



*Sorry it's a lousy picture; couldn't resist it!
Timely in the sense that it was another 'Piggy Back Roller'
the like of which graced the back page of last issue!
Does Anno Domini catch up with even Rolls-Royces?*

Being Alongside

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

Sep - Oct 2008

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 APCMH

Mondays 2pm - 5pm

November First Aid

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: 0207 724 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)

St Andrew's, Frognal, United Reformed Church NW3

2nd and 4th Friday of each month

10.15am-12noon

Aiming to provide friendship and mutual support for those living with mental health concerns, both sufferers and carers, where matters may be explored and discussion encouraged.

contact: The Rev'd Jonathan Dean: 0207 435 5725
or Jean Marsham: 0208 455 1240

Junction of Frognal Lane / West End Lane / Finchley Road.

near Finchley Rd Met / Jub;
113, 82, 13, 46, 268, 328, 139, C11 (West End Green);
Finchley Rd / Frognal (NL Metro),
Hampstead (Northern);
West Hampstead (First Capital Direct)



The Who and What of APCMH

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Patron	Professor Andrew Sims	
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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.

For Specific Contacts, see above; for General Enquiries reach us:

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registered charity: 1081642

limited company: 3957730

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

Origination by APCMH; printed by **PrintInc**: 020 8255 2110

Poetry Please?

About two years ago, *Being Alongside's* previous Editor John Rawson and his wife Leona compiled a 40 page booklet called *Poems from the Heart*.

The poems were contributed by the readership and the costs of production underwritten by the Young Friends of the Quaker Society.

As current readers of *Being Alongside* will know, the poems 'keep on coming', so perhaps it is time, as John hinted, that another booklet of poems is due!

However, before such a project gets under way, it would be helpful if the remaining booklets were distributed as 'sales', 'gifts', 'calling cards' or 'introductions'.

If you think you can use any copies of *Poems From the Heart* in a positive way, please get in touch with Pam Freeman 02086 473678. When that resource has been used up, we can seriously think about a *More Poems From the Heart!*

And the meantime gives plenty of time for the Bards among you to put pen to paper!

Steve

Boom Boom!

A self opinionated journalist visiting the mental institution asked the Director how he decided which patients should be kept in.

He replied, 'We fill up a bath and offer the patient a teaspoon, a teacup and bucket to empty it.'

The journalist said, 'Sorted! Normal people would chose the bucket.'

'Not so,' said the Director. 'Normal people choose to pull the plug out. Would you like a bed near the window?'

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*Contributions for next issue - due November 1st - to the editor
by October 12th please, but sooner is always better!*

Are you working on yours yet?

Front Page

by Amanda Headley-White

Finding my Wings Again - From Client to Counsellor

From time to time I wonder how a little girl who planned to be a vet ended up working as a counsellor being alongside humans rather than working with animals. Like most paths in life its not been as simple as taking the road labelled 'mental health' rather than 'job with animals'. Instead it has been a series of offshoots and eddies, often feeling as if I've been washed along, and at other times feeling distinctly pulled.

I can trace my interest in working in therapy to when I was 17 and suffering from anorexia and depression. I was referred to a psychotherapist at the Retreat Hospital, feeling confused and fragile. At the time I was on a straight A-course for my A-levels and headed to Cambridge. I should have been happy, but I was in despair, some nameless anxiety, some feeling of pointlessness that immobilised me. The therapist was the first person I had spoken to who seemed to grasp what was going on. Rather than saying 'you're doing so well!' or fussing about what I ate, here was someone who seemed to get the way I felt, and accept it. One of the things he said was 'I've never been an anorexic girl, you may know more about that experience than me, but I'll do my best to understand you.'. For me this illuminates two things, firstly that in order to be alongside one does not need to have had the same experience, I realised this as time went on. The other thought that went through my mind at this time was how fantastic it would be to have a therapist who had been through something akin to my experience and survived it. To know that some 'sorted' and reasonably happy adult had been where I'd been could have been such an encouragement.

For a long time I concentrated on getting well, finding myself in increasingly dark places. I mean really dark, phoning the Samaritans in a midnight rainstorm on the lawn in front of my halls in Cambridge, finding myself in the psychiatric ward when I should have been studying, and ending up statistically homeless.

