



Being Alongside

The Bi-Monthly magazine of *Being Alongside* / apcmh

May - June 2011



Help is at Hand

Samaritans: 08457 909090

(national number which will put you through to your nearest branch)

Saneline: (6 - 11pm each night) 08457 678000

Rethink Advisory Service: 08454 560455

Young Minds Parents' Helpline: 08088 025544

(9.30 - 4 weekdays, free from mobiles and landlines)

Carers in the Community: 01642 818332

(led by Edna Hunneysett. This is her home number)

MIND: (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) 08457 660163

Maytree: (24 / 7: but leave message if no live answer) 020 7263 7070

The Barnabas *Drop - In Sessions*

*'Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas
(which means Son of Encouragement)' Acts 4:36*

St. Paul's Community Project in partnership with BA / apcmh

Mondays 2pm - 5pm

Plus various activities: Table tennis, dominoes, scrabble, art / craft,
poetry reading, tea / sandwiches / cakes and chat.

Wednesday 10am - 12pm

A more reflective discussion time with tea and biscuits, an opportunity to
all share concerns or to receive one-to-one support (by appointment).

Free. All Welcome.

Venue: St Paul's Church Centre, 3 Rossmore Rd, NW1
(5 mins walk from Marylebone Station; buses 139 & 189 stop outside)

call: Sister Theresa: 020 7724 8517

'When he arrived and saw the wonderful things God was doing, he was filled with excitement & joy, and encouraged the believers to stay close to The Lord whatever the cost. Barnabas was a kindly person, full of the Holy Spirit & strong in faith. As a result large numbers of people were added to the Lord. (Acts 11:19-24)

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Front Page

with
Diana Klewin

I am a user of the Barnabas Drop-In sessions at St. Paul's Church in Rossmore Rd, near Marylebone station. I am also a member of the National Committee *Being Alongside*, which is the operational name for *the Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health* ; apcmh. This is a voluntary association which has a Christian element at it's core.



Due to some bereavements during my life and some health problems, waves of depression frequently pass over me, which is so debilitating and such a waste of time. I was co-opted onto this committee with the view that I might in some way be able to assist others who may be experiencing some form of mental distress.

The Cycle Of Life

I have recently written a piece of creative writing, which seemed to cheer people up, so I considered using it in our bi-monthly magazine of *Being Alongside* /apcmh. The exercise was to imagine that we were an older generation writing some advice for the younger generation, in the form of a letter, which I did at the Church Army Day Centre. I was encouraged to submit my writing by some of the women there and also by the Church Committee members.

I thought that my article would make people think and realise that they only have one life; no one gets a second chance. I would hope that people could escape from the prison of the invisible walls that they surrounded themselves with. Although one might think that their world has come to an end, there is another world outside.

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The seasons still come and go year in and year out. Many therapists will tell you that they can help and guide people but they cannot do everything for you. There is a Chinese proverb that says that 'every long journey begins with the first step'. A mother hen makes a nest and sits on her eggs to keep them warm but the unborn chicken must do all the work alone. It must struggle to break free.

I would encourage anyone who has experienced some form of mental distress to seek help and advice in order to help them to take the first step.

Now I am reaching the end of a long and dusty road, I have been reflecting upon the cycle of life from birth to death. It is interesting to observe nature during the different stages of it's life cycle. In winter the trees look naked when the leaves have fallen. At night they emerge from the ground as black silhouettes against the sky, when the sun has turned the clouds to a burning rose.

In the spring, lambs and other animals jump and run about freely upon the lush green grass at the start of their lives, during their happy days, before they are led to their slaughter. Flowers such as crocuses and daffodils are blooming everywhere. Other flowers still in bud gradually open up in the countryside and in the town's parks. At this time of their renaissance, nature has woven a multi-coloured carpet over the landscape; the magic paintbrush has produced a riot of colour. The smell of different scents fills the air.

I am telling you this my friend, to make you aware that no one - and nothing - lasts forever. Seize every opportunity to realize your dreams, when you are young. It is then that you are strong enough, more agile and you have your health. The time to act is now. 'Procrastination is the thief of time; tomorrow never comes'. At this stage of your life-cycle, you are not afflicted by old age diseases to slow you down. No one escapes the angel of death when he knocks on your door.

