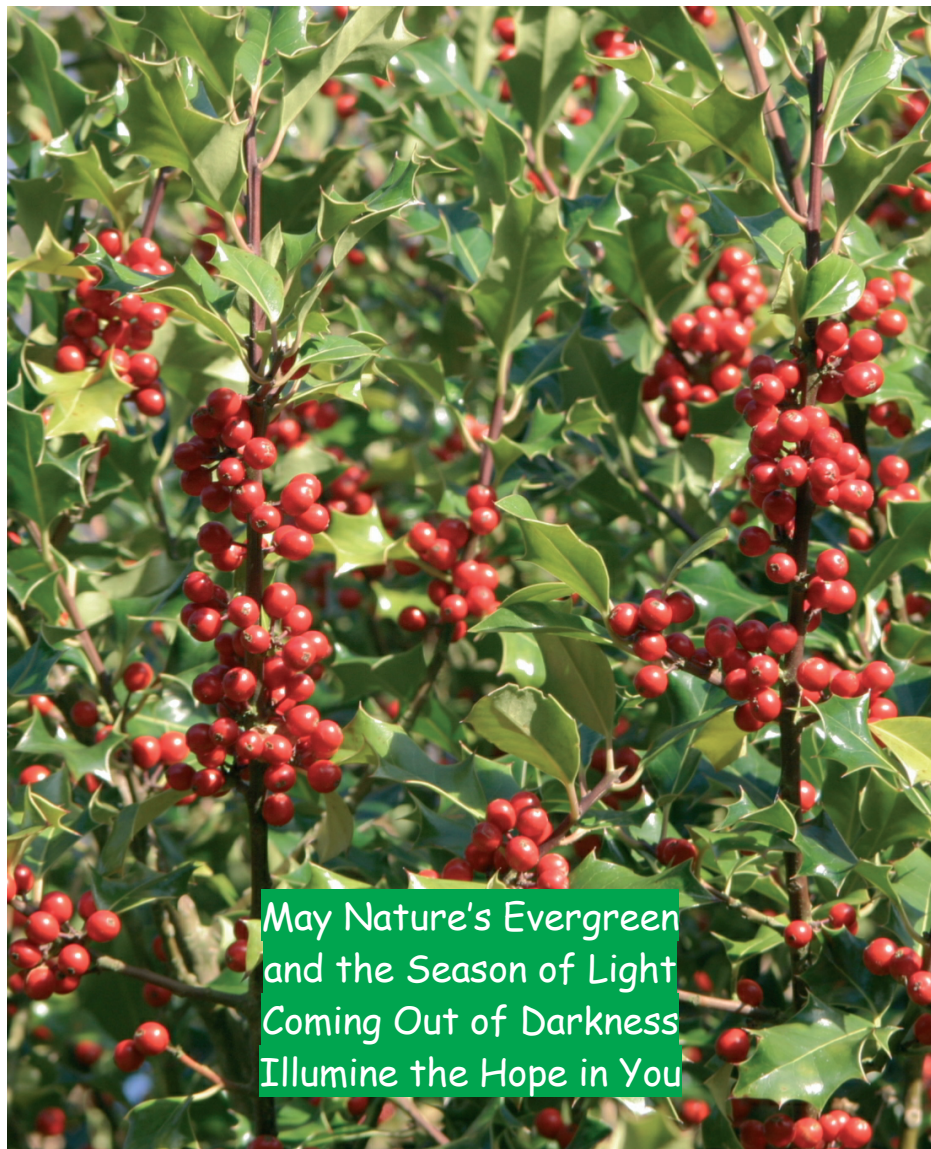




# *Being Alongside*

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

Nov - Dec 2010



May Nature's Evergreen  
and the Season of Light  
Coming Out of Darkness  
Illumine the Hope in You

## **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: Captain Mark Dadds, or 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)*

## ***Mental Health Support Group (The Dymphna Group)***

Jean Marsham regrets to announce that this group,  
previously meeting at St Andrew's, Frognal,  
United Reformed Church NW3  
is to close until further notice.

She thanks all those who came along and / or helped in any way,  
trusting that it was a positive experience for all concerned.

*Jean Marsham*

020 8455 1240

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Readers may have noticed a briefer BA this issue. This is to accommodate the Leaflet and Renewal material without having to incur higher mailing costs through extra weight.

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 January 1st - to the editor by December 10 please, but sooner is always more helpful!

This issue is now available for reading / downloading from the web site: [\*\*\*www.pastoral.org.uk\*\*\*](http://www.pastoral.org.uk)

## Front Page

It is wonderful when we get contributions from readers; we have one this issue p 11, and in our July - August *BA* we had two pieces about 'divine support'. They offered quite different stances. One claimed faith was a positive help, whereas the other claimed that faith, or more particularly, to be exposed to others banging on about it, tended to make matters worse.

As I write, the Chilean miners have all been rescued; is this an opportunity for wider learning? If you are in a pit, how helpful is it if those at the surface call down advice from their safe place afar off? If others have successfully escaped, is that an encouragement? Or can it add to the despair of the trapped? I suspect that what the trapped really want to know is that 'someone' is on their way back from safety to be alongside. And preferably this 'someone' has been through a similar experience. And whilst not needing to be 'an expert', does need to have as good, if not better understanding, of what is going on as the trapped have. But the crucial need is for closeness and comfort - cleverness, because it can detract from closeness - is the loose cannon.