In the city I moved to after Cambridge I found a new therapist and continued some of the work I had started in York. Once again my therapist proved a major part of my life and a source of strength. Something of this

How can we help other Christians who are depressed? The Bible says that Jesus came that we "*might have life, and might have it abundantly*" (John 10:10).

Certainly; depression is not abundant life and not the way God would want any of his children to be, but this does not mean that people who are depressed should be made to feel guilty for their depression.

As Christians it is our duty to make ourselves available to others in order to help them find His peace and joy. What sorts of things can we do?

- We can listen without judging
- We can help with normal daily tasks that might be becoming too much.
- We can pray for and with them.
- We can, by our actions and words, remind them that God is still there and still loves them.

How can you help yourself, if you are at all depressed? If you are depressed there is no point being told to pull yourself together and get on with your life. That would not be at all helpful, but there are ways that you can bring about gradual change, your own lives and make them more bearable, even if you are suffering from severe depression. What sorts of things can you do?

- Admit to yourself and to a trusted friend that you are depressed. Recovery cannot begin until you have admitted there is a problem.
- See a Doctor. Depression is an illness and as such is treatable. A doctor may be able to prescribe medication that may make a big difference to the way you feel.

Jayne Flynn

First Girl:

It's my boss's birthday next week. He has everything. What can I give him?

Second girl:

My phone number!

*My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear.
My Wounds fester and are loathsome
because of my sinful folly.
I am bowed down and brought very low;
all day long I go about mourning.
My back is filled with searing pain;
there is no health in my body.
I am feeble and utterly crushed;
I groan in anguish of heart.*

Psalms 38: 4-6

Here David's depression was due to feeling guilty for his sins, but this is by no means the only cause of depression among Christians.

People who are depressed are often told to place their hope in God. Whilst this is quite obviously the right thing to do, it is not always easy. When someone is suffering from true clinical depression there may seem to be no hope at all, and to put trust in a loving God is then a difficult, if not impossible thing to do. Sometimes in these instances medication is a way of providing the depressed person with a path back to a relative stability, so that they are able once again to see through the shroud of darkness to the light of God.

David called upon the Lord and found hope:

*Why are you downcast, O my soul?
Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.
My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember
you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon —
from Mount Mizar.*

Psalms 42: 5-6

was to do with the faith she had in me, and her willingness to travel with me at my speed. I would say that at this time the therapy kept me alive. In deep despair therapeutic work becomes very hard, and is in the terms of Winnicott simply a case of 'holding', rather like a mother might hold a distressed infant.

At this point I found myself in hospital, and leafing through my bedside bible table reading and praying the words 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove... that I could fly away and be at rest' (psalm 55.6). At this point all I longed for was rest, a place where what-ever it was tormented me would cease. In the same hospital visit I learned of a therapeutic community on the outskirts of the city where I lived, and realised that this would be my place of rest and recuperation.

My therapist helped me get a place in the therapeutic community and it was after a year in this environment (and working with a fantastic therapist) that I started to think of my future. By this point I felt I had lost 5 years of my life to depression and eating disorders, and it felt incredibly important that this time be used and honoured somehow. At the point I left Cambridge some dear friends had suggested that now I was starting my lessons in life, and this stayed with me.

I started my training - in counselling - at the local college and found it immensely enjoyable, and having done so much therapy fairly easy going. I think I was a fairly cheeky student, gaining a sense of fun I'd never had at school!

The challenge has come in later training when I've tried to model the strength and belief my therapists had in me for my own clients. The first time I saw a client felt like the first time I flew. I worried and I worried and then I took the client to my consulting room, sat down, talked her through the procedures and fastened my seatbelt, knowing that if we crashed we crashed, but I felt a faith that we'd stay up. Of course a plane does not stay up on faith, it takes a fair bit of fuel and technology, but I believe that the faith helps, at least it makes it more enjoyable. I believe it's the same in counselling. A blind faith in one's ability would be dangerous, a faith in one's client that ignored real risk would be negligent. In place there needs to be boundaries, training, supervision, and my own physical, emotional, spiritual and social nourishment. However at the same time as all the necessary underpinning of my practice I also have a faith in my clients, seeing them as people of potential and great courage. As a Quaker I'd say I 'see that of God within them', as a follower of Humanistic therapy I'd say I see the potential for growth that all humans have.