Love life. Keep your dream alive, achieve your goal, before time has turned full circle. This way you will have no regrets. This is my advice to you my friend from someone who is in the winter of her life.

Diana Klewin

National Committee Member

Ed; one of Life's serendipities; when I was looking for a picture for the front cover, I wondered how the piece of whimsical graffiti might fit. Having since seen Diana's Front Page contribution, all has been revealed!

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Poem: Intimations of Grace

*It is so very difficult;
Words come, flowers wilt
The Earth goes round,
We make a sound,

In the sound there is a dream
Love is a constant stream
Our burdens grow faint
Changing colour like paint

Till reason tells us
That love welling within us
Is real – He is real
Wielding prayers on a rosary wheel

Where prayer is normal
Unhoused Saints truly formal
The house is the prayer
Where we can feel near

And we need not fear
The thoughts we bear
Are sonnets of Grace
To the heart of the race

So be at peace
For life's short lease
Is cushioned with prayer
To make each one dear.*

Simon Partridge

April 12th 2011 AD

Always With Us? Guess So...

Rev'd Paul Nicolson chairs the Zaccheaus charitable trust (tel: 0207 259 0801, email: paulnicolson@z2k.org, www.z2k.org), which works with vulnerable, impoverished people who find themselves in debt to the state (ie council tax & utilities as opposed to credit cards.) The Trust receives referrals from GPs and psychiatrists in the London area, as well as MPs. His plea here is that we do not become mesmerised criticising big bonuses as being unfair, but re-direct our energy into resisting the way our benefit system will increasingly impoverish those least able to cope with recession. We should stay focused on championing a greater need by a greater number.

The fixation with banker's bonuses in the minds of politicians and news editors is hiding a very serious crisis facing 1.5 million adult claimants of unemployment benefits.

Their income after rent and council tax will increase from £51.85 a week (aged 18-24) to £53.45 on the 6th April and from £65.45 to £67.50 (25-60).

But the Centre for Research in Social Policy has calculated that the rate of increase in the cost of a healthy diet, currently £45.65 a week, researched by nutritionists, checked with the public for reasonableness and priced in supermarkets, is very likely to result in the weekly cost of food exceeding the level of adult benefits within a few years. And that is if benefits continue to be increased in line with the Consumer Prices Index.

Rising prices of domestic fuel, clothes and transport already encourage the purchase of cheap, filling and fattening food; such as special offers in supermarkets of 40 sausages for 69 pence.

The consequences will be debt and low birth weight babies due to very low incomes. Both have a serious impact on mental and physical health.

When the NHS reforms go through, poverty related illness will use up a significant part of GP's budgets. This could be prevented if statutory minimum incomes was related to weekly cost of healthy living. Forget banker's bonuses - excessive as they are - and focus on sorting poverty.

Rev'd Paul Nicolson

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BOOK REVIEW:

The Judas Deer

by Sue Hampton

Sue Hampton was inspired to write by Michael Morpurgo, and shares his view of fiction for young readers: that it should honestly reflect life as it is, good and evil, light and darkness. The blurb describes *The Judas Deer* as dark, and it might disturb readers younger than ten, but there's enough depth and sensitivity here to engage adults too.

Jeth gets pictures in his head. His mum is in hospital and we know from the start that she's not in for a routine op, but once the pieces fall in place it's shocking. Yet we also know from the start that he loves her, and she loves him.

The characterisation is complex and the rich, middle-class household where Jeth finds himself out of place is arguably more dysfunctional than his own. Reality and imagination overlap and Jeth is confused. Is the white deer in the forest real? And what about Zora, the girl who might be from space? Past and present become equally muddled and Jeth, who runs to the woods at night and beats his fists on skin when there's too much to feel, is most delusional when he doesn't doubt himself. It's a delicate and compelling portrait.

If there's darkness in the novel, there's also energy and humour and, even before the postscript ending, hope. Presenting the world almost exclusively through Jeth's eyes, Sue Hampton adopts an authentic, troubled voice but doesn't label or analyse, and the novel is more powerful for its ambiguities and subtlety. Warm, poetic, engaging and highly recommended.

