



## The Who and What of APCMH

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APCMH is 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

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The views expressed in *Being Alongside* are not necessarily those of the Association.



## Being Alongside

the Bi-Monthly Newsletter of the  
**Association for  
Pastoral  
Care in  
Mental  
Health**

January - February, 2007

Friends fill  
your life with  
joy,

your soul with  
sunshine,

and your  
heart with  
love

My "inner voice" has created great chaos in my life and others, sometimes due to my interpretation - but also to great inner peace and a sense of true belonging and of being understood on a level no other can. The flux is a struggle but I recognise it as a symptom, a negative aspect, and also something that has enabled me to begin to see my own self worth, to say the least, ( a positive aspect). I now tend to "sit through" these extremes and try not to react to the fear they can both bring, I have discovered that fear intensifies both, but in acknowledging I am in an "extreme" place tends to take away some of that fear.

Sue Holt

[www.freewebs.com/manicpoet/](http://www.freewebs.com/manicpoet/)

[www.manicpoet.shorturl.com](http://www.manicpoet.shorturl.com)

Mind in Croydon is gaining a reputation for the production of ground - breaking documentaries on a range of mental health subjects.



Our video on self-injury, **Visible Memories** (27 mins; £40), was recently featured in a programme shown on Channel 5.

We were also pleased when our latest film **Pillar to Post** ( 23 mins; £35) was featured in the Department of Health's Guide on Good Practice in Dual Diagnosis as a recommended educational resource.

Also available: **Hard to Believe**, (on spirituality and mental health: 30 mins; £35) and **Finding the Edge** (a positive view of young people and mental health: 15 mins; £25)

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## STOP PRESS: Conference:

*MIND and SPIRIT 2007: 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2007*

Shire Hall, Chelmsford 10am – 4pm

**'Spirituality and the whole person approach'**

Rt. Rev. John Gladwin - Bishop of Chelmsford

**' The Ups and Downs of Spirituality in Mental Health '**

Prof. Andrew Simms - recent Chair of Special Interest Group on Spirituality at The Royal College of Psychiatry

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## Front Page

Pam Freeman.

Another New Year - a time to wonder what lies ahead and a time to reflect on past events and activities. The National Committee has a great deal to be grateful for, and to be thankful that so many strands have woven together positively.

Firstly, our link with the St Marylebone Healing and Counselling Centre has proved a real joy. Conferences have been held there culminating in one in November.



Andrew Powell (<<< left) of the Spirituality Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists spent the day and spoke very sympathetically and encouragingly. We were lucky that we had support from Rev'd Andrew Wilson Chaplain to the Maudsley and Bethlem Hospitals Trust, (right >>>), Rev'd Chris MacKenna and Richard Pacetti who had made several DVDs and videos on mental health

issues. We are truly indebted to him for his inspirational and innovative work that has helped so many people.

The money raised by the Young Quakers helped to fund the conferences and poetry book (*Poems from the Heart*) that John and Leona produced. This book has been a blessing to many people - we hope that readers will keep sending their poems in.



## Telling It Like It Is

Sue Holt

I wanted to write and say a big thank you for the Sep '06 Newsletter.

Firstly, I wanted to contribute to Sister Theresa studies. I have had a great deal of contact with services over 15 years. I was accepting many levels of care during that time, although at times I was very reluctant and, I guess, a difficult patient. Even though I still consider the degrees of care within a psychiatric hospital to be poor, I can now with reflection see how I was helped to not "harm myself or others", as when I was psychotic my husband "demanding" for me to be sectioned as I was refusing to stay as I was going to my son's nativity, I was sectioned and it is only recently that I am beginning to see its benefit -the year was 1998, my son was 8. I was talking a great deal about being God's "messenger" and blessing people.

I live not far from the hospital, and on escorted walks I was "encouraged" not to go to the shops in my village, once again I could not see the need for this and saw it as an abuse of power, I have begun to also see the reason why, for this and other things. Today, I struggle very much with how I impacted upon those around me, especially my son who is now 16. (I have been ill all his life, but so much more from 1997), and my husband. I recognise I was so immersed where I was that I did not consider them, other than in my husband's case as a jailor, as my illness is levelling out this is becoming increasingly apparent to me, it is a difficult time to say the least.

Tom Hapur's article made great sense to me. I struggled greatly with hearing God's voice, and defended it vehemently as not being a symptom of illness, I still do from time to time, but mostly with myself. I see it now as being more than one thing. I was in need of being seen and heard. God did that, but I needed more; how can I have more than God? To work for Him, to be His child, which I now know is what He wants from us all, but at the time it was just me, He was not asking it from anyone else. My "faith" was lob sided to say the least.

