

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

Number 46

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This Newsletter is issued by a growing association of people who are, in conjunction with the Foundation for Community Encouragement of the USA (FCE), committed to developing community building in Britain beyond that originally described in Dr. M. Scott Peck's book, 'The Different Drum'.

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Extract from "The Broken Tower"

And so it was I entered the broken world
To chase the visionary company of love,
Its voice an instant in the wind
I know not whither hurled
But not for long to hold each desperate choice.

by Hart Crane (from frontispiece of "Streetcar Named Desire")

From the Editor

This is the first edition of the newsletter that I have actually edited, and I hope you find the contents as interesting as I have done. It really seems to be a bumper issue, and I am most grateful to those of you who have sent in articles. I have had to compact things a little but I hope the sense of what you wanted to say has been retained. I already have some articles promised for next time, but please remember that copy has to be with me by June 13th at the very latest, and if it is a long article it does help if it can come to me electronically. Thanks also to those of you who have written with your good wishes for my editorship - I hope that I can make a positive contribution to the CBiB network.

If you are reading this but have not yet sent in your subscription cheque I would be grateful if you would do so very soon. Details are on the back page. I am hoping that all the editions this year will be at least 8 pages long, and full of interest!

Other services

Besides looking after the newsletter, I have recently taken over the DATABASE for all CBiB contacts. Initial enquiries should still go to Anthony (details on the back page) but you will have seen that the response card in the recent mailing came back to me. Next time I hope we will be able to do the mailing so that those of you who are newsletter subscribers will not be asked to return a card (because we know you are still interested in receiving CBiB information).

If any of you are doing something for CBiB and would like some help with ADMINISTRATION I may be able to assist you, so do give me a call. I have various software packages and a newish computer, and if they can be used to serve the network I would be pleased.

I have created a complete LIST of all the articles in the past newsletters right from the very first, with a brief summary of what each one is about. This has given me an insight into some of the struggles that CBiB has been going through. If there is enough interest I would be happy to publish the list as a

supplement. I am also planning to photocopy a complete set of newsletters for the records. Are any of you interested in the list (the cost is minimal), or in a set of back copies (the cost of which would be between £10 and £25 depending on how many sets are asked for in total)?

Hope in the Cities

I have been sent a brochure on 'Hope in the Cities', which is a 'partnership of people from different backgrounds and races whose aim is to make Britain a home for all who live in it.' It is an initiative of MRA (Moral Rearmament), which I do not know much about.

One group write 'There was an early realisation that before the group could go out on the streets, we had to form a community of our own. This process has taken honest, and sometimes painful discussions, encouraging the individual to look at life from the perspective of others. Our aim is to identify how each person in society can realise their full potential.'

Has anyone come across this before, or indeed been in contact with any other groups that are trying to build community in Britain from any other perspective. If so I would love to hear from you.

