

# NEWSLETTER

*October 2000*

## THE CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

*We are on a journey, we are brothers on the road;  
We are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load*

I was recently reminded of this verse from the Servant Song. I was taking part in a local "Pilgrimage Walk". In six groups of twos and threes we set out from the Cellar, a Christian coffee bar in Godalming, to visit a total of 44 places of worship within a 4-mile radius. Each group visited about 8 places and walked about 10 miles or so. We were celebrating the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of the Cellar and the "pilgrimage" was intended to be a symbolic act of unity. There was a great deal of organisation and preparation – advertising for walkers, getting maps, planning routes, deciding on the places to be visited, clothes, boots, sandwiches, water and the Baptist pastor to send us on our way with prayers. It struck me how strange it was that there was such a good feeling of fellowship, challenge and achievement – even though there was no necessity and, some would say, no point in what we were doing. But the significance for me was not so much in the achievement or the destination but in the experience of the "journey" – being with each other, the common struggle, the beauty of God's creation, the muddy path, the helping hand, the lost way, the unexpected guide who helped set us right again and, of course, the welcoming pub when we were tired, hungry and thirsty. It was a wonderful day!

As an Association we are also on a journey. We try to set our sights on where we want to go and we spend a considerable amount of time planning how to get there. But there are many diversions, obstacles and unexpected hazards on the way. Our route may not be as straightforward as we had hoped. We may get side-tracked or temporarily lose our way. But hopefully we go in the right general direction and arrive at the intended destination sooner or later. And, as with the Pilgrimage Walk, it is not only the destination but the journey that is important. As we move along we enjoy each other's company, share set-backs and achievements and, I believe, see a growing band of fellow pilgrims.

And we now have :

- A new **leaflet** hot off the press; (A copy is enclosed with this Newsletter)
- A **web-site** that is up and running though still in its infancy;
- A growing number of **resource sheets** that can be (or will be able to be) accessed from the web-site;
- A newly formed **company** which will take over the work of APCMH on 1 October;
- An effective **affiliation agreement** for new groups supporting our aims;
- A **new administration assistant**; Carole Allen;
- A **members' day and A.G.M.** on 4 November at Battersea (Leaflet also enclosed) for members, supporters and guests at which Canon John Foscett will speak on the subject of "Being Alongside" and Andrew Wilson, who is the chaplain at the Bethlem Royal Hospital and works closely with the Croydon Branch of APCMH, will lead a short act of worship and dedication of the work of our new company to God.

Our next main objectives will be to increase our network of supporters and build up our resource material. We will also have to think of ways to increase APCMH's income which, apart from the income restricted to the use of particular branches, is currently only about £3000 a year.

But, whatever our objectives, I hope that we will not lose sight of the importance of the journey itself – not only as we work to improve the Association but also with those we meet in our everyday lives. Another verse from the Servant Song sums it up in these words:

*I will weep when you are weeping. When you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow till we've seen this journey through.*

**John Vallat**



# WHAT IS TRUE HAPPINESS?

Is it possible, I wonder, to be truly happy in this life? Not happy, according just to our senses, you understand, but happy in every sense, as our first parents were happy before the Fall.

Perhaps we can never experience the kind of happiness known only to our first parents before they sinned, but we believe that through the Redemptive act of Christ and the sacrament of baptism, we are restored and set free. Once again we can become friends of God and that original innocence can be ours.

Looking around me I am constantly reminded of our sinful and fallen state; human beings are flawed and broken until they cooperate with the grace on offer. Working as a social worker I am surrounded by disorder and a steady stream of human chaos caused by sin, comes my way. I hear about this wonderful Redemption in my parish church every Sunday morning, but by Monday afternoon I am convinced of the grim reality of Original Sin!

Closer to home I am also reminded of our fallen nature by my wife's illness; she has suffered from a mental disorder for the past 25 years. I can only take comfort from my faith and learn to understand that like Job we sometimes have to undergo trials and tribulations of the most appalling kind. They are a test of our faith. So my marriage vows keep me running in the race. I am sure it is true to say that mental health problems present the cruellest kind of cross to bear. Besides the actual suffering and pain one has also to put up with the taboo which accompanies the illness in our society. Far from sounding like a prophet of doom! I have to say that I was not pleased when I recently suffered a road accident and narrowly escaped death. Fortunately I only received a broken leg and trapped nerves in both arms! It is not surprising that I am often searching for that welcome ray of sunshine from God.