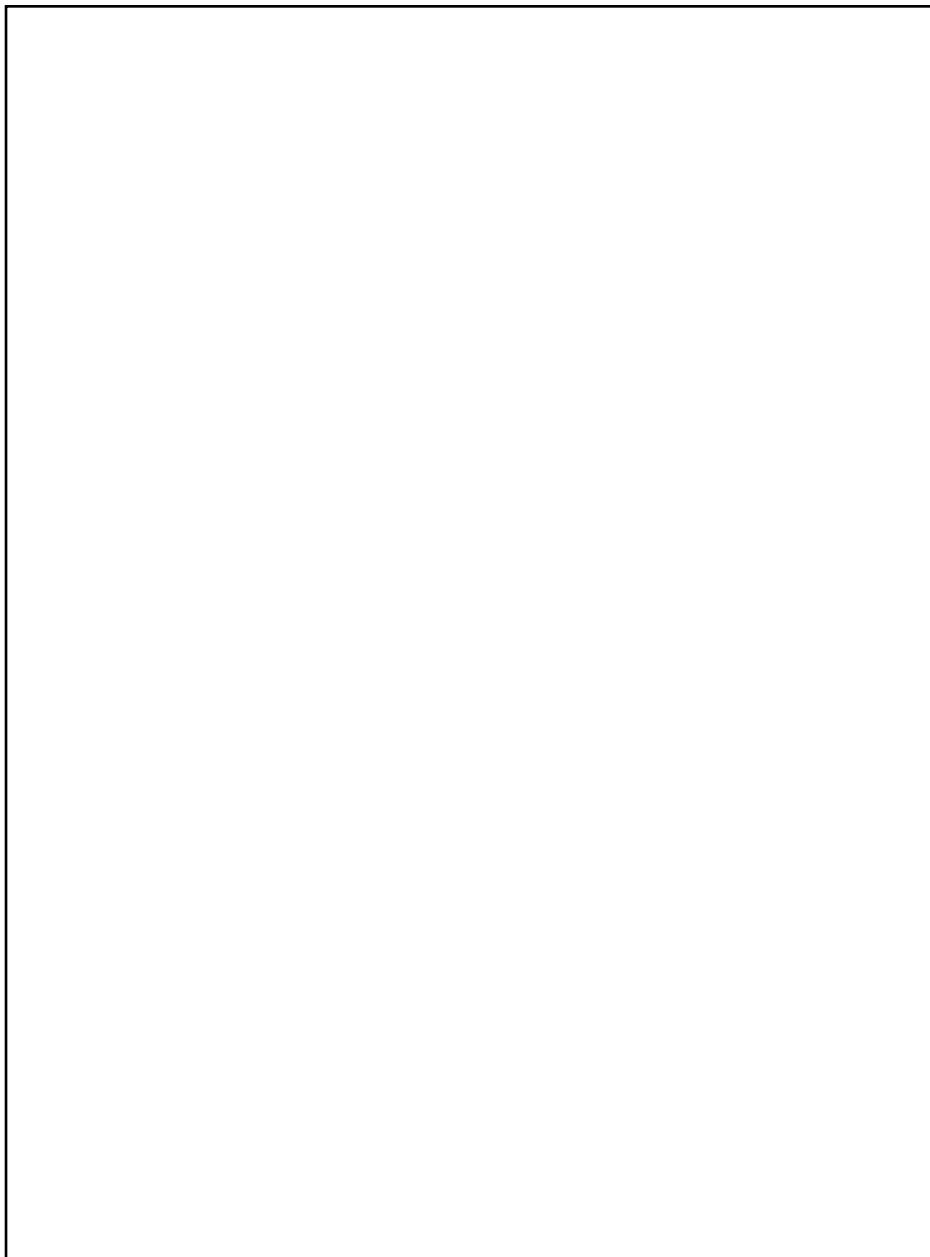
The Judas Deer is out at the end of April, ISBN 9781903490624, published by Pegasus, £7.99.

www.suehamptonauthor.co.uk

Humour: The Zen of Sarcasm:

