

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2003

The CHAIR'S REPORT at the Annual General Meeting, June 2003

It is ten months since our last AGM. In that time the national committee has met three times having decided to meet as a full committee rather than in sub groups. We are grateful for the continued use of St Paul's Church, Rossmore Road, for our meetings. We have also met at the house of the Sacred Hearts sisters in Southampton Way, Camberwell.

Changes in Committee Membership. We were saddened by the death in September 2002 of Jeremy Boutwood, who was chair of APCMH for five years, and to whom the organisation owes so much. Peter Sommers stood down as a co-opted member. Our thanks go to him for his contribution to the work of the committee. Mary Hillier was unable to continue as consultant to the committee. We are very grateful to her for all her work, especially on the resource sheets. Suzanne Heneghan and Stephan Ball were co-opted on to the committee.

Policy and Development. A very exciting development during the past year has been the relationship with the Young Quakers. We are most grateful to John Vallat for all his work in developing these links. An account of these developments follows this report on the next page.

Another development in November 2002 was the first Away Day for committee members and others closely involved with the working of APCMH – John Rawson, editor of the newsletter, Lionel Perkin, our Webmaster and Margaret Norris, who deals with the contact line. It was an opportunity to get to know one another and to plan for the future. Some of the decisions taken at the Away Day have already been put into effect.

Newsletter This is now published bi-monthly, and the committee members take it in turn to contribute the front page message. This gives readers the chance to get to know their committee members, and to hear different perspectives on the work of APCMH. We are very grateful to John Rawson for all that he does as editor. It is clear that the newsletter is much appreciated and that it is an important means of communicating the message and values of APCMH. It also gives members and readers the opportunity to share experiences, views and ideas. It is always interesting to hear about new initiatives and we hope that contributions will continue to flow in. Particular thanks must go to Pam Freeman for the work she does on the mailing. For those with Internet access, it is now possible to receive the newsletter by email, thus saving on postage and administrative costs. The newsletter can also be accessed on the web site. It will also of course continue to be available by post.

Web site. We appreciate all the work put in by Lionel Perkins on maintaining and updating the web site (www.pastoral.org.uk) it enables those with Internet access to obtain information about APCMH and its activities. The web site has an increasing number of 'hits' and of visitors from the US, some of whom have become members. We hope that our collaboration with the Young Quakers will enable the web site to be developed.

Contact line. Suzanne Heneghan has joined Margaret Norris in dealing with the contact line. We are very grateful to them for their work in this area.

Conferences. We intend to offer, in addition to the conference on the day of the AGM, a conference in the autumn. In 2003 the conference will be on 8 November, please make a note in your diaries now. The topic is, "Coping With Stress" and the speaker will be Wanda Nash.

Branches and affiliated groups Croydon is aiming to become a separate charity. When this happens, we will affect a formal transfer of their bank balance to them. Our good wishes go with Croydon in this new development.

Continued

The Chair's Report, Continued

The branches and affiliated groups are the backbone of our organisation and carry out the practical support work, 'Being Alongside'. National APCMH will concentrate on encouraging this and we congratulate the groups on all that is being done. We look forward to reporting news of what is happening in the branches in future Newsletters.

Networking Apart from the relationship with the Young Quakers, APCMH is represented by one or more committee members at the meetings of an ecumenical group concerned with mental health and spirituality that was initiated by Jeremy Boutwood.

We are also in contact with Interact, a large organisation with headquarters in Chelmsford whose values are based on the Christian ethic and which works with people in the UK and overseas who are experiencing mental illness or who have learning disabilities. It provides training, resources, experience and support and works with partners in the statutory sector. A conference, bringing together partners from the statutory sector and faith communities, is planned for the autumn and APCMH has expressed an interest in being involved.

For a small organisation run entirely by volunteers and without an office base, the achievements of APCMH are considerable. These achievements are due to the hard work and commitment of members, supporters, branches and affiliated groups, management committees and volunteers, as well as committee members. We are most grateful to these donors. While recognising that the needs are great and that there is always room for further growth and development, we need to thank all those involved in the work of APCMH for their valuable contribution.

Lorna Brockett

On The 'Young Friends' Initiative - a report for the 2003 AGM

We are amazed, excited and extremely grateful to find APCMH adopted as the Young Friends' charity for this year. The Young Friends are part of the Quakers. They will be promoting APCMH and fundraising for us amongst all the Quaker Meeting Halls throughout the country. They hope to raise about £10,000. But, at least as importantly, their campaign will be an opportunity for them to raise awareness of mental health issues. We particularly look forward to working with the Young Friends in trying to be more effective regarding young people who are experiencing or have experienced, mental distress.