One beautiful May morning I awoke early to see the sun shining through the bedroom window. I felt a sudden and impulsive call to drive to Walsingham and to pray at the foot of the statue of Our Lady. At 7.00am therefore I found myself driving through the quiet streets of Bradford, before most commuters had started their journeys. I enjoyed a fast exuberant drive down to that pretty Norfolk shrine and pulled into the empty car park next to the church. The spring air felt fresh and clean and the surrounding, verdant countryside was welcome balm to my stressed body and spirit. I wandered into the modern and attractive church, which was empty and still. I heard a noise from the sacristy and wondered if there was a priest around to hear my confession and there on cue was a kindly smiling cleric who said that he would be pleased to hear my confession. After the sacrament of Reconciliation and some words of spiritual direction I emerged from the confessional cleansed, healed and forgiven. I now prepared for round two: the life giving Sacrament of the Eucharist! I knelt there knowing with some awesome certainty that I was about to receive the King of Kings, fresh from having all my sins forgiven. I was innocent at last. I began to experience a belief and feeling that I was unique, privileged and loved by God the Father. My anxieties and cares of this life fell from me like scales.

After mass I walked across to the café and ordered a wholesome and spectacular three-course lunch, never had food tasted so good. After this delicious lunch I stretched out on the warm grass and basked in the glorious sunshine; was this true happiness I mused....I knew that the sunshine and the good food were only part of the equation. What pierced me deeply was the fact that the two life-giving Sacraments had fed me with eternal sunshine and joy.

My long day was drawing to a close; but the sun was still shining as I headed north to Bradford on that memorable day out.

**Denis Jackson**

**UNION NATIONALE DES AMIN ET FAMILLES DES MALADE MENTAUX**  
**(National Union of the Friends and Families of the Mentally Ill)**  
**National Office 8 Rue de Mentyon 75009 Paris**

**ITS AIMS**

- To break the isolation caused mental illness
- To create a psychological and legal environment which accomplishes and prolongs therapeutic action
- To facilitate the rehabilitation of The mentally ill and support those about them
- Intervene with government bodies to improve legislation
- Agitate to change public opinion and behaviour with regard to mental illness

**ITS SERVICES**

- A national centre providing specialist services
- Permanent departments to provide services and conferences
- To create and sustain establishments all over France
- Provide training for professionals
- A newsletter for exchange of information published three times a year

***submitted by Mr Evelyn Sumption***  
***Forest Hill Branch***

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**MORE HASTE, LESS SPEED**

Shallow waters hardly cover the stones  
They bubble and ripple their way along

Deep waters run still  
They hardly look as if they are moving

Often our life is like turbulent waters  
Everything is done with such a rush and a gush

We would do well to consider where we are going

It takes time and patience  
to make anything that is good  
If you try to do something in a hurry  
you are liable to spoil it

Consult the Lord about what you want to do  
He will guide you and help you  
Then you will end up having  
something well worthwhile



## APCMH MERTON BRANCH

### AN EXTRACT FROM THE CHAIR'S REPORT 1999 – 2000

When I returned to England after nine years in Western Australia and a total of 15 years in the ministry, I still felt inadequately trained for my pastoral work. At that time – 30 years ago – the Theological Department at Birmingham University was setting up a special post-graduate course in PASTORAL STUDIES. This was the inspiration of two Christian psychiatrists who constructed the course and tutored and guided us through it. Those were the two most productive years of my ministry but returning to work in the parish ministry seemed even more “frustrating”: bishops and archdeacons didn't seem to know what I was talking about.

Your invitation to take the chair for our local branch has given me an opportunity to try once more to apply the divine example of the Good Shepherd – the first PASTOR who CARES for us all ... but with more skill and commitment. During the year I have once more enjoyed working and talking with other caring organisations I had previously served in our borough: MIND, Age Concern and Victim Support. Leaders of all the daring groups have been invited to join in discussing planes set out in turn by the local authority and national government to improve the care of the develop the rehabilitation of those with mental health problems.

The nation is about to experience what might be called a reversal of the pattern of care for those with mental health problems. Patients are no longer to be seen as victims. As *users* of the facilities and therapies they become the central person in the new Mental Health Bill. And doctors, therapists, nurses, social workers – yes and even psychiatrists! – are there for the sake of *the person with mental health problems* who is clearly the centre and focus of the service.

Those psychiatrists 30 years ago taught me that some persons have problems from time to time: they are not the problems!! Not even ‘patients’ or ‘clients’. They remain *persons*. I have also learned all through my ministry that I too can experience problems and that the greatest help in resolving my problems has been when someone listened to me, tried imaginatively to be where I was and above all else carried on regarding me as a real person. Members of our branch share this valuable pastoral care – friendly acceptance of other persons who may have problems in coping with life. We do not attempt therapy. We do not give advice. We just listen and share each others interests, joys and sometimes sorrows too.