- (1) Do not walk behind me, for I may not lead. Do not walk ahead of me, for I may not follow. Do not walk beside me either. Just pretty much leave me alone.
- (2) It's always darkest before dawn. So if you're going to steal your neighbour's newspaper, that's the time to do it.
- (3) Don't be irreplaceable. If you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.
- (4) Always remember that you're unique. Just like everyone else.
- (5) Never test the depth of the water with both feet.
- (6) If you think nobody cares if you're alive, try missing a couple of car payments.
- (7) Before you criticize someone, you should walk a mile in their shoes. That way, when you criticize them, you're a mile away and you have their shoes.
- (8) If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is probably not for you.
- (9) Give a man a fish- he will eat for a day. Teach him how to fish - he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day.
- (10) If you lend someone £20 and never see that person again, it was probably a wise investment.
- (11) If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.
- (12) Some days you're the bug; some days you're the windshield.
- (13) Everyone seems normal until you get to know them.
- (14) The quickest way to double your money is to fold it in half and put it back in your pocket.
- (15) A closed mouth gathers no foot.
- (16) There are two theories to arguing with women. Neither one works.
- (17) Generally speaking, you aren't learning much when your lips are moving.
- (18) Experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.
- (19) Never miss a good chance to shut up.
- (20) Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

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An Adventurous Life

Pastor Ken Buntin's autobiography *An Adventurous Life* came out last year. He makes it available free to anyone interested; contact him on 01332 515426.

The dust jacket says:

Beryl and Ken Bunting have spent most of their lives with physically and mentally handicapped people as psychiatric nurses. Ken knows of no greater adventure than that of helping distressed individuals to make gradual progress towards independence and maturity.

The book's forward is by Edna Hunneysett; the book is illustrated with the author's photographs.

What follows is an abridgement of chapter 16, the penultimate chapter.

As I near my 86th birthday, and am now considerably handicapped and unable to drive, I look back on a most interesting and eventful life.

It may be said that I have used my autobiography to express my heartfelt convictions about the need for those who suffer from some kind of maladjustment to life, to find support in the Christian faith and can say without a shadow of doubt that hundreds have been helped to discover for themselves that to 'learn of Christ', seeing Him as their 'Model of Maturity' as the only effective way towards improvement and recovery.

At long last, those who have a concern to help those who suffer from some degree of neurosis are finding that mental illness has a 'spiritual dimension', and even the ones with a deep-seated disorder are finding that a rudimentary faith in God does help.

Sad to say, not many 'traditional' churches are motivated to provide 'drop-in' Centres where those with problems of this nature can find an understanding 'listening ear'. Unfortunately, the kinds of services which are held are traditionally orientated and almost bewildering to the first time visitor. All we seem to be doing is to 'cream off' from society, just those who

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have been brought up to accept a certain family tradition, or those who will quickly adapt themselves to the worship style of the particular denomination.

However, there is a gradual change taking place, which some of us are glad to observe.

It was in 1947 when I first began as a student nurse at a mental hospital which was just emerging from the old 'Lunatic Asylum' image, when any person who showed a mild or severe degree of abnormality, whether of an organic or functional nature was weeded out of society, and confined to this large, grim, prison-like building, often for the rest of their life.

As time went on, more and more doors were unlocked. Later, occupational therapy and industrial therapy (a kind of sheltered workshop) was built, and eventually a shop, and rehabilitation" system came along to help prepare those with a psychiatric history but had recovered sufficiently to live (usually with support) in the community. Having been personally involved in much of this development and in giving support in a voluntary way since that time, I can look back on both a useful... and adventurous life.

Ken Bunting

Many thanks to all our contributors! Your offerings are so vital. Submissions are welcome from all areas of the community, especially insights from the varying faith communities. Whilst we all appreciate a well balanced magazine, I can only put in what I receive - so I hope you're working on your next piece...!

Copy for next issue - due July 1st - to the editor by June 17 please, but sooner is always more helpful!

www.beingalongside.org.uk

Pay us a visit!



***Being Alongside's
A.G.M + PLUS +
1..00 - 4.30***

Sat 7 May

All Welcome!

***Venue: St Paul's Church Centre,
Rossmore Road, NW1 6NJ***



*nearest stations: Baker Street &
Marylebone*

tel: 02033 972497

email: mark.dadds@yahoo.co.uk

web: beingalongside.org.uk

We look forward to seeing you on the day - no need to book.

1.00 Lunch: provided

1.30 - 2.30 A.G.M.

2.30 - 3.30 Musical Exercise & Fun with Brenda Meadows

*3.30 - 4.00 Open Forum: an opportunity to share your own
poetry, writing, creative work etc.*

4.00 Refreshments before departures.



Man and Spiderman

Unlike most of The Lads in my class at school, I was never into Nietzsche nor Marvel Comics, partly because I found the characters all too physical: males were too USA regulation muscular, females - especially the 'baddies' - were too generous of bosom for my tender years. (Now of course, I'm at an age when I can cope with such delights. Lol!)

Needing some escapism after some difficult days, my wife and I fell into watching the first of the *Spiderman* movies. The action and effects such as the protagonist swinging ape-like at skyscraper height along the streets of New York were impressive. The format was spun (pun intended) into a formula common to many super hero stories, although the detail of Peter being Genetically Modified by a spider's bite was topical and novel. The characterisation was charming if thin and superficial, but let's recall we're not talking Jane Austen here.

As usual with cartoon super heroes, Spiderman had an alter ego, a secret life, a bi-personality. As plain Peter Parker he was the nicest of young men. He cared for his Aunt and Uncle who brought him up (parenting of the Superhero is usually surrogate) with family life being



reminiscent of a nuclear Walton's. He was gentle, gullible, an easy target for schemers and bullies ie a million miles away from a reality TV wannabe.



But as Spiderman, he was capable of - as you rightly imagine - great strength, super hearing, climbing vertical walls, hanging from ceilings, wrapping undesirables in impenetrable webbing, acrobatic leaps, tumbles and pendulum like swings via projected gossamer lines.

So far, so much childishness, but the intrigue was something about the torn-ness of Spiderman's psyche. It was not a split personality because Peter 'knew' Spiderman and vice versa; and, whilst the boundaries were clear, they were very close. And the film provided several instances of dilemma. For example, should he be Spiderman and bring the thief who

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killed his uncle to book, or accept the suffering which fate deals to mere mortals? Should he use Spiderman to entice the love of his life away from a hoodlum? Or try to win her the hard, mortal way?

A sub plot entailed a weapons experiment going wrong leaving a captain of industry bent on revenge; initially against his detractors, but ultimately against the arachnid crusader. Of course Spiderman finally triumphs, but not without losing the love of his life to his vocation. (Was it intentional that her red hair chimed in with traditional portrayals of Mary Magdalene?). If he was to be, as Spiderman, the saviour of his community, he could not be Peter Parker, beau of Mary Jane, who, having had her fill of 'rough', and moving beyond wide eyed infatuation of Spiderman, had developed mature feelings for Peter. She ends in tears, he walks away resolutely quoting his dead Uncle Ben: ***With great power comes great responsibility.***



So if we 'dig deeper' (too much competitive tv!) into the movie's themes, we can find a bit more than a cultish, kiddish merchandising machine. Perhaps there are promptings for that introspection - sometimes painful - can yield a better self understanding which in turn will help fine tune our life-coping mechanisms. How do we handle living on one level as Jo Enfeeble, whilst trying to bring our Superhero selves to birth? How right / clever / pragmatic is it to deny the one identity and continually inhabit the other? Have we a Superhero latent within us anyway, or is such the cornerstone of the Self Improvement Industries? In the end, do we not know that the real Superhero is Jo Enfeeble who just keeps hanging on? (pun intended.)

Can I learn more about being a man by watching a spiderman? Mmm, meanwhile, those ahead of me, will know *Spiderman 3* is out soon!

Steve Press

You are My Sunshine,

(get the Kleenex now!)

Like any good mother, when Karen found out that another baby was on the way, she did what she could to help her 3-year-old son Michael prepare for a new sibling. They found out that the new baby was going to be a girl, and day after day, night after night, Michael sang to his sister in mommy's tummy. He was building a bond of love with his little sister before he even met her.

The pregnancy progressed normally for Karen. In time, the labor pains came; soon it was every five minutes, every three, every minute. But serious complications arose during delivery and Karen found herself in hours of labor. Would a C-section be required? Finally, after a long struggle, Michael's little sister was born.

But she was in very serious condition. With a siren howling in the night, the ambulance rushed the infant to the neonatal intensive care unit at St. Mary's Hospital, Knoxville, Tennessee. The days inched by. The little girl got worse. The pediatrician had to tell the parents there is very little hope, advising them to prepare for the worst.

Karen and her husband contacted a local cemetery about a burial plot. They had fixed up a special room in their house for their new baby but now they found themselves having to plan for a funeral. Michael however, kept begging his parents to let him see his sister. 'I want to sing to her', he kept saying, but kids are never allowed in Intensive Care.

Karen decided to take Michael whether they liked it or not. If he didn't see his sister right then, he may never see her alive. She dressed him in an oversized scrub suit and marched him into ICU. He looked like a walking laundry basket. The head nurse recognized him as a child and bellowed, 'Get that kid out of here now. No children are allowed!'

The mother rose up strong in Karen, and the usually mild-mannered lady glared steel-eyed right into the head nurse's face, her lips a firm line. 'He is not leaving until he sings to his sister' she stated. Then Karen towed Michael to his sister's bedside. He gazed at the tiny infant losing the battle to live. After a moment, he began to sing in the pure-hearted voice of a 3-year-old:

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*'You are my sunshine, my only sunshine,
you make me happy when skies are gray.'*

Instantly the baby girl seemed to respond. The pulse rate began to calm down and become steady. 'Keep on singing, Michael,' encouraged Karen with tears in her eyes.

*'You never know, dear, how much I love you,
please don't take my sunshine away.'*

As Michael sang to his sister, the baby's ragged, strained breathing became as smooth as a kitten's purr 'Keep on singing, sweetheart.'

*'The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping,
I dreamed I held you in my arms'*

Michael's little sister began to relax as a healing rest seemed to sweep over her. 'Keep on singing, Michael.' Tears had now conquered the face of the bossy head nurse.

*'You are my sunshine, my only sunshine.
Please don't take my sunshine away.'*

The very next day, the little girl was well enough to get out of ICU and two weeks later she was allowed home.

Woman's Day Magazine called it *The Miracle of a Brother's Song*. The medical staff just called it a miracle. Karen called it a miracle of God's love.

NEVER GIVE UP ON THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE;
LOVE IS SO INCREDIBLY POWERFUL.

supplied by Trish Ellis; Origination unknown

St Marylebone Mental Health Support Group
meets on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

Welcoming Cuppa at 10.30am

Meeting begins 11am & ends about -12.30

Spiritual Journeying Group

'Chicken Soup for the Soul'

Evening and Afternoon
sessions

Tuesday 10th May,
7:30 - 8:45pm, St Mary's Church

Wednesday 25th May,
1:00 - 2:15pm, High Cross

The Spiritual Journeying Group is for those of us who sometimes find our daily lives difficult and challenging. It reaches out to anyone who asks questions about the meaning of life and wants to explore their own spiritual dimension. A knowing, caring God is at the heart of our themes but no-one is expected to view things in any prescriptive or fixed way. We expect and encourage differing perspectives of faith. It is an open group to which people are invited as and when they can come.

It would be lovely to see you there!

Evening Sessions

7:30-8:45pm

St Mary's Church

Park Road, Camberley
GU15 2SR

5th Apr - Chocolate -
10th May - Chicken Soup for -
the Soul
7th Jun - Is life a Peach -
or an orange?
28th Jun - TBD -

Afternoon Sessions

1:00-2:15pm

High Cross

Knoll Road, Camberley
GU15 3SY

27th Apr
25th May
15th Jun
13th Jul



For enquiries please contact Jennine Thomas on
07505477457 or Trish Ellis on 01276 507673



The Who & What of Being Alongside

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www.pastoral.org.uk

/

www.beingalongside.org.uk

'Being Alongside' is the operational name for the 'Association for Pastoral Care in Mental Health', (apcmh), a Christian based, voluntary association of individual members and affiliated groups who recognise the importance of spiritual values and support in mental health. It has a network of supporters throughout the United Kingdom and it welcomes and encourages people whatever their own faith or belief system. Governed by its National Committee, BA / acmh s primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.

UK Registered Charity: 1081642

UK Registered Company: 3957730

All submissions welcomed by the Editor.

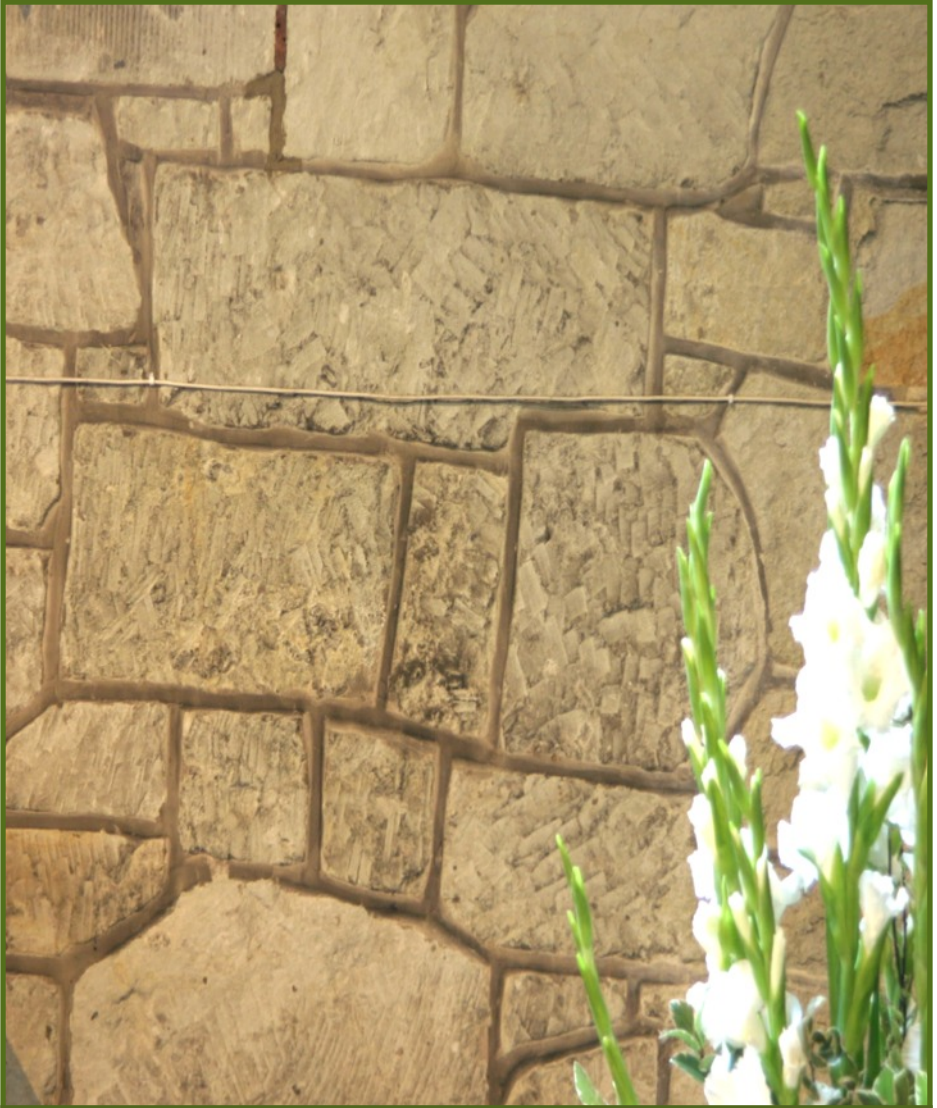
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Views in *Being Alongside* are not necessarily those of the organisation.

Origination by BA;

printed by **PrintInc**: 020 8255 2110



***Whatever your Shape,
You're Needed for the Wall***