Maybe I make this sound sort of happy and rather naïve. I know I could have died several times in my illness, I know people who did die, I know clients who do well and then slide back. I certainly know people whose potential seems to be crushed. Perhaps what I believe is that without faith in healing there is very little help. With faith, with God, with what you will, there is more hope. And like with the flying, to live in hope, is a lot more enjoyable.

Amanda Headley-White is a trustee of APCMH and a Quaker. She works as a counsellor and administrator for a small counselling and psychotherapy centre in Bristol.

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www.pastoral.org.uk

Mental Health Training Conference for Pastoral Carers / Church Leaders

to help churches respond to Mental Health needs in their communities:

24th October 2008

Diocesan House, 36 Causton St SW1P 4AU

Jack Maple: Community Ministry Advisor:

Tel: 0207 932 1122

Email: jack.maple@london.anglican.org

The Darkest Days

Jane Flynn writes about depression, & finds comfort in Scripture:

We have all experienced at some time or another the feeling of being sad and "down" and whilst most of us get over it fairly soon, for some, the sadness persists. People who are sad for a prolonged period of time may be diagnosed as depressed.

There are many factors causing depression: Guilt, burn out, environment, anger, loss or bereavement and even the normal stress of daily life can lead to depression, and some people seem more prone to it than others.

The Bible does not mention "depression" as such, but it does describe, on many occasions, people who show all the outward signs of being depressed: Job in Job 3; Moses in Numbers 11:10-23; Jonah in Jonah 4. God's great servant Elijah was so depressed at one time that he was suicidal and went to hide himself and die.

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the tree and fell asleep. (1 Kings 19: 3-5)

God sent an angel to Elijah, not to criticise or moralise about the situation, but with a choice. Elijah himself had to make the decision, eat the food provided or die. Notice that God dealt first with the physical needs of his hunger and fatigue, and then gave him a new direction.

Many of David's psalms show he spent times in depths of depression:

CHRIST IS THE MORNING STAR, WHO, WHEN THE DARKNESS
OF THIS WORLD IS PAST, BRINGS TO HIS SAINTS THE PROMISE
OF THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND O-PENS EVERLASTING DAY.

St Bede.

Food for Thought

Once upon a time there was an island where all the feelings lived; Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all the others including Love.

One day the news broke that the island was going to sink to the bottom of the ocean. So all the feelings prepared their boats to leave. Love wanted to stay to preserve the island paradise until the last possible moment. But when the island was almost overwhelmed, Love decided it was time to leave. She began looking for someone to ask for help. Just then Richness was passing by in a grand boat.

Love asked, "Richness, Can I come with you on your boat?" Richness answered, "I'm sorry, but there is a lot of silver and gold on my boat and there would be no room for you anywhere."

Then Love decided to ask Vanity for help who was passing in a beautiful vessel. Love cried out, "Vanity, help me please." "I can't help you", Vanity said, "You are all wet and will damage my beautiful boat."

Love saw Sadness passing. Love said, "Sadness, can I come with you." Sadness answered, "Love, I'm sorry, but I just need to be alone now."

Then Love saw Happiness. Love cried out, "Please take me with you." But Happiness was so pre-occupied feeling good that he didn't hear.

Love began to cry. Then she heard a voice say, "Come Love, I will take you with me." It was an old voice. Love felt so overjoyed that she forgot to ask for a name. When they arrived on land the stranger went on his way. Love realised how much she owed him.

Love then found Knowledge and asked, "Who was it that helped me?" "It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"But why did Time help me when no one else would?" Love asked.

Knowledge smiled and with deep wisdom and sincerity answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how great Love is."

contributed by Caroline Homan.

Happy Birthday APCMH Croydon!

In June 1989 the Croydon branch of APCMH held its first AGM following a year in which the original steering group had become a fully operational Branch of APCMH. The organisation itself came into being in June 1988.

Dennis Murray who was then the Development Officer of APCMH had identified Croydon as potentially fruitful ground for a new branch of APCMH and so it has proved to be.

Contact was made with the local churches with varied success. Some churches at that time honestly believed that there were no mental health issues in their congregations but others came forward with volunteers and some financial support.

The early intention of the Association was to provide a befriending service. Befriending is of course essentially pastoral care for the individual in which the befriender comes alongside a person in distress and walks with them along the road. The image of the road is still used by The Croydon APCMH because as we say in our leaflet " 'the road is long with many a winding turn'----- Let's walk together".

In the end, or rather at the beginning, the model of pastoral care adopted by Croydon was the Drop-In; a place where people can meet without formality and stigma, where they can be supported and offer support to each other.

A significant event which was key to the development of the organisation was the appointment of Andrew Wilson as Chaplain to Warlingham Park Hospital. Croydon is famous for developing the role of the Community Psychiatric Nurse; it should also be famous for the first Community Mental Health Chaplain. Andrew's work from the start included working in the community. Andrew became a key member of the Association and has provided support, love, and practical and spiritual leadership to all involved with organisation and especially to its

development workers, for almost all its twenty year history. The Association has increasingly become an arm of the Chaplaincy in the community, with our spiritual home in the beautiful chapel at the Bethlem Hospital.

The first Drop-In started in the URC church hall in South Croydon but moved quite quickly to the South Croydon Centre at the back of St Peter's Church Hall. This Drop-In, known as the Rainbow club, is still open every Monday evening welcoming between 25-30 people each week. There are two members who come each week who have been coming from the beginning and our Drop-In worker was one of the original steering group members. Some volunteers have been coming almost as long. In these days of constant change and innovation people value continuity and reliability, especially when life is difficult and confusing.

The Association has grown since those early days. In 1995 APCMH was able to appoint its first development worker, Mary Hillier, when a successful application was made to Croydon Social Services for money from Joint Finance - a pot of money which enabled many small voluntary organisations to grow.

With the acceptance of financial support from Social Services came a tension. The organisation needed to show that it was open to all people whatever their faith and also to those whose world view is secular. There was a need to be true to the underlying Christian ethos of the organisation as well as being open to all.

The Drop-Ins have never been a place for overt religious practice although always places where Christ's instruction to 'love thy neighbour' has been the guiding ethos. APCMH tries in all it does to reflect the love of Christ in a way that includes all people, whatever spiritual path they are on.

Now, twenty years after the founding of the Association, there are three Drop-Ins and a women's Drop-In. In addition there is a programme of Healing and Creativity with workshops in relaxation, writing and art. These have been made possible by a bequest from Margaret Baylis, a dear friend and benefactor of the Association. Also there is the New Horizons project, where volunteers support residents in a rehabilitation unit to visit a local cafe and many workshops and training activities. All this work is only possible because of the work of our many volunteers.

- * Creating or renovating urban green areas (such as 'Adopt-a-Space' schemes whereby a group adopts, maintains, improves, and makes accessible a specific location)
- * Installing signposts to encourage community environmental awareness (such as clear signs in the countryside for ramblers)
- * Recycling projects, such as furniture, glass, and white goods (for example, reclaiming discarded furniture and doing it up to sell)
- * Community agricultural projects linking gardeners and producers with local selling opportunities
- * Producing artwork in public places and in enclosed spaces (for example, mosaics in parks, sculpture in hospitals)
- * Exchange schemes giving opportunities to experience and learn about other environments and community activity
- * Learning new environmental skills (such as making garden furniture, dry stonewalling, thatching)

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. Mind works to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress by:

- * Advancing the views, needs, and ambitions of people with mental health problems
- * Challenging discrimination and promoting inclusion
- * Influencing policy and achieving equal rights through campaigning and educating
- * Inspiring the development of quality services which reflect expressed need and diversity

Mind's vision is of a society that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively, and with respect. Mind stands up and speaks out on the real issues that affect daily lives. They provide information and support, campaign to improve policy and attitudes, and develop services with local Mind associations.

Many thanks to all our contributors for their offerings.

Steve



At last! Some good news about money going INTO helping those with mental health issues! If 'small is beautiful', this will be a boon to many. This is from the MIND web site and tells of an initiative where sufferers, the local community and the environment are together in an Win - Win situation. (see: <http://www.mind.org.uk/>)

The Ecominds funding scheme

Ecominds is an open grant programme run by Mind as an award partner of the Big Lottery Fund. The programme has £7.5 million to distribute to around 125 new and existing projects around England focusing on mental health and the environment over the next five years.

The purpose of Ecominds

Ecominds aims to help people with direct experience of mental distress become involved in environmental projects that improve mental and physical health, and local communities.