Today, I still waver, sometimes not knowing what to believe, unable to read the Bible as it is just about me, to not believing very much in it, and shifting from talking about God to excessive beliefs about our relationship, or wondering if He truly exists.

insight and a feeling of self-worth and belonging? If so, how? This is easier said than done, especially for a volunteer rather than a professional in the mental health care services.

Humanists do not recognize the existence of God or other supernatural entities, but have a moral and ethical code of behaviour. One humanist definition of "spiritual" comes from Prof. Maslow: *"The spiritual life is part of our biological life. It is the highest part of it, but yet part of it. The spiritual life is part of the human essence. It is a defining characteristic of human nature, without which human nature is not full human nature. It is part of the real self, of one's identity, of one's inner-core, of one's specieshood, of full humanness."*

Marilyn Mason of the British Humanist Association refers to awe and wonder at the natural world as a "materialist spirituality" ("materialist" meaning the world of matter, which includes the products of the human mind and emotions). She has said *"Even if scientists and philosophers do come at last to the conclusion that human beings are simply a mass of chemicals, purely physical, our minds and our better feelings would still be something pretty marvellous, worth celebrating and cultivating... I enjoy the arts, nature, friendship and love, and I have enough purposes and principles in my life to keep me going. Many of those who, like me, share and value deeply the experiences sometimes labelled "spiritual" would classify them differently, and more clearly and precisely."*

So in the context of helping non-believers with mental health problems does meeting their spiritual needs mean helping them to view the natural world with awe and wonder, or enjoy the finer things in life – art, music, literature, love and so on?

Whatever one understands by "spirituality", and meeting the spiritual needs of non-believers, a starting point is simply the gift of friendship – which involves caring, affection and loyalty. The Mental Health Foundation has said *"Friendship as a form of spiritual connection is of basic importance to the lives of people with mental health problems."*

*David Roe*

***Keep your ears to the ground  
for murmurings about Drop In facilities  
at the Maudsley...***

Another really exciting event is that St Paul's Rossmore Road managed to get funding to run a drop in twice a week for a year. Thanks to Betty the fund raiser, and Sr Theresa and Captain Mark a real sense of joy and community is felt by many who drop in for warmth and fellowship.

What of our hopes for 2007? We are really lucky that Steve Press has agreed to edit the newsletter. We will be very interested to hear your views on the new look. Many thanks to John and Leona for being so generous with their time and money producing the newsletter for several years and keeping links with our members and friends.



Richard Pacetti (above) is in the process of producing another film to be entitled *Sexuality and Mental Health*. (see p16 for basic details of existing titles).



Chris MacKenna (<<< left) and his committee will be organising another conference at St Marylebone and the St Paul's Drop In will continue to meet twice a week at St Paul's, Rossmore Road. (See p11.)

But above all, we hope that you will let us know your news and views and that details of projects you are involved with. Sharing experiences can help, others and give support to those whom are trying to set similar ideas in motion.

Every Good Wish for a Happy and Peaceful New Year!

*Pam Freeman*

## Editorial?

Welcome One and All to a New Year!

As a child I never really liked celebrating New Year for it was merely the depressing signal that Christmas was a long, long way off! Now I'm a little (yeah, right!) older and there have been many Christmas disappointments which mean that New Year can assume a more appropriate place in my affections. I can recall a helicopter being sat upon and wrecked by a favourite aunt, a train set that did not - and quite probably could not - fulfil the advertising hype, the bike that was good, but my pal's was better, the relationship that never blossomed despite the expectation laden office party, the first car that too many people responded to with respectful silence - you know the sorts of thing I mean.

Nowadays I think of New Year as a kind of template. It can never be a totally fresh start for history - both good and bad - gets 'rolled over' like sums in a bank statement. But although the formatting is in place, the working area of the pages is blank. The dice might be loaded, but their exact turn out cannot be predicted. We might be able to choose 'when' and 'how' we throw - the result is not fixed. So before the calendar and diaries - or is it palm tops? - suffer the indignity of having dates shoehorned in, let us recognise the wonderful potential of the blank areas. And in the responsibility of making good choices where we can.

This forms a gift of a link to the subject of a New Look magazine, newly entitled *Being Alongside* for the **APCMH**. Indeed, as I type and click, most of the pages are blank, waiting to be filled with readers' views, insights, rantings, prayers and yes, even photos. I hope mine can be a very gentle hand on the tiller and allow everyone to have the chance to 'share'. To resort to the vernacular - get it to me and it'll get in! From clever to cheesy, from whimsey to world class, let's have it!