The adoption of APCMH is the result of Stephan Ball's introduction of us to them following last year's annual meeting. A visit by your reporter to meet the Young Friends Appeal Committee in Bristol, followed by two of their representatives joining us at a committee planning day last November, confirmed our mutual feeling that we could work well together. APCMH was then formally adopted as their charity for this year. Since then, John and Suzanne Heneghan have spoken at the Young Friends conference, again in Bristol, and we have attended the Quaker Annual Meeting in London to be present at a joint exhibition stand with the Young Friends.

We have established a sub-committee that is meeting regularly with representatives of the Young Friends to discuss ideas as to how to move forward and, in particular, how to concentrate more on younger people, something that we now realise we have failed to do so far. Our current aims are:

- To encourage at least one 'Young Friend' to join our committee as a trustee.
- To improve our communication and publicity material.
- To encourage more contributions in the APCMH newsletter on issues concerning younger people, and particularly from younger people themselves.
- To include young people, and young people's issues, in our training courses.
- To offer a training day on the provision of pastoral care for people in Quaker meetings suffering from mental distress, hopefully in November this year.
- To have a study day on "mental health and younger people" in May 2004.
- To work towards a training day for university chaplains in September 2004.
- Thereafter to have more focus on encouraging the development of local groups and possibly, also working more directly with universities.

Guildford branch is arranging a seminar, 'Young People and Mental Health' on 18 October this year

John Vallat May 2003

IMPRESSIONS of the 2003 A.G.M.

When I originally booked leave from the 'Saturday' job it was to go to a mass rally for Christian men in the Royal Albert Hall, however I later realised that it clashed with the APCMH annual general meeting. What should I do? I have a Christian TV "God" channel at home and visit many conferences, care of their camera teams, also it seemed to me that Jesus was often much more at home with people pushed to the edges of society, so the AGM seemed a good conscious choice.

My interest in the Association and Mental Health stems from my own negative experiences whilst experiencing nervous exhaustion as a serving member of the Royal Air Force some years ago, and from difficulties experienced with resettling into civilian life. This led me into Social Work training, employment as a Nursing Assistant in a large Psychiatric Hospital and my current employment as a Technical Instructor, in a local Charity, which teaches work skills to community clients and hospital patients. I work with people who have a range of learning difficulties such as Autism, Aspergers Syndrome, Acquired head injury, Epilepsy and also with those who suffer from poor Mental Health.

AGM Impressions – The group had been described to me as being very welcoming and open, and despite my three hour journey from Northampton I soon felt at very much at home. A plentiful supply of tea usually ensures this, so I was not disappointed! Anne Morrissey's handling of the subject of Hospitality, and use of Hebrew 13 v 2 as a text, plus her shared experiences and insights were very useful and relevant. There are too many of these to share here, but here are some brief notes I took.

"Hospitality represents a generosity of spirit which when quenched can welcome Greed". Especially relevant was the thought that, "All can do it!" No diplomas needed!, all that is needed to cross the boundaries is an outward going nature, which might express itself by a smile. Hospitality gives rights to strangers by saying, "I am secure but I am going to let go of it to bless you!" There is an obligation to be receptive to other needs, to give food and water perhaps, and to listen to other's stories. "Tell me how is it for you? Hospitality does not attempt to change the guest but adopts a "listen and learn" attitude. By doing so the guest might become open to change. In hospitality I am the one with obligations.

Anne shared some tips from the Catholic Workers Movement – Houses of Hospitality and other sources viz. – Keep it small, responsive, the secret is in the little things, but attention to details is precious to people. Be welcoming. As in prayer, three people is a good number for a "ministering" group. This can result in what Anne described as a "Cascade of Grace".

Moral entrepreneurs "take the risk to meet the untrustworthy". Weber, the Sociologist warned against "Overt Rationalisation as an Iron Cage that constrains all manifestation of Care". Care has powerful associations. The less powerful are over-ridden by the powerful, e.g. Staff v Patient ratio of power. Many caring agencies have become more and more fearful and entrenched in their attitudes. Obversely, "Theology comes alive in places of struggle" and "the offer of hospitality takes with it the risk of having ones heart broken. We need to take the risk of being overwhelmed and we need to be prepared to take the little deaths along the way in order to enter into the great death. (Jesus made reference to "dying to self" (John 12 v24 and elsewhere.) Recommended reading from the day was, by authors Pine and Gilmore, "Experience Economy", and, by Jeremy Lawrence, "Pure Madness" – How Fear Drives the Mental Health system. ISBN 415 36980 – 0.