I was able to take full part in our last training programme. Not only was it educational, interesting and stimulating it was a living experience of meeting new persons, finding them to be friends and then learning how to understand what kind of mental health problems some of us have to carry in our modern world. All of those attending the course have now found their own “befriendedes” through the network which Marion Ferguson gently knits between hospitals, psychiatrists, social works etc. She does it with great skill and with caring, but at the end of the matching process it is simply two friends who are introduced to each other, one with problems and perhaps few friends, the other with that concern for another which begins with the Good Shepherd's care for us all.

My aim for the next few years is to try and inspire every church of all denominations in our borough to give the Pastoral Care to those with Mental Health Problem, as much priority as the preaching of the Gospel! *BECAUSE IT IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE GOSPEL OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD*, the Pastor who came to give us life and give it more abundantly.

Thank you for making me your Chair.

**Alan Whittle**



## WE SURVIVORS (*those of us born before 1940*)

We were born before penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, videos, Frisbees and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ball point pens; before dishwashers, tumble dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes... and before man walked on the moon.

We married first and then lived together (how quaint can you be?). We thought 'fast food' was what you ate in Lent, a 'big mac' was an oversized raincoat and 'crumpet' we had for tea. We existed before house husbands, computer dating, dual careers, and when a 'meaningful relationship' meant getting along with cousins and 'sheltered accommodation' was where you waited for the bus.

We were before day care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yoghurt and young men wearing earrings. For us 'time sharing' meant togetherness, a 'chip' was a fried potato! 'hardware' meant nuts and bolts and software' wasn't a word.

Before 1940, 'Made in Japan' meant junk, the term 'making out' referred to how you did in your exams, 'stud' was something that fastened a collar to a shirt and 'going all the way' meant staying on a double decker to the bus depot. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. In our day cigarette smoking was fashionable, 'grass' was mown, 'coke' was kept in the coal house, a 'joint' was a piece of meat you had on Sundays and 'pot' was something you cooked in. 'Rock music' was a grandmother's lullaby, 'Eldorado' was an ice cream, a 'gay person' was the life and soul of the party and nothing more, while 'aids' just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a Bunch when you think of the ways in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder we are so confused and there is a generation gap today, but...by the grace of God...we have survived!

Hallelujah !!!

*Joy Nock, contributed by Ruth Stephens*

## ~~~~~ ALL YOU CAN DO IS TO LEAD A GOOD LIFE!

Arriving at Marylebone Station, I found that it was in the throes of being renovated. In the Portaloos, the space was so cramped that there was hardly room enough for three. "It's pretty cramped in here isn't it?" I said to the chap next to me. "Yes, things are changing." Glancing at him I said, "You sound like a Buddhist to me." "Where do you come from?" "India .... the Punjab." "There's been a lot of trouble there." "There's always been a lot of trouble there." "All religion is man-made." I murmured some sort of agreement – then he went on about the terrible wars that had taken place in Europe. "And there was nothing you could do about it." With that he went out.

A moment or two later I descended onto the concourse, quite expecting that he had gone, but he was still there waiting for me. I looked at him, puzzled, for I'd thought that he was one of the railway staff – a guard or something. He opened his anorak, revealing a security guard's uniform – he'd come from a nearby building site. "All you can do is to lead a good life," he continued, as if there hadn't been a gap in the conversation. "It's all a question of living in the present moment." I said. "Living in the present moment for the future." He replied. And with that we went our different ways. He back to work and I to the Monet Exhibition.

Soon I had forgotten him amongst the crowded galleries with their animated conversations and variegated colour. But it was one of those encounters that will forever be etched in my memory. The words of William Blake spring to mind: He who would do good to another must do it in *MINUTE PARTICULARS*.

*Peter Somers*

# **A MEDITATION** contributed by Pam Freeman

## **YOU KEEP US WAITING**

Leader : You keep us waiting,  
You,  
The God of all time  
Want us to wait  
For the right time in which  
To discover who we are,  
Where we must go,  
Who will be with us,  
And what we must do.....

**All : So, thank you for the waiting time.**

Leader : You keep us looking,  
You,  
The God of all space,  
Want us to look  
In the right and wrong places  
For signs of hope,  
For people who are hopeless,  
For visions of a better world  
Which will appear  
Among the disappointments  
Of the world we know...

**All : So, thank you for the looking time**

Leader : You keep us loving,  
You,  
The God whose name is love,  
Want us to be like you...  
To love the loveless and the unlovely and the unlovable,  
To love those near us without jealousy or design or threat,  
And,  
Most difficult of all,  
To love ourselves....

**All : So, thank you for the loving time.**

Leader: And in all this  
You keep us.  
Through hard questions with no easy answers,  
Through failing where we hoped to succeed  
And making an impact when we felt we were useless.  
Through the patience and the dreams and the love of others,  
And through Jesus Christ and His Spirit,  
You,  
Keep us....

**All : So, thank you for the keeping time  
and for now and for ever AMEN**



## SANCTUARY IN THE COMMUNITY

When the Guildford Mental Health Liaison Group made a special visit to The Priory Hospital, we were obviously impressed by the therapeutic regime and high staffing ratio, as well as the excellent induction and training programmes.

But what struck us most was the relaxed environment – the beauty of the garden, the opportunities for tennis, the single rooms with en suite facilities. It is so obvious that the healing of emotional and psychiatric wounds can happen so much better where there is space and privacy and somewhere apart from the hidden pressure of the daily grind which cause the all-encompassing stress. At The Priory there was a gentle sense of retreat, very different from the rather bleak old institutions but reminiscent of their space.

However, there is a fundamental flaw with The Priory – the cost! So we were asking ourselves how we can find this same space, on a low budget in the community; a safe haven without walls. Maybe we need to start with what we have. Friendship and mutual support provide space. Holidays, outings and walks give time out and away from worry and anxiety. Special places where we know we will feel at home – The Den, The 18-50 Club, Ludlow Road.

But there could be more

Do we think of using the resources of religious houses where there

Are grounds and peace and "spirituality"?

Do we do enough to create "time out" by organising specific programmes

Which enrich the soul-visits to art galleries, historical gardens, places for

Meditation and reflection-therapies that rely on nothing more than travelling

To the very ordinary spot that is genuinely in harmony with our best selves.

I remember watching the geese and swans in the Peter Scott Wildfowl sanctuary in Gloucestershire some years ago. They looked beautiful because, in such a place, they were allowed to flourish in an environment free of pollution, toxic pesticides, hunters, etc. Maybe there is a lesson here; the world is so hard to our emotions that it needs sanctuary for us too to be ourselves.

**Jeremy Boutwood**

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*Lord, you have taught us in your word*

*That there is a time to speak*

*And a time to keep silence.*

*As we thank you for the power of speech,*

*We pray also for the grace of silence.*

*Make us as ready to listen as we are to talk:*

*Ready to listen to your voice*

*In the quietness of our hearts,*

*And ready to listen to other people*

*Who need a sympathetic ear.*

*Show us when to open our mouths*

*And when to hold our peace,*

*That we may glorify you*

*Both in speech and in silence;*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord AMEN.*



## ***A Message from Pastor Ken Bunting R.M.N. (Retd.)***

Dear Friends at APCMH

Now that our mental hospitals have largely closed, many ex-residents, as well as ordinary people with a history of having had mental health problems, are looking to the churches for supportive help.

Many ministers are very busy, and others feel to be lacking in expertise, but after over 35 years in both close research, as well as management in the psychiatric profession, I feel prompted by the Lord to share this, together with my eight-and-a-half years as the minister of a church which grew three-four fold, with all who wish to follow Jesus in giving care to those with social needs.

I am happy to send details of all my publications and tapes. The taped series may be used as Bible Studies, but are especially designed to help those who are mentally distressed to listen to in their homes, thus 'subsidising' the ministry.

Having now mainly covered my costs through sponsorship, as well as personal subsidy, I can now offer ALL my books and tapes FREE, asking only for a donation from those who can afford to do so, to help with heavy printing costs, also postage to my many overseas contacts. It would also encourage me, and help me to improve this ministry, if you would please send me any comments you have on any books or tapes that you may send for.

Every sincere blessing  
***Ken Bunting***

Ken Bunting's address is : 103 Devonshire Drive, Mickleover, Derbyshire DE3 5HE

***Don't forget ! our Members Day & A.G.M.***

***"Being Alongside"***

**Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November 200**

**10.00 am to 4.00 pm**

**All Saints Church**

**Prince of Wales Drive, Battersea, London SW11**

**All supporters of APCMH and their guests are welcome**

A Leaflet is included with the Newsletter, please complete the tear-off portion and return it as soon as possible

**A WISE SAYING (AND WORTHY OF ALL PERSONS TO BE RECEIVED!)**

**Good advice for all motorists : Never drive faster than your guardian angel can fly !!!**

## **The Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health**

An association that supports those who are mentally ill and their families

Registered No. 327532

**PLEASE NOTE NEW National Office Address**

**APCMH c/o St Marylebone Parish Church, Marylebone Road, LONDON NW1 5LT**

The views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Association

The Editor welcomes contributions for publication, please send them to:

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