So Thank You - in anticipation - for contributing to *Being Alongside*. May it be a vehicle of honesty, hope, fun, learning, interest and healing to those who, whilst aware of their suffering and imperfections, continue to nurture love for self, neighbour, community and planet.

Boldly Grow,

*Steve*

Some Christians may say that a non-believer's spiritual needs may be met if they were helped to believe in God and follow a Christian life. That may be so, but steering them in that direction if they had not taken the first steps themselves may cause offence or be counter-productive.

One example of the second meaning of "spiritual" is evident in the "spirituality" section of a library, which is usually adjoining the "religion" section, and includes books on a wide range of "new-age" and older mystic and supernatural phenomena and beliefs. These include, for example, astrology, feng shui, spiritualism, clairvoyance, extra-sensory perception, crystal healing, witchcraft, ghosts, poltergeists, tarot cards, and so on. If a person with a mental health problem was interested in some of these activities I suppose one could be meeting their spiritual needs to help them get more involved and meet others with similar views, if the practice of the activities caused no harm.

The normal use of the word "spirituality" today in the context of mental health is broader. For example, "Promoting mental health: a resource for spiritual and pastoral care" (Church of England, the National Institute for Mental Health in England, and "Mentality") says "*Spirituality is a quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God.*"

A problem with this type of short definition is that it lacks a moral or ethical element, and appears to allow humans to have a positive or higher spiritual quality while doing harm to others. For example, a person preparing to be a suicide bomber could be said to have meaning and purpose in life, revering and holding in awe that which inspired him to act.

The Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists avoids this problem in their definition, which is as follows: "*In healthcare, spirituality is identified with experiencing a deep-seated sense of meaning and purpose in life, together with a sense of belonging. It is about acceptance, integration and wholeness..... Spirituality, described as "linking the deeply personal with the universal", is inclusive and unifying. It naturally leads to the recognition that to harm another is to harm oneself, and equally that helping others is to help oneself. It applies to everyone, including those who do not believe in God or a 'higher being'. The universality of spirituality extends across creed and culture; at the same time spirituality is felt as unique to each and every person.*"

So according to this definition does trying to to meet a non-believer's spiritual needs include helping them find meaning and purpose in life,

## What are the Spiritual Needs of Non-Believers ?

*A personal view by David Roe*

The purpose of this article is to ask this question, not to answer it !

A year ago I was invited to talk a small local meeting of another mental health charity. The organizer asked me to include in my talk something about "spirituality". My heart sank, as I was not qualified to address this subject. Although APCMH is a Christian-based organization, I did not want to try to deal with it from one particular viewpoint, as I realized that my audience was likely to consist of persons of different religious beliefs as well as those who had no religious belief.

I thought I should start by checking out what APCMH had to say on its web-site. This states that APCMH "is primarily concerned with the spiritual needs of people with mental health problems. We hope to encourage local initiatives in faith communities in order to support and empower mental health service users..." There has been much said about the importance of meeting the spiritual needs of those who are mentally ill – and for the medical profession to recognize that expression religious beliefs should not be ignored or regarded as a symptom of the illness. However, presumably most branches of APCMH, do not distinguish between Christians or those who have other or no religious beliefs, when deciding whether to help persons with mental health problems, or to recruit volunteers.

So what are the spiritual needs of those with no religious beliefs who suffer from mental health problems ? This question is not easy to answer – one basic reason for this is that "spiritual" has more than one dictionary definition. To simplify, the three relevant definitions are:-

- (a) connected with religion and the church;
- (b) connected with the world outside the body or physical things; and
- (c) connected with the higher / finer qualities of the human spirit.

Modern day use of "spiritual" and "spirituality" can be based on any one of these meanings, or can embrace all of them.

## Northern Light

Perhaps readers might be interested to know about the work of our organisation in Batley, West Yorkshire.

Some 12 years ago after suffering my third breakdown I formed the Batley Self-Help Depression Group. I recognised that there was very little support in the community for sufferers of depression and because I had received so much support from family, friends and church I wanted to offer help to others.

We began with three or four members and over the last 9 years we have had well over 500 sufferers coming through our doors. We are now a registered charity and we have our own website [www.batleyselfhelp.org.uk](http://www.batleyselfhelp.org.uk) Our aim is to offer mutual self help and support to sufferers of depression and their carers in a safe, caring and nonjudgmental environment.

We also seek to help lift the stigma attached to depression and to educate those who know little about the illness.

