance to intensive care. Some doctors and nurses were gathered just inside the open door. I stood and look at them anxiously, drawing the attention of a nurse. She came over. "Can I help you?" "Yes ... I wonder if I might see Clive Thornton?" "Yes of course," she said stepping slightly backwards. "He's right here".

I hadn't realised I had been standing practically by Clive's bed. I turned to him. "He's asleep," she said. "Oh, it's alright", I whispered. "I'm not in a hurry," even though my instincts were telling me to get the hell out of there as fast as possible. Tubes ran in and out of the oxygen mask. Blood congealed around the mouth and nostrils. The sheets were pulled back to just below the waist, displaying a body battered, bruised and stitched. Feet, arms, legs, pelvis all broken, as I learnt later.

Suddenly my attention was drawn to the type of ward I was in. No ordinary ward this but a place where death constantly lurks. "Oh look, he's awake," I heard the nurse say. I looked at Clive, "Hi" I said. He looked surprised but pleased to see me. He smiled "Hello Keith". "How are you" I asked feeling a bit of a twit. "Terrible" he answered, "I'm very sore.... a lot of pain".

"Do you need anything?" I asked as I thinking some activity might help take his mind of his condition. "No, not really" he replied, trying to move slightly with obvious pain and discomfort. "Are you able to read?" I asked. "Yea... I can use this arm a bit". "OK, I'll bring some papers and magazines next time I come".

He asked if I'd summon the nurse as he would like to eat some mousse which was being kept in the fridge. "It's the only thing I can eat. You see I split all my gums too, Keith... when I....". "Oh, I see" said I, pretending to make logical sense of the explanation while ignoring the painful implications. "Is there no end to this?", I thought.

Mousse consumed I conveyed greetings from friends. "Hillary sends her love and Jill and Father Paul said they will be in to see you soon". "Ah, great!" he said. "I've been so stupid you know Keith.... I did such a stupid thing. I guess I caused a lot of hurt". "Yes I expect you have," I said. "People are hurt, hurt at seeing you hurt and your suffering all this pain. The main thing now is for you to get well". He looked at me intently like a child being told a bedtime story. "Yes that's another reason why it's good for me to eat mousse... it will help to build my bones".

The sister came in to minister to him, giving an opportunity for me to leave. "It was good of you to come Keith" Clive said. I smiled and put a hand on his brow. I tried somehow to reassure him that I'd be around... that there is at least some support out there. Looking at his bruised and battered body I wanted to cry. "I'll see you soon" I whispered and left the ward.

On the way down in the lift, past the still empty reception desk, out of the hospital and on down the road towards the tube station I questioned God, "Is it not enough to be a schizophrenic sufferer without having to be bruised and battered as well... how much suffering satisfies you God... how much?"

Then I thought of Christ.

Stan Mc Gowan

EDITORS NOTE

We are grateful to all the branches and individual members who have submitted material for inclusion in this newsletter. Unfortunately, lack of space has meant that we have been unable to include all that we received. In particular we have been obliged to condense the branch reports. If your contribution has not been included, do not be discouraged. We still need copy for the next edition which we plan to publish in April.

Changed Expectations

Seven of us decided to sit down together for three afternoon sessions over the summer months and share something of the changes that have come upon us over the years. Two started out life as barristers practising in London, another had been a successful accountant, one a teacher, another a naval officer and lastly a retired naval dental commander and his wife. What we all have in common is that we have all been through periods of considerable psychiatric stress which has been the cause of a complete change of life-style. This sharing of common experience was aimed to see how these changes had also changed our values.

Obviously we have all been through the inevitable feelings of joining a poorer group, being frustrated at a sense of failure and the lack of opportunity to express proven talents in the world of business and the professions. For most of us there have been difficulties in relationships with those closest to us. There has been the darkness of apparent loss of hope and the impotence of not being able to take charge of one's own life - and this is especially acute in an environment like Surrey where success in the competition of life is the sign of acceptability. There have been periods for all of us when we were quite incompetent in terms of communication, and when we were unable to share our inner struggles with others. There has been the boredom of now having to accept a lifestyle that no longer has the hype of 'top things'; there has been the loss of conversation because our mental world is not a good topic for dinner-table chat. Generally mental illness - and I think we are all prepared to accept the stigma - has brought with it periods of very low self-esteem, practical losses and many changes in our relationships.