Although the above is little more than a sharing of notes taken on the day, in my life they are immensely relevant at this time, as signposts for my own Christian experience. They may seem a little cryptic in presentation, but I believe they are nuggets of wisdom in their own right, and well worth sharing and putting into practice. The group work and conversations throughout the day for me were an invaluable sharing of life's experience at various levels, and qualities of hospitality were evident. In our group we discovered a helpful rapport and established a good working respect in spite of differing ethnic backgrounds age and experience. There is much to revisit. For me the day had eternal worth, and the words of Matthew, chapter 25 vs 35 – 40 seem especially significant here, because of Jesus' commendation of his followers for their hospitality.

Alan Sizer - Northampton

On "TRYING TOO HARD"

"She tries too hard, doesn't she?" a minister once observed of a friend. True. And what he said of her could just as easily have been said of myself. From the moment of my first revelatory encounter with God in Christ, which came through the periods I spent on psychiatric wards following the births of my two children, one could say I had always "tried too hard."

My Damascus Road experience, coinciding as it did with years of mental and creative turmoil had me cannoning from depths to heights and left me bearing the label "manic depressive" for many years. A zealous determination to "change the world", combined with intense spiritual and poetic revelation, proved a near-deadly and somewhat potent combination at times!

One of the many friends who have at times walked alongside me on this somewhat erratic Pilgrim's Progress once said I should concentrate a little more, in Christian terms on being "Mary" rather than "Martha". Yet for me, it seemed balance was the key – the balance between the two. Martha and her "doing" for Christ, Mary simply "being" – soaking up His presence, His inspiration.

Over the past 14 years, God has instigated a miraculous process of healing and of confirming His great love and mercy in some very remarkable ways. As a writer, poetry and my diary have been a crucial part of the healing, and I have spent the last few weeks consigning the majority of that work to cardboard storage boxes, feeling perhaps this is another crucial stage in the journey onward.

One document, the final one in my "series" appropriately named "The Full-Stop," had been left uppermost – and I was surprised, in the May issue to see a fragment of the first poem in the unpublished "collection;" "Revelation – On Listening to "Morning" by Grieg."

I have to say, I have no idea how the editor came by the poem – perhaps I passed it on to him and then was running so hard in another creative/spiritual direction that I forgot all about it – something which has become a difficult habit to break over the years even for my Heavenly Father! Or perhaps, as I have used it in various talks, someone else passed it on. Anyway, I thought you ought to have the complete version – or perhaps the musical/poetic revelation would be incomplete!

REVELATION (On listening to "Morning" by Grieg)

How many mornings in a single life?
How many sunrises and sunsets?
Seasons of blossom and growing...
Then the darkness
The falling away....
How many russet leaves to decay?
How many branches made bare....
To come into bloom again?

How many night-times in a single life?
How many moonshines?
How many times do weary feet turn to dance again?
How many tears wept?
And how much sunshine after rain?
How many times does the curtain draw back?
And pain turn to smiles again?

How many.....
How many seasons?
How many reasons
To say "Thank you"
For another morning?

My "Full-Stop" collection still remains at the top of my tottering pile of mainly unpublished scribblings. It has helped me to a fresh view of the mystery of how my 14 years of sickness have been to a large degree my healing, and, after years of running and running in spiritual terms, it has certainly brought me into a new period of my life.

In basic terms, I am treating life as a marathon with the occasional sprint, rather than a constant, action-packed dash. Sometimes, I am beginning to think perhaps God might even like me to take a casual stroll.

In short, I am not trying as hard. I can only hope – in a new and hopefully somewhat more mature guise – I am trying hard enough!

Julia Giles.

THE GOAT

(The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a barren region;
and the goat shall be set free in the wilderness." Leviticus 16.22)

"Guilty"

Approaching death, forsaken, utterly estranged.

Oh God! What is my wrongdoing that my days must be pursued by unyielding guilt?

The devil promises relief; a masquerade of angels from above,

Deceived me into thinking that the punishment was sent by God himself.

I see beyond the fowler's snare. Remaining a servant to love.

But I know not why the guilt of a nation has been confessed upon my head.

Why each iniquity takes passion's place.

The lot has fallen upon me.

Impoverished!

Blotted out of The Book Of The Living.

All the transgressions of a nation refuse to relinquish their grasp, adding guilt to guilt.

Lord, purge the sin of innocent blood and take my life.

Release me from this wilderness and touch my lips with fire.

Blot out my crime and absolve me.

Provide a way through this barren state, a river of life in which to drown my conscience.

..... submitted by **Suzanne Banks-Heneghan**

*(Suzanne reminds us that the St Marylebone Parish Church – Mental Health Support Group
meets on the first and third Fridays of the month from 11.15am to 12.15pm)*

BLACK DOG

Uninvited, unwanted he nevertheless arrives

To wreak havoc with my day

My antennae predict his coming

But do not reveal how long he will stay

I clean the house, buy fresh flowers

Light candles. Prepare for my unwelcome guest

Cancel parties. Take the phone off the hook.

Paint my nails. Dress in my best

Resist his visit, he is fiercely tenacious

Shows me yellow teeth, issues a warning growl

Now compliant, his reluctant hostess

Must indulge his predacious prowl

Come, I exhort him, sit here by my hearth

Warm your dangerous flanks by my fire

My house is your house for the duration

Take whatever you desire

Toss my mind about like an old slipper

Gnaw at my bones. Feast on my heart.

Let my tears quench your thirst. Devour my soul.

Only then will you stealthily depart.

This poem won the £50 first prize in the Adult Poetry Competition at the Flitwick (Beds) Arts Festival

DEEP WITHIN

The sky is clear blue

Birds sing from the treetops

A rushing stream tumbles over the rocks

Buttercups dance in the meadow

This place is safe

Safe from the terrors within

Waiting to devour me

I wait

Watching the clouds skim across the sky

The wind gently brushes my cheek

I hear the gurgling water

I have found paradise

How long can I remain

Before the horror within emerges

And takes control

It is so fresh

The blossom on the trees are so fragrant

I dare to dream

Maybe life will always be this sweet

I remember last time

How I lost control

Maybe today is just too good

I close my eyes

Keeping my vision of paradise

So that when the time comes I can return

And smell the perfumed air alone

When I am imprisoned behind closed walls

Alone with my terror

Amid grey walls and smoked filled rooms

I will remember and be free

Sue Holt

*A poem from Sue Holt's book "Poems of Survival" which is available from Chipmunka publishing, P.O.Box
6872, Brentwood, Essex CM13 1T*

A WORK SHEET ON HOSPITALITY

Some Key Points:

We could spend our whole day together just listing the instances where hospitality is a theme in the Bible.

Tertulian lists hospitality as 'one of the marks of the church'.

Search the web with Google and there will be lost and lots of references – all referring to the *hospitality industry*.

Hospitality and the risk associated with travel once went hand in hand – today the traveller pays his or her way and thus sustains the hospitality industry.

Hospitality is now associated with primitive or undeveloped societies and cultures.

Q. Where in Britain today do we see hospitality? What sort of places?

Hospitality involves:

A host and a guest.

Giving rights to strangers. (non-members of the group)

Hospitality is never sold.

A friendly caring spirit.

An obligation to be receptive to the guest's needs.

An obligation to hear the guest's story.

Q. Who do you hold up as someone who is hospitable? What's their secret?

Looking at hospitality more closely:

The host's role is to learn from the guest – rather than attempt to change the guest...however, in the offering of a free space change may take place.

the host must allow the guest the right to remain a stranger and accept the possibility of mystery.

The powerful host has all the obligations and the vulnerable guest has almost all the rights.

Hospitality does not need special training.

Q. To what extent do APCMH branches offer hospitality?

Two examples of hospitality in action:

Tea and toast.

The churches' winter night shelters in London.

Hospitality and a cascade of grace

Q. Do you have any examples of a cascade of grace that has followed from hospitality? Have you entertained angels unawares?

Hospitality is a radical action:

It widens the 'radius of trust' at a time when people are inclined not to trust each other

Those who give hospitality to the stranger or the disparaged are moral entrepreneurs

It highlights the danger of professional caring getting trapped in an iron cage of defensive bureaucracy

It alerts us to the ever-present nature of sin

Despite our best endeavours we can never do enough.

Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health
BRANCHES & AFFILIATED GROUPS

GROUP	CONTACT	ACTIVITIES	OTHER INFORMATION
CROYDON Branch	Sue Albery APCMH Cornerstone House Willis Road Croydon CR0 2XX Tel: 020 8665 6718 Fax: 020 8665 1972 e-mail: apcmh@croydononline.org	Drop-in Clubs Mondays : Ledbury Road. Fridays : Pollards Hill North. Sundays : South Norwood. Social project with rehabilitation. Creative Workshops Training	For further information: contact Sue Albury
FOREST HILL Branch	Nick Cotton 17 Woodsyre Sydenham Hill London SE26 6SS Tel: 020 8670 5822 Fax: 020 8265 9285 e-mail: dncotton@dircon.co.uk	Weekly Drop-ins Wednesday 7 to 9pm St Saviours Hall Brockley Rise Also some trips.	For those in the Forest Hill/Catford/ Sydenham area
GUILDFORD Branch	Claire Vallatt 30 Chalk Road Godalming Surrey GU7 2AD Tel: 01483 428131 Fax: 01483 418432 e-mail: cv@frithhatch.u-net.com	Seminars, meetings and local newsletters in and around Guildford. Monthly tea party at Chilford Priory. Annual quiet day.	The aims of Guildford APCMH are: Increasing awareness of mental health problems in the general public and church communities; the contributing factors and the rebuilding of lives.
HASLEMERE GRAPEVINE Branch	Vacant	Drop-in on Fridays 10am to Noon at Methodist Church Hall Weyhill, Haslemere	
HASTINGS APCMI Affiliated	Hastings APCMI 49 Cambridge Gardens Hastings East Sussex TN34 1EN Tel: 01424 424 152 e-mail: apcmi@beeb.net	Training and supporting volunteer befrienders who visit people in the Hastings area who are isolated in the community and suffering from mental health problems	
NORTH MARYL'BONE Branch	Pam Freeman 16 Beechwood Court West Street Lane Carshalton Surrey SM5 2PZ Tel: 020 647 36788 Sister Theresa Pountney 47 Simpson House Paveley Street London NW8 8TU Tel: 020 7724 6453	Social meetings for anyone looking for support, tea and a chat, table tennis, scrabble and ludo, etc. Usually on the last Monday in the month 2pm to 5pm at St. Paul's Church Centre Rossmore Road NW1	A support group meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays every month 11.15am to 12.15 (doors at 10.45) at St. Marylebone Parish Church, Marylebone Road NW1

Continued

GROUP	CONTACT	ACTIVITIES	OTHER INFORMATION
MERTON Branch	David Roe 105 Poplar Road South Merton Park London SW19 3JZ Tel: 020 8542 9637 e-mail: roe.lug@lineone.net	Runs a One-to-One befriending scheme in and around the boro' of Merton.	We run an annual training course and support group for volunteer befrienders. Male befrienders are particularly welcomed for those men who are on our waiting list
TRUST LINKS. SOUTH EAST ESSEX Affiliated	Cheryl Higgins c/o 173 Woodside Leigh-on-Sea Essex SS9 4TG Tel: 01702 525838 (Evenings) Web site: www.trustlinks.org	Addressing gaps in mental health support from community perspective. Accessing funding for community projects. Facilitating partnerships. Hosting Conferences.	Trust Links is active in Southend and surrounding areas in south-east Essex and meets in various locations in Southend
WALTHAM FOREST Formerly a Branch	CREST (Waltham Forest)	Befriending scheme	No continuing links with APCMH
YORK Affiliated	Richard Norman 10 Severus Avenue York YO24 4LY Tel: 01904 783263 e-mail; yorkapcmh@aol.com	Visiting and befriending support in York	

~~~~~ Pam Freeman our Co-ordinator reports

The AGM Study Day was excellent and the members present were very impressed with the presentation by Ann Morrissey. Her worksheet on hospitality, the subject of her address to members, is on page 6.

The Chair's report to the AGM is reproduced on the front page, and is followed by a report on the 'Young Friends' Initiative by our Company Secretary John Vallat. The Executive Committee is delighted and very appreciative that the Quaker 'Young Friends' have adopted APCMH for their 2003 charity. We shall report progress on our mutual work together in future Newsletters.

At the A.G.M. the following members were elected to the national executive committee:

Lorna Brockett	Chair	Sister Theresa Pountney
John Vallat	Company Secretary	Solomon Brown
Flora Njoku	Hon. Treasurer	Suzanne Heneghan
Pam Freeman	Co-ordinator	

We wish them a successful year in office at this exciting time of growth for the association.

THE ASSOCIATION FOR PASTORAL CARE IN MENTAL HEALTH

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

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