I suspect that the recommendation of any particular spirituality, or advocacy of a particular medical regime, whilst of possible help when the sufferer is feeling well, is quite possibly not helpful when the suffering is at its worst. Once again I find myself returning to the principle of *being alongside* whereby those with humility, courage and compassion make the effort to be alongside those in pain. Christians will look to the Incarnation of their God at Christmas, Hindus will look to the Rama the avatar of Vishnu, Muslims will look to Mohammed's (pbuh) victorious return to Mecca, (known as Fatah-e-Mubeen), and Pagans will look to the turning of the Seasons for divine expressions of *being alongside*.

However, I close with words from Simon and Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, a popular expression of 'light in the darkness'. All we need is to overcome fear and inertia and get bridge building it! Seasons Greetings!

*When you're weary - feeling small,*

*When tears are in your eyes I will dry them all.*

*I'm on your side when times get rough and friends just can't be found*

*Like a bridge over troubled water I will lay me down .*

*Steve Press*



## *A Salutary Lesson*

### ***Mary Wright 's story of trying to come off too quickly***

After about 10 years taking Seroxat (Paroxetine) following a period of extreme stress at work, I realized that I have been “well” for several years. My GP had advised caution in reducing my daily 40 mg dose of Seroxat, especially as I also wanted to reduce my HRT medication, which could also result in mood changes. I successfully reduced and stopped the HRT and embarked on a reduction of Seroxat.

I initially reduced to 20 mgs for 3 weeks and did not notice much difference in how I felt. On a Saturday morning I went to take my tablet, to find that I had none left. It felt like the “right” moment to stop the medication.

Within 4 days I felt terrible. I experienced nausea and dizziness, noises in my ear, headache and vertigo. Worse still was the nighttime. The most extreme vivid dreams disturbed my sleep and woke me every 2 to 3 hours sweating. It took me at least an hour to recover from each and get back to sleep only for some fresh nightmare to beset me. I guessed this might be withdrawal symptoms, but thought that if I rode it out I would soon feel better and be drug free, but the days passed and after 5 days I felt no better.

On a Sunday I rang NHS Direct for advice. I explained that I had come off my Seroxat medication. I was taken through all the standard questions and the operator thought that I might be suffering from high blood pressure and might also be at risk of a heart attack or stroke. He did not think that it would be anything to do with withdrawal. Later he phoned me back to say he had looked up the withdrawal symptoms, and after all it might be that.

He advised me to go to my GP the next day. I was unable to get an appointment until the late afternoon, so rang the MIND helpline for advice. They were unable to help themselves but gave me the telephone number of C.I.T.A. – the Council for Information on Tranquillizers and Antidepressants. This organization has a helpline to phone and leave a contact number, and someone will phone back. The woman who phoned me could not have been more helpful and understanding. It was a real relief to know that the symptoms I was experiencing were not unusual and that this organization knew exactly how to help.

>>>

## *Being Alongside* Nov - Dec 2010

I was told to see my GP immediately and to go back on at least a 20 mg dose of Seroxat. I was sent a book called "*Back to Life*" which I received the next day. (£12.99) It is a comprehensive account of these medications and how to withdraw them safely with the help of a GP. I can also phone again at anytime for support.

Following my experience with the NHS helpline I was anxious about whether my GP would understand that my symptoms were withdrawal. I need not have worried. As soon as I said that I had stopped the medication, he knew how bad I would be feeling and put me back on it straight away. Within 2 – 3 days my symptoms had gone. Now I have to stabilize again on 20mg per day for a month and then work with my GP to reduce the dose slowly. In the C.I.T.A. book this is done over 71 weeks!

This was a salutary lesson for me. I thought that I was sensible about medication, having been on a range of antidepressants and tranquillizers at various times in my life. I thought that I had reduced slowly. I thought that I could "ride out" the withdrawal symptoms. It felt like the "right" moment, but I needed to check that out. I do believe in angels though and the woman who was on the end of the phone was one for me that morning. She ended the call with "God bless you".

Council for Information on Tranquillisers and Antidepressants

Office line: 0151 474 9626 (Mon - Thur 10-4)

Helpline: 0151 932 0102 (Mon - Fri 10-1, Weekends & Bank Holidays)

Fax - 0151 284 8324; Email - [cita@citap.org.uk](mailto:cita@citap.org.uk)

Postal address is:

CITA, The JDI Centre, 3 – 11 Mersey View, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 6QA

If you would like to help them, please consider making a donation as they have no funding. (Registered charity since October 1987: 519334).

*Mary Wright*

[www.beingalongside.org.uk](http://www.beingalongside.org.uk)

[www.pastoral.org.uk](http://www.pastoral.org.uk)

***two addresses -  
same well loved website!***

## *Hooked?*

A fishing boat docked in a tiny harbour. A tourist complimented the fishermen on their catch and asked how long it took them.

"Not very long." they answered in unison.

"Why didn't you stay out longer and catch more?"

They explained their small catches met their needs and those of their families.

"But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

"We sleep late, fish a little, play with our kids, and take siestas with our wives. In the evenings, we go into the village to see our friends, have a few drinks, play the guitar, and sing a few songs. Life's good."

The tourist interrupted, "I have a Business Degree and I can help! Fish longer every day to catch more, then you can buy a bigger boat."

"And after that?"

"With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second and a third and so on until you have an entire fleet. Instead of selling to a middle man, you can negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to Mexico City , Los Angeles, or even New York!"

"How long would that take?"

"Twenty, perhaps twenty-five years." replied the tourist.

"And after that?"

"Afterwards? Well my friend, that's when it gets really interesting," answered the tourist, laughing. "When your business gets really big, you can start buying and selling stocks and make millions!"

"Millions? Really? And after that?" asked the fishermen.

"After that you'll be able to retire, live in a tiny village near the coast, sleep late, play with your kids, catch a few fish, take a siesta with your wife and spend your evenings drinking and enjoying your friends."

"With all due respect sir, but that's exactly what we are doing now."

So what's the point wasting twenty-five years?" asked the Mexicans.

*Consider where you're Going in Life... you may already be there & not know.!*



## Spiritual Journeying

*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!

Meetings in Camberley one evening, and one afternoon a month.

Future dates:

23 Nov: 7:30-8:45pm at St Mary's Church

3 Nov: 2:00-3:15pm at High Cross

For enquiries please contact

Jennine Thomas: 07505477457, or

Trish Ellis: 01276 507673 (right >>>).

*Ed: Other dates were supplied for December & the New Year, but space limited, so please call Jennie or Trish.*



[www.beingalongside.org.uk](http://www.beingalongside.org.uk)

[www.pastoral.org.uk](http://www.pastoral.org.uk)

**two addresses -  
same well loved website!**

## *Could This Be Part of The Fight Back?*

From the Mental Health Foundation Website: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/)

There's increasing evidence that Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) could help to reduce our anxiety levels and teach us new ways to manage stress. The results of various clinical studies and research speak for themselves, highlighting benefits such as:

- \* A 70 per cent reduction in anxiety
- \* Fewer visits to your GP
- \* An ongoing reduction in anxiety three years after taking an MBSR course
- \* An increase in disease-fighting antibodies, suggesting improvements to the immune system
- \* Longer and better quality sleep, with fewer sleep disturbances
- \* A reduction in negative feelings like anger, tension and depression
- \* Improvements in physical conditions as varied as psoriasis, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue syndrome.

The evidence in support of MBSR is so strong that almost three-quarters of GPs think it would be beneficial for all patients to learn.

## *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**



## Clippings

Another reader offering - keep 'em coming - this one being part of an email exchange with 'A' in response to BA's last (Sep - Oct 2010) issue:

*Thanks for picture Sunset at Coltishall which is beautiful. North Norfolk coast is one of my most favourite places with and almost timelessness about it all. We go camping there often for its peace and tranquility. Broken only by the fly past of the Euro jets from R.A.F Coltishall! but as ex-RAF "types" thats always been part of the Holiday. Old memories of Jet engines being "run" on an airfield have always brought a touch of "nostalgia" to me.*

*I have just returned from a Church 12 day mission trip to Romania, and I found her (contributor Ella Romanovskij, p9) observations on a "Communal Survival" very true as we helped with the host organisations "ministry to the "poor" and "street boys". Their efforts have been dealt a blow by the "economic downturn" but was immensely impressed by their warmth, hospitality, and "interaction and sense of "extended family which I experienced there.*

From ***Depression : the way out of your prison*** by Dorothy Rowe

*..... Some of you never joke around, not because you have no sense of humour (everyone has) but because you believe that life is serious and to be good you must take things seriously. You would never dream of laughing at anyone, because if you did, it means you don't love them.*

*What rubbish! As anyone who manages to cope in any way with life will tell you, one thing that makes it bearable is that it is funny, and when we laugh at people we love we are showing we love and accept them for what they are.*

*When we laugh at ourselves we show that we accept ourselves.*



# *The Who & What of Being Alongside*

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Patron	Prof Andrew Sims	
Chair	Stephan Ball	0844 800 9744 @ 5p / min
Company Sec'y	Mark Dadds	see below
Membership Secretary	Mark Dadds	0844 800 9744 @ 5p / min, or, 020 7724 8517 via St Paul's Centre
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Printer	PrintInc	<a href="mailto:printinc2@btconnect.com">printinc2@btconnect.com</a>

*'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, APCMH is primarily concerned to promote and encourage "being alongside" people experiencing mental or emotional distress.*

*For Specific Contacts, see above. For General Enquiries reach us at the Registered and Administrative office at:*

St Paul's Centre, 5 Rossmore Road, Marylebone, London NW1 6NJ

tel: 0844 800 9744 (calls @ 5p / minute) / net: [www.pastoral.org.uk](http://www.pastoral.org.uk)

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

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'And the darkness extinguisheth it not'...  
or, don't let them get to you!

*Season's Greetings to Everyone*