But, surprisingly, these sessions were not filled with doom and gloom. Through all the trauma there has emerged new visions of hope and values which stand more strongly in terms of human solidarity and corporate compassion. Marital bonds have been strengthened through the mutual struggle to make a home despite the irrational and irritating behaviour of a mentally ill spouse. We can now more easily understand the difficulties of all those who remain on the margins - the permanently poor, the mentally handicapped, minority groups, even the refugees and the tramps, and more globally the sense of utter helplessness that must plague all the starving millions in the undeveloped world. We have learnt that prayer is not just a conventional way of recognising our religious duties, but the means of communication with our loving Father who wants to step down and carry us through the darkness. It would certainly be true that, in hindsight, like Simon of Cyrene, the carrying of

such a share in the Cross has been 'an inner dark night of the soul'. The feelings of oppression and persecution, if accepted, help to identify with the forsakenness of Christ. And, perhaps, more important than all, has been the communities to which we have been invited, where previous class and professional barriers would otherwise have barred us. The world of mental illness could be called a part of the underclass, but from within, it can be felt to be a deep bond of human communion which can be shared in the most simple experiences - old fashioned outings, enjoyment of another's paintings, producing new magazines and groups.....'

Jean Vanier, in his founding of the L'ARCHE movement, has always proclaimed that the most fragile people in society - and in his case he was talking about the severely, institutionally-bound, mentally-handicapped adults that became his first community - have much to tell us about the most basic human values. After our sharing of common experiences I think we would all agree that the psychiatric fragility that has been so obviously unearthed in our own lives has similarly been a means of finding a whole new life-style that is more open, more generous and more compassionate than we could ever imagined. 'Hope' is the word to describe this discovery - out of the most chronic 'failures' and darkness, there is incredible light if we can share our lives in a community where hope is alive.

Jeremy Boutwood

A Weekend in Torbay

The Association of Christian Psychiatrists met to discuss aspects of Pastoral Care in the light of the Prince of Wales' speech in which he emphasised the need for awareness of the spiritual dimension in illness, particularly mental illness. It was my privilege to represent APCMI at this weekend. As the only non-medical participant I felt, on arrival, like Daniel entering the lions den but such was the welcome and openness of the encounter that when I left I felt I had become a psychiatrist!

To spend forty eight hours with a group of strangers of diverse Christian beliefs and practice and, I suspect, equally differing psychiatric traditions, might seem daunting. However, the experience of the presence of Christ amongst us, inviting us to our common calling of serving those called mentally ill is one I wish to share with you. I hope that we in APCMI may be equally inspired to put aside differences and be open to the calling of God and likewise to serve and be with those we seek to care for.

Adrian Tate - Oblate SSJE

Events and Activities

A Day of Prayer

On 21 March we are planning a day of prayer. For those who can get to St Edward's House in Westminster we can share in a physical way. For the rest of our members we invite you to set aside a small part of the day being still with God and those, the Mentally Ill, that he uses to speak to us.

Winter Study Day

In January the Guildford branch are hosting a WINTER STUDY DAY. See back page for details. In the morning we shall be looking pastoral care and how to make it happen. In the afternoon members will have the opportunity think about how they would like the Association to develop. It is intended to make this part of the day a General Meeting of the Association. This is a very important day and we hope to have a very good turn-out.

Around the Branches

Chelmsford was established in June 1990 and after a period during which a number of options were considered the branch now plans to act as a broker for information, to set up a carers support group and a befriending scheme. Speakers will be available for other local organisations.

Croydon has been running a Drop-In Centre since March 1990. A suitable venue has been a problem but they have now moved to one where smoking is allowed - this seems to be a prerequisite - and the number of members is increasing.

Dulwich and Forest Hill continue to run their successful Drop-In Centre which has now been open for three and a half years. The London Musicals Company once again put on a Musical 'Anything Goes' which raised £900 for local funds.

Eastbourne continues with their hospital visits and befriending.

Forest branch is publicising itself among the Waltham Forest, Woodford and Wanstead churches. They are arranging for members of the Chingford churches to visit the newly built residential homes for former residents of Claybury. A Befrienders' Training Course has already been organised and they plan to set up a Befriending Scheme. They are also looking at the possibility of a sheltered workshop.

Guildford "Hope through the Darkness" a celebration of hope for those who suffer from mental illness and those who support them was held in the local Church. Poetry reading, guitar playing, reading from the Gospel - all came together to give everyone great joy and encouragement. "Cracking Up in Haslemere" - a very successful half day seminar was held in October during which a psychiatrist, a volunteer and a sufferer all brought their special insights which have provoked the start of a mental health initiative in Haslemere.