Ecominds will help reduce the stigma surrounding mental distress and help create a society that treats people with experience of mental distress fairly, positively, and with respect.

There is growing evidence demonstrating that green exercise provides substantial benefits for health and well being.

Examples of projects

- * Community horticultural and agricultural projects
- * Walking and rambling groups
- * Wildlife habitat or other site creation or renovation
- * Clearing open spaces for community use
- * Graffiti removal projects
- * Environmental protection (such as rebuilding a flood plain)

Our volunteers come from all walks of life; from every age group and many communities. Many have had their own personal experience of mental distress and many of them care for a person dear to them who is distressed. They bring a variety of skills and abilities to the work some stay for six months before they move on, often to take up paid work or take qualifications for which volunteering with the Association has been valuable experience, and others have been with us for many years.

On the journey through the 20 years since its foundation The Croydon APCMH has changed its name first from APCMI to APCMH - a change from 'illness' to 'health' representing an important change in the way mental health is viewed. It says firmly that mental health affects us all. The second change was from the Croydon branch to the Croydon APCMH in 2002 reflected the growing independence of the work in Croydon.

In 2008 the Croydon APCMH stands at a crossroads; changes in the wider context of Croydon mental health services may bring opportunities and challenges. The Association was founded to meet the spiritual needs of people living with mental health issues and whatever it does it must stay true to this founding ethos.

Sue Albery

020 8665 6718 // www.croydon-apcmh.co.uk

Help is at Hand

Carers: www.carersinthecommunity.org.uk

Maytree (sanctuary for the suicidal) 020 7263 7070
www.maytree.org.uk

MIND: www.mind.org.uk

Rethink Advisory Service: 02089 746814
www.rethink.org

Samaritans: 08457 909090

Saneline: 08457 678000

Young Minds Parents' Information Service: 08000 182138

That Special You

I once asked a friend whether she had enjoyed her vacation abroad. 'The trip was terrific', she replied, 'but unfortunately I had to take myself along.' Like it or not, you're stuck with your own self as a constant companion on life's journey.

How do you feel about the self that travels along with you? What words would you choose to describe its distinctive qualities? Curious? Friendly? Honest?

You carry your self-image everywhere you go, and it serves like a camera lens that filters all your experiences.

For we don't see the world as it really is, but always in terms of who we are.

And it makes a world of difference whether you view life's voyage through a dark lens of self-regret, or through a bright lens of self-respect.

Seeing yourself as special doesn't depend on being young or smart, healthy or wealthy. Feeling good about yourself doesn't depend on what you say or what you weigh. You probably know people who have lots of good fortune, but still are plagued with self-doubt. And surely you've met others burdened with problems who still seem filled with self-confidence.

It isn't what you have or what you do, but *how you react to who you are* that causes the greatest pleasure or pain. Shakespeare observed that *nothing in the world is good or bad but thinking makes it so*.

And this includes yourself.

Since self-esteem is merely a state of mind, you *are* special, as long as you believe it.

As a clinical psychologist, I'm continually amazed at the diversity of human nature. No two of us are alike. Each self is exceptional, simply because it's unique: a one-of-a-kind truly singular sensation. Your own rare combination of qualities is interwoven like an elegant quilt with many intricate pieces arranged in a perfect pattern.

Dr Rita Freedman, from her book That Special You.

Published in 1994 by Peter Pauper Press, Inc.

Quoted with permission & thanks

For those who can claim a Christian faith, assurance that you are not just special because you are unique, but because God loves you. Here, the prophet Isaiah speaks to a people devastated by defeat, with lost hope and lost identity, and exiled in a foreign land.

(Quoted from 'The Message'):

Isaiah 43:1-4

*But now, God's Message,
the God who made you in the first place, Jacob,
the One who got you started, Israel:*

*"Don't be afraid, I've redeemed you.
I've called your name. You're mine.*

*When you're in over your head, I'll be there with you.
When you're in rough waters, you will not go down.
When you're between a rock and a hard place,
it won't be a dead end—*

*Because I am God, your personal God,
The Holy of Israel, your Saviour.
I paid a huge price for you:
all of Egypt, with rich Cush and Seba thrown in!*

*That's how much you mean to me!
That's how much I love you!
I'd sell off the whole world to get you back,
trade the Creation just for you.*