We believe that the success of our group lies in the fact that we offer unconditional love to each of our members. Each one is made to feel special and of worth and the group has become a community to which they feel they belong. We feel that it is a great privilege to sit alongside each sufferer and to be allowed to share their deep pain and suffering. To our amazement so many find their way to recovery and healing.

We have found that God doesn't ask us for our *ability* but our *availability* and He will do the rest. Whenever we have had a need He has provided and we look forward to celebrating the group's 10th birthday next year.

I hope this will encourage others who think that they can't do much to help such sufferers. A 'listening ear' is a much needed and valuable asset in today's busy lifestyle.

If anyone would like more information then please contact us at [enquiries@batleyselfhelp.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@batleyselfhelp.org.uk)

*Marion Dixon*

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

## Poem: Carcinoma

This is offered by Sheila B who writes: This is by my friend Richard Leigh. I don't know if it is 'too strong' to share, or upsetting? For me, it keeps triggering off other strong - or very strange, challenging thoughts also - that somehow become useful.

P.S. I found the day at St Marylebone on 23 November just *SO GOOD*, and thank you to the many bits of just human kindness that I felt all round ... and the real listenings to each other.

I grow unstoppably inside you.  
Sometimes there's a pause -  
I call it getting my breath back,  
You call it 'remission' -

and then we're off again. I live,  
I batten on you: what feeds you  
is nutriment to me. We are brothers,  
after all, under the skin.

Sometimes a merciless bombardment  
might set me back a little; but remember:  
what harms me, harms you more:  
you do your precious self no favours.

I and my kind seek only to remind you:  
you and your kind encroach without limit,  
your curse is on the world - and ours,  
on you, is striving to avenge

the balance which you have tilted  
irreversibly out of true. Now, I control  
everything that must happen; and  
I intend to keep things like this.



## Drop In

A chance to meet others experiencing mental health issues.

Venue: St Paul's Community Church,  
3 Rossmore Road, London NW1 5LT

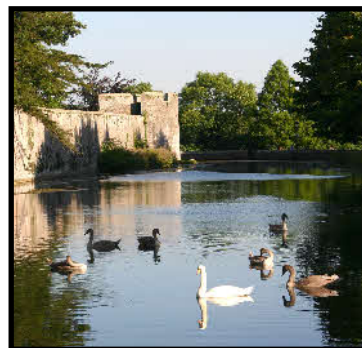
Time: 3 - 5 every Monday, 10 - 12 every Wednesday

## Worth a Thousand Words?

Below: an image from the precincts of Wells Cathedral in Somerset. Hopefully it can remind us all of pleasant summer days.

Images always make a publication more attractive, so if you have a photo you'd like in *BA*, please post it to the Editor (contact details on back cover). Artwork, photos, pictures - even cross-stitch (!) can be scanned in. Obviously, all pc generated material can be e-mailed. However, for images, please adjust e-mail settings to 'High Resolution'. This will increase the chances of a quality reproduction.

Please keep hand written material seriously legible. Whether by hand or pc, wide margins with minimal underlining and annotations are much appreciated.



Apologies to readers who were expecting this issue sooner; copy arriving last minute, technical challenges and festivities to be indulged in conspired to delay. Will try harder next time, promise!

Copy for March's *BA* to Editor by early Feb please.

*Steve*

## Selfishness

We always think of mine and I and me,  
Instead of ours and us and we,  
Let's not be selfish to each other,  
Let's always give to one another,  
Let's give and help and share  
Let's love and hope and care,  
A better world is a united one,  
Where things for each other are done,  
Done without selfishness and greed,  
Done to help all those in need,  
Then we will live together in peace,  
And love and unity will never cease.

## The Face that Tells All

I see upon the face of Jesus, in that child standing there,  
The look this face, is the look that says, I care.  
He smiles with me and laughs with me, and helps me on my way,  
Through thick and thin, He is with me, today and every day.

I see those eyes that look at me, these lips that say, "I'm near",  
He reaches out His hands to me, and takes away my fear,  
I turn to Him, and say to Him, "Why did you die for me?"  
He turns to me, and says to me, "I died to make you free".

I feel His presence close to me, and deep within my heart,  
I know He's with me always, and never will depart,  
Have faith and love Him always, and you will; feel His presence too,  
And then you'll know His love will be, the greatest gift to you.

Several readers have customarily received *BA* via e-mail. I hope this can continue but the colour cover has increased the file size to beyond the usual limits. Therefore, it will be available on line via [www.yousendit.com](http://www.yousendit.com) who will inform you by e-mail that *BA* awaits downloading.

Steve

## Book Review:

### **Christian Congregations and Mental Illness**

by Edna Hunneysett. Contact Edna 01642 818332  
[www.carersinthecommunity.org.uk](http://www.carersinthecommunity.org.uk)

#### *About the Author*

Edna Mary Hunneysett, born in 1940, spent her childhood with eight siblings on a small farm on the Yorkshire moors. After marrying and raising ten children, she began her academic career in 1990 graduating with a BA Hons (Divinity) in 1995 followed by an MA with Distinction in 1998. Her first book *Carers in the Community: 'Why Have You Forsaken Me?'* was published in 2001. She is a 'hands-on' grandmother of 15 grandchildren and combines this with her writing and speaking in churches and other venues raising awareness for support needed for families experiencing mental illness.

This book is available in December 2006. £12

#### *About the Book*

The author seeks answers to a series of questions. Is care extended in Christian communities towards people with mental illnesses? Do Christians know what kind of support people with mental illnesses and their families need? Does Christian faith make a positive difference to how such people are treated? Are Christian ministers trained in this aspect of ministry? The study sets the context for contemporary attitudes by an outline of the history of how mental illness has been understood by theologians, and also within Christian congregations. The research component was an attitude survey of 592 people from a sample target of three denominations, Anglicans, Roman Catholics and Evangelical / Pentecostals. The result demonstrated more supportive attitudes than are evident among the general public. At the same time, there were indications of a lack of knowledge, and the need for better education at every level. There is a real need to raise awareness, so that the negative aspects of mental health difficulties can be addressed, and the stigmatisation and discrimination prevalent in society can be challenged.

#### *Reviews:*

This book shows how it is within the Church's power to make a posi-



tive difference to the lives of people with mental health difficulties, written by someone who has made a difference.

*Bishop Stephen W Sykes*

This is one of the most in depth studies into the Christian community's response to people with mental health problems I have come across. Edna once again, following her previous book, *Carers in the Community: Why have you forsaken me?*, approaches the subject with a wonderful personal touch.

Although this is an incredible piece of research into our, that is the Christian community's, attitudes throughout history and especially in the modern day toward people suffering from mental illness, it is also a deeply personal drawing together of people's lived experience.

Everyone can learn a great deal from this book as many attitudes commonplace in the Christian community also exist in the wider community. Edna challenges us all to re-evaluate our perception of mental illness and people who suffer from it. The consequences of "Stigma" and negative attitudes towards people who suffer from mental illness are laid bare. As a chaplain to a hospital specialising in the care of people suffering from mental illness and a priest with frequent contact with people affected by mental illness, I found this book incredibly thought provoking and I learnt a great deal about my own attitudes, some of which left much to be desired.

For any Christian this is not a comfortable read, patting the Christian Churches on the back for a job well done. It is rather a prophetic call to all Christians, and indeed to all people, to rise to the summons of Christ to bring "Good News" to all people, to break down the stereotypes and the stigma that stereotyping brings, and see all people as children of God and give them the respect that that position deserves!

*Rev'd Bill Serplus - Hospital Chaplain*

This book is the fruit of countless hours and days, months of work and thorough research arising out of a lived experience. It will prove to be a source of help and reference and encouragement to many people in the Church and elsewhere working in the field of mental health.

*Canon Eddie Gubbins, Episcopal Vicar,  
Diocese of Middlesbrough*

## *Sorry Bridget*

Many of you will have seen and enjoyed **Poems from the Heart**. Sad to say, there were some typos in offerings by Bridget Pelling. We reproduce the corrected poems in full and offer our sincere apologies. **When Jesus Comes Again**, **Selfishness** and **The Face That Tells All**.

We cannot say it won't happen again, for such is the 'there you go' of flawed human nature. Thus we do rely on, and need, each others' commitment to improvement and on each others' forgiveness.

*Steve*

## *When Jesus Comes Again*

When Jesus comes again,  
There will be no pain,  
There will be no pain or sorrow,  
For Jesus will say, please follow  
And follow Him I will!

When Jesus comes again,  
He will come to stay,  
He will guide us through each day  
And He will forgive our sin,  
I will follow Him, through thick and thin.

When Jesus comes again,  
He will come forever,  
He will leave us never,  
When He's here, we shall find  
That He has come to save mankind!  
To save mankind!

When Jesus comes again,  
The world will be a better place,  
It will be changed by God's good grace,  
That's why God will send His son,  
He will come again, until His work is done,  
Until His work is done!