Kensington and Chelsea has been suffering a shortage of volunteers. The Drop-In Centre continues to operate but the carers support group has been suspended for the moment. More volunteers for this branch would be greatly appreciated.

Merton a new branch has just started.

York has recently completed a successful Training Course for Caring Volunteers and is focusing on providing one-to-one social contact and bringing together small groups of sufferers. They are also providing support for those who have recently moved from hospital into the community.

We also have **Grampian, Hastings and Kingston and Esher** branches.

Developments in the North

Christine Kelsey has continued development work in the north, based on the office in York. It is difficult to do justice to all Christine's hard work in the space available. The recent highlights include:

Hull An open public meeting was held in October and a follow up with staff of the York Doeskin Board for Social Responsibility. These contacts indicate that the model for APCMI adopted in the South will need to be adapted to cover rural areas such as this. There is a need for befriending and training.

Lancaster A steering group has been set up to explore needs and if appropriate to set up a branch. A further meeting is planned in January.

Stockport An open meeting was held in October chaired by the local bishop. Attendance was disappointing and those interested do not appear to have a great deal of time. However, a steering committee has been established.

Contacts have also been established in **Nottingham, Sheffield and Liverpool** and we have recently received the petition from **Leeds** which is described elsewhere.

Developments in the South East

Despite the loss of Dennis, a number of activities which are still being pursued. The latest position on these is

Aldershot - plans have been put on ice.

We have had an enquiry from **Bath** concerning a night shelter and the impact on it of the mentally ill.

An open meeting is planned for January 14 in **Bexley** with a volunteers training course starting in February run jointly with Mind. The possibility of a branch will be discussed after the open meeting.

After discussion of provisions in **Canterbury** it seems as if the needs are much greater on the North Kent coast.

Following an open meeting in September a steering committee was established in **Havering**. This is still exploring the needs of the area and looking for the way forward.

The **Luton** consultation day is discussed elsewhere.

Swindon - plans have been shelved for the moment

In **Tower Hamlets** our very successful Befrienders Training Course, run in conjunction with MIND was attended by twenty two people. The Tower Hamlets Churches Mental Health Group, in which we participate will be meeting to discuss its plan of action for the coming months.

The Oyster

Grit caused irritation inside the oyster shell
But that irritation turned into a pearl.

Life is irritation giving such hard knocks.
Delays and disappointments,
The death of all your loved ones
Causes bitter shocks.

As irritation increases,
the pearl becomes more bright.
It will not be too long before you are over, Night.

Jesus

Jesus attracted people wherever he went.
He preached and he healed until he was spent.
When he approached the people were glad.
He cast out demons and converted the bad.

He selected twelve apostles
He knew they would die
He knew he would be hoisted on a cross, on high,
He was the king,
He is the truth.

Snuffed out in his prime, not long past his youth.
He is coming again but we don't know the time.
He's still alive in bread and wine.

The Spirit

There is a mighty spirit who can take away your fear.
If you just surrender and let him draw near.
You are like a cork, bobbing in the sea
But this mighty spirit can set you free.

Surrender the ego,
Surrender the self,
Wake up to, inner radiant health.

Like the splitting of an atom
A healing takes place,
And your former self is gone without a trace.

Irene
APCMI Dulwich & Forest Hill

WINTER STUDY DAY

Saturday January 18th 10am to 4pm
Hosted by the Guildford Branch of APCMI at
The Ludlow Road Centre
(near the Station)

Patterning Care for Tomorrow

Looking at ways in which those involved in pastoral care can more effectively co-operate with statutory providers of mental health support.

Programme

- 10.00 Arrivals. Coffee available
- 10.30 Introductions.
- 10.45 **CARING TOGETHER** - Elizabeth Clark, a mental health social worker who has spent the last five years with the Kent Ecumenical Project helping parish communities to become collaborators in the Care in the Community activities of the County Health and Social Services Departments..... followed by group discussions
- 12.00 **MAKING IT HAPPEN LOCALLY** - A presentation by the Guildford Branch, whose members are involved in day centres, social and recreational projects, training days, carers' helpline and other local mental health activities.
- 13.00 Lunch - provided at the Centre
- 14.00 **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE** - Led by a member of the National Committee, this afternoon session will give all members present an opportunity to explore different ways the APCMI may go forward in the future. It is proposed to make this part of the day a General Meeting of the Association.
- 16.00 Tea. Departures.

We are charging £3 for the day including catering. We hope to provide overnight accommodation for anyone coming a long distance. Maps etc. will be sent on application.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL