

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2006

This month's Front Page contribution from the Editor

By now dear reader you will have discovered your complimentary copy of the Association's first poetry book 'POEMS FROM THE HEART' included with your current Newsletter. We hope that you will find it enlightening, enriching and worth its having been produced. The book's contents have been predominantly contributed by our readers, and as such reflect their own experiences of the mental health problems they may have suffered. In reading them, we are sure that you will share their anxieties, their feelings of hopelessness, their struggles through adversity and then, hopefully, their gradual return to good mental health. Many, but not all of the poems contain amongst their feelings, guilt, sadness, despair, but also evidence of hope, of conquering adversity, of relief, of triumph, and most all, of gratitude and love. We hope you will enjoy them and share with the contributors their sorrows and their joys. If you have, instructions for purchasing further copies will be found on the inside pages and if its reception is favourable we shall consider publishing further, similar volumes.

Now, on to a rather more practical matter. I have for some time now thought that, after eight years of my editorship, the Newsletter has not recently progressed in line with the twenty-first century in its format, appearance and presentation. I discussed my thoughts with our chairman, Suzanne Heneghan and suggested that it was time for a radical change and that I should stand down as editor. I also assured her that I intended to continue in post until a replacement was found. She reluctantly, agreed to this and the die was cast.

To everybody's amazement, within a week a new editor was found and recruited to the honorary post. As a consequence, this is to be my final edition and the January issue will therefore be published under the control of its new editor. His name is Steve Press, currently editor of the 'Way of Life' the magazine of The Guild of Health Limited, and I am sure you will welcome him with the same appreciation that you have shown me and my dear wife Leona, who has so ably assisted me over the last eight years. We offer however, if invited, to continue as editors and producers of any further books of poems that may be published.

Thank you all very much for your friendship and loyalty, I shall always remember, with fondness, my time with you. Please continue to support Steve with your encouragement and, above all with your contributions, his contact details are shown on the back page.

God bless you all.

John Rawson

SPACE TO BE

Space To Be is a new initiative that has been set up in Park Barn, Guildford, for local people with mental health needs or with addiction issues. Essentially, it is an opportunity for people of all faiths or none to come and have time for themselves, time away from the stresses and strains of daily life, and it is an offering of the church of St. Clare's, Park Barn, to its local community. Sessions are held every first Tuesday of the month from 7.30 to 9.00 pm.

Space To Be was inspired by the pastoral ministry of clergy and lay people in the parish who felt that the Church could and should do more for people with mental health needs, and also those with addiction issues; indeed, for anyone with chaotic or stressful lifestyles. Volunteers run it from St. Clare's Church, with support from the Diocese of Guildford. The complementary therapists, whose names are shown below, are funded by the Healthy Living Programme.

On entering St. Clare's Church Centre, a visitor to Space To Be will find a social space, where refreshments are served and people can chat with friends old and new, read papers and magazines, or listen to music; a sacred space, where people can reflect on the meditations, both verbal and visual, which have been prepared, light a candle, write a prayer for the prayer tree, and so on; and a relaxation space where massage, reflexology and aromatherapy are offered by our fully qualified complementary therapists. Listeners are also on hand, as required, and the resources table offers information on local resources. People are free to opt in to as much or as little as they wish, and everything is offered in a spirit of openness and welcome.

Space To Be was established with this structure in recognition of the fact that our mental well-being depends on the health of body, mind and spirit, and on the balance between all these entities. And of course, we all have these needs, not only those who have experienced the mental health "services" – we have found at St. Clare's that many local people have come in to enjoy the evenings, not just those with mental health problems. We all need space for ourselves, just to be.

'Space To Be' is held every first Tuesday of the month, 7.30 – 9.00 pm, at St. Clare's Church Centre, Cabell Road, Park Barn, Guildford. There is no charge but contributions are invited for refreshments. For further details, please contact:

***Wendy Bryant: 01483 790327 or wendy.bryant@cofeguildford.org.uk
Or Emma Trenier: 01483 503827.***

All are very welcome.

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### ***A Letter to the Editor***

I wonder if your readers would be interested in an initiative that was started in France 40 years ago, called 'Les Moines Handicappes'? These are fully established Benedictine Monasteries and convents where all the monks or nuns suffer from a disability, including mental illnesses. Applications are welcome from anyone who is 1) genuinely seeking God, 2) is reasonably stable 3) is prepared to take their medication and obey their doctors in all things, as a matter of the Rule. The nearest monastery and a convent are situated a few minutes from Dieppe, a short ferry ride from Newhaven. A friend who visited said the monks are extremely hospitable and sing the Office like angels. The monastery itself is an old chateau, with beautiful grounds, where there are lodges for guests. The Order is planning to establish foundations in Britain and Ireland, and is already in Belgium and Spain. The Prior at Dieppe is a French American, who speaks perfect English, though the other monks only have a few words. Contact details are: -

Frere Johann  
Prieure Sainte Claire  
Martingny 76880  
France.  
Tel: 0033 (0) 235 855006

Perhaps some of your readers would like to take the trip across the Channel and stay as guests?

***Eric Mulvihill***



## In Memory of Shirley Allaway

Shirley was one of our main supporters living in the Marylebone area. She came to the drop in regularly, seminars and the AGMs. She was a very private person who never discussed her past. All I knew was that she had taught in a high school some years before. She lived totally in the present and never complained when things were difficult for her. She showed interest in others and wrote me notes on several occasions.

Some of her poems are in the poetry book. As one reads them it is clear that things can be expressed in poems that are hard to say in conversation. Glimmers of the person within come to the fore. Poetry was a very important part of Shirley's life – I know that reading her poems to us at an AGM struck a chord with me and put our relationship on a different basis.

Shirley died on 13<sup>th</sup> October. Theresa, Suzanne and I will miss her a great deal. By reading her poems she will live on in our hearts and memories.

*Pam Freeman*

### SOMEWHERE I SHALL FIND YOU

Somewhere I shall find you  
in the moaning of the wind  
in the song of the sea  
in the bright morning's mist  
from the dew.

Though songs may sing of farewell  
I shall find you with a casual glance  
a reflection in a shop window  
somewhere at a dull party  
where we shall say  
we have not met before

Somewhere I shall find you  
on an ordinary day

Somewhere I shall find you  
and it will be the wind's song  
the scent of flowers  
ancient ships setting sail  
old men with pipes  
some blind and some aching  
with a twinkle in their eyes

Somewhere I shall find you  
as I have found you before

### TODAY

All the misery  
All the tragedy  
All the comedy  
All the joy  
Are gathered up in Thee.

None of it matters  
if God knows.

None of it matters  
Tomorrow.

Remember all the yesterdays  
That brought forth today.

Think of all the tomorrows  
That start today.

What of the days  
like yesterday?

What if tomorrow  
is like today?  
God, why have you given me

All the misery  
All the tragedy  
All the comedy  
All the joy  
Of today?

*Shirley M Allaway*



## Letter to the Editor

### Re: Stigma and Discrimination

I was so sad when I read the letter in your July issue from Robert MacIntosh lamenting that there is no special Remembrance Day for service users.

In my church, St Mary's, Linton, Cambridge we have a lovely All Souls' Celebration on the evening of the Sunday nearest the last day of October (Hallowe'n). Everyone who has lost a loved one in the past year is invited, and most of us who have come once continue to come for years. The church is full. For some, it is the only time they will visit the church in the course of a year.

The names of those remembered are read out – not only those who have died in the past year, but also those whom members of the congregation wish to remember. We each walk reverently up to a side altar with a lighted candle and leave it there, with the scores of other candles. There is music and appropriate hymns. The remembrance is set in the context of the Eucharist – Jesus' Last Supper with his friends on the eve of his death – and anyone who wishes is welcome to receive the sacrament or a blessing at the altar rail.

After the service we are offered a glass of wine or fruit juice and perhaps a mince pie. People talk quietly to friend and stranger. Some tears are shed. Memories are shared.

Perhaps Robert can persuade his local chaplaincy team to hold such an annual service?

I feel it is more appropriate to welcome all who have been bereaved to one service, rather than having a special service for those fallen in battle, and another for service users, and another for stillborn infants, and so on. Some families may have lost dear ones in all three categories, but may not wish to attend three or more different services.

To each of us our departed loved ones are very special, and we know that they are redeemed by God – they are precious in His sight and loved by Him (Isaiah 43 vv 1-4). That is enough.

*Elizabeth Bray*

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From the Southwark diocese magazine "The BRIDGE" (April 2006)

SO WHAT IS "MENTAL ILLNESS"?

Anne Gear is a Pastoral Worker in the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Department of Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust. She is also a 'Service User'.

I wish I had a physical illness, rather than a mental one, as there is so much taboo – even in the Church – about having a mental health problem. About 10% of the population will suffer from a mental health problem or illness in any one year. So it is high time that society in general and the Church in particular accepted this, worked at understanding folk suffering from mental health issues and ceased from either judging them or trying to find a quick solution.

I suffer from schizophrenia where I hear voices and suffer from frequent frightening delusions. The voices are inside my head, as when one is thinking, and outside, like a radio going non-stop. They are often very negative and scary.

Approximately 1% of the population will suffer from schizophrenia, yet there is a great deal of misunderstanding about this illness. Contrary to the media hype about "knife-wielding people loose in society", most sufferers are helped by regular medication. I have a monthly injection, which keeps me relatively well but does not take away all the voices and delusions.

I also suffer from depression, for which I regularly take anti-depressants. Everyone gets low from time to time but depression that prevents one living and working is an illness and one cannot just 'snap out of it'. Approximately 1 in 6 people will have depression at some point in their life.

Clinical depression is life in a big, black, never ending hole into which one has fallen, with no hope of a way out. It feels dark and oppressive. Many who suffer from depression harm themselves. They may overdose on medication, or alcohol, or cut themselves with blades or knives. In the past, "Christians" have told me that my depression was due to the sin in my life or my lack of faith – even that I was possessed by demons. These comments only increase the despondency, hopelessness, lack of self-worth – and depression.

Manic depression (also known as bipolar affective disorder) affects about 1% of the population. Although I don't suffer from this type of depression, I have many friends who do. They experience regular mood swings. Low depressed moods are followed by extremely high moods and this makes them unpredictable. If not on medication, they may well become a danger to themselves.

Other mental health issues encountered by psychiatrists every week include –

phobias and panic attacks, an intense fear of a situation or an object.

anxiety disorders, overwhelming feelings that may affect the ability to function.

alcohol and drug misuse

Often linked to another mental health problem.

eating disorders

eg bulimia and anorexia nervosa

postnatal depression

affecting about 10% of mothers

sleep problems

long term they may cause physical or mental health problems

loss and bereavement

1 in 4 adults have experienced the death of someone close in the past 5 years

dementia

affects about 750,000 people in the country.

Sadly, many mental health trusts are only able to fund the treatment of crises and the short-term acute phases of these illnesses. There is no long adequate support for long-term clients. Failed by the system, many slip through the safety net of the NHS services.

Is this not where the church can play a role in offering love, acceptance, understanding and a place to belong?

The Rev Nigel Copsey, Team Leader in the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Department writes:

It has been a great privilege for me and the other team members to work as colleagues with Anne over these past few years. We have all been inspired by her faith and trust in God even through the most difficult of times. We have all learnt a great deal by witnessing how she is able to struggle with her distress and also live by faith.

AVOIDING THE DEPRESSION TRIGGERS OF AGEING

As we age, our production and reservoirs of neurotransmitters decline, making us more vulnerable to depression.

Six powerful triggers of depression in ageing are...

1. Sudden loss of social interplay

Due to accident, eg broken hip, illness or loss of dearest friend(s). Loss of status and meaning can cause serotonin levels to drop very fast changing perception, mood and thinking.

Protective strategies:

Organise visits from friends, transport to usual activities wherever possible.

Increase your phone calls to give your usual love, interest and news to all those you care about.

2. Loss of brain stimulation

The brain needs frequent emotional arousal to keep neurotransmitters flowing. TV and passive solitary entertainments do not arouse us like doing real things with, and for, real people who have meaning for us.

Protective strategies:

Regularly do things together with people you enjoy and care about.

Have adventures and do new things as often as possible. The average 69-year-old UK grandmother has five holidays each year and is learning new skills.

3. Loss of social structure

Friends and family move away, get 'too busy', loved ones die.

Protective strategies:

Make your love bigger and more certain – choose to love all, serve all in your community.

Make serious new friendships and do worthwhile and exciting things together.

Create big social events to bring scattered family or loved ones together, Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, workdays, picnics, trips. You have plenty of time for planning and sharing ideas.

4. Loss of morale

Due to loss or ending of great and noble purpose, loss of roles in work and family, loss of prowess and useful skills, loss of health, and loss of habitual ways of contributing or achieving.

Protective strategies:

Reframe your actions – not specific physical acts but broad acts of loving, nurturing, encouraging, Facilitating etc.

Shift your focus to the spirit in people and your own spirit – you are not your mind and body.

Find new outlets for your passions and ideals and new groups to enjoy synergy with.

5. Character collapse

Four dangers can trap old people into a cul-de-sac of isolation and negativity that fosters depression: becoming a snob, malignant complaining and stoic martyrdom.

Protective strategies:

Reality check – ask yourself honestly if you are like this, and ask some honest friends.

Choose to act differently.

Move your focus to create small successful positive actions that take you into new territory

Ask close friends and family to help you and celebrate your achievements.

6. Maintaining stress levels as the body ages

As the body ages, it loses its resilience and continued high levels of demanding work can trigger depression as well as strokes, hearts attacks etc.

Protective strategies:

Offload high stress – low reward tasks and roles

Avoid reacting aggressively to difficulties

Actively seek to increase nutrients, especially joy, love and wisdom

Change your challenges – move towards creative eldership.

Submitted by Fenella Denning

Scene

I find it hard to be connected
I feel needles in my hands and feet
Spread eagled wide to be dissected.

Through eyes I see my split incision
The pains are real that I unfeel
My loss of choice of indecision.

The Cheshire grin without a soul
The ant of pleasure pincers nether
Towards my outward arms aglow

I see inside the bride of my discomfort
The talons intertwine along my spine
Her nerves are mine she sighs in comfort

The wind that drags the autumn leaves from trees afloat
Are nothing more than sobs of love and blackened hate
Another season without reason for which I'm sorely gloating.

And what within my mind's eye see
Are not within but in without
Detached and so free like the leaf from the tree

That's what it's about.

William Young

Making a Difference

One day a man was walking along the seashore.
He noticed that during the night
Many seashells and starfish had washed up on the shore.
Thoroughly enjoying the morning sun and cool sea air,
The man strolled for miles along the sand.
Far off in the distance, he saw a small figure dancing.
The man was joyous that someone was celebrating life
in such a grand and uninhibited manner.
As he drew closer, however, it became apparent
That perhaps the figure was not dancing
But was repeatedly performing some ritual.
Approaching the small figure, the man noticed that it was a child.
The girl was methodically picking up starfish from the shore
and tossing them back into the surf.

The man paused for a moment, puzzled and asked...

"Why are you throwing those starfish?"

"If I leave these starfish on the beach," she replied,
"the sun will dry them, and they will die."

"So I'm throwing them back into the ocean
because I want them to live."

The man was silent for a moment, impressed with the child's thoughtfulness.

Then he motioned up and down the miles and miles of beach and said,

"There must be millions of starfish along here! How can you
possibly expect to make a difference?"

The young girl pondered the man's words for a moment,
then she slowly leaned over, reached down,
and carefully picked up another starfish from the sand.

Pulling back, she arched the starfish gently into the surf.

She turned to the man and smiled. "You may be right," she said....

"But I Made A Difference For That One!"

Author Unknown – submitted by Mandy Lelliott

Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH GROUP

*A chance to meet others
who have experienced
prolonged mental health issues*

At

St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre
17 Marylebone Road, London NW1

On

The First and Third Fridays of every month
11.00 am – 12.15 pm. Doors open at 10.30 am.

For further information please Phone 020 7935 5066

WILL YOU PLEASE HELP THE EDITOR ?

Dear Readers

I have recently changed computers and in transferring data to my new machine I inadvertently deleted my email address list of those persons receiving the newsletter electronically. If you know of anybody who wishes to receive the newsletter in this format will you please advise them of my predicament and ask them to email me with a fresh request at:

johnrawson@blueyonder.co.uk

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