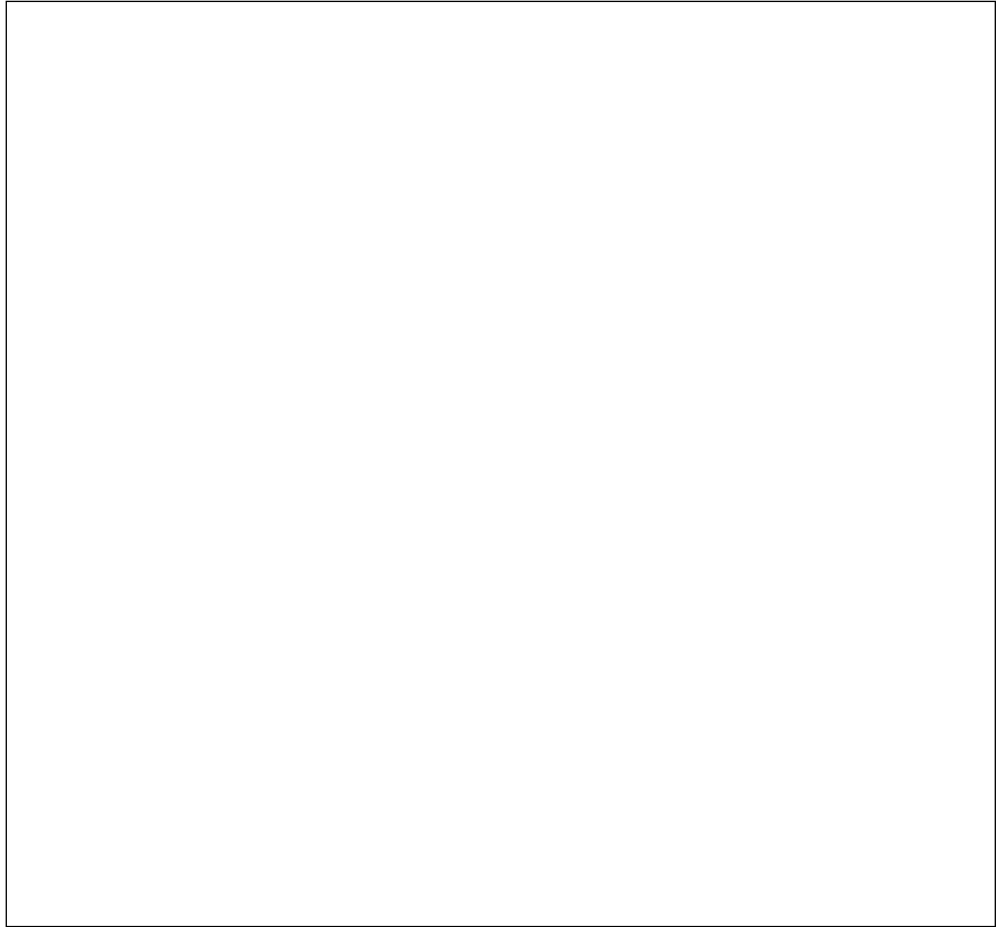
Request for information

I have been asked by a group who meet regularly to guide them towards any publications (besides M. Scott Peck's books) which 'point people to the essential qualities and attitudes necessary to live happily in community'. They would like know more, and to use them in their personal and group development.

Being new to CBiB and the community movement I was unable to help, but do any of you have books or pamphlets that you can recommend? If you can send me the details, a sentence or two about what they contain, and why you think they are useful, I will publish them in the newsletter.

Can you Draw?

Do any of you have an artistic gift which you



Hereford happened. As a sponsor/participant that was my primary goal and on-going anxiety. In the process I learned a hell of a lot about the relationship between hard work and trust - that both are important and that trusting is sometimes actually the more difficult.

As a member of the facilitator training group I hadn't sat as a participant in a public CB circle for a long time. The perspective

shift was wonderful. The weekend touched me in quite personal ways as well as sparking off thoughts about the CB model as seen from the "other side". All in all by the end of the weekend I felt very grateful for the experience and relieved that it was over.

Michael Jacobs

Would any other participants like to send in a

Dear Editor

Having recently received the March newsletter I was struck by the letter from Christine Short titled 'Sadness & Pain'.

Firstly I was able to empathise with her feelings. I too felt a degree of concern, that could have been described as a troubling of the spirit at the apparent exclusiveness of 1. Men behaving Boldly and 2. CBW for church going Christians.

However on reflection, and this is I guess my 'secondly', I felt that my feelings were based on a misunderstanding of the purpose and direction of community building.

For a long time I agonised over the issues of exclusivity and inclusivity. As a follower of Jesus, who claims the exclusive right to be all inclusive, I struggled with my own position. Emptiness was painful, being prepared to accept the integrity of others to follow their own paths is not the same as believing they are right in doing so. However I took some time to arrive at that conclusion. Therefore the right to share my own life experience in the gentle hope of inspiring someone else without threatening their integrity as an individual was, and still is, a tension I live with daily.

I feel that we have that same tension with events. Community building by the very nature of the experience must be inclusive, yet as an organised event they are exclusive whether we like to face the fact or not. A certain 'type' of person is attracted to an 'open' event. These may be individuals on a spiritual search attracted through Scott Peck books. Alternatively they may be friends, soul mates, and fellow travellers of the organisers; they may be all of one company, as is often the case in America's FCE; they may be all drawn from a similar social class or educational standard. Indeed Scott Peck points out in 'A world waiting to be born' that attendance at American events was largely from white, middle class America.

To seek to develop community building it seems to me that we must live with the tension of exclusive targeting which will, with all honesty and integrity encompass as wide a

sphere of social/religious/cultural groupings as possible. This means that we adopt a degree of realistic honesty. If we hope to affect the church, let's 'market' (please forgive the word I can't think of another) in a way that makes the church want to be part, if a prison then let's be accessible to prison authorities, if companies then let's demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the CBE and so on. We need to communicate within the framework of those we hope to see enriched.

Thus as a result of the apparent exclusivity inclusivity is glimpsed, whilst integrity is maintained. My own understanding of inclusivity was I suspect too general and denied the exclusive appeal of CBW's already in action. The confronting of this has enabled me to move to a new standpoint where I am able to rejoice with the men and Christians attending these two events as they move toward an experience that will both enrich and build their lives. I may be an onlooker, but I would be only excluded by my own prejudices. As it is I sing with a light heart, included by my common hope, and naive enough to look for the best.

David Tomlinson

*Greenhill, Torrisdale, Campbeltown, Argyll,
PA28 6QT. Tel: 01583 431754.*

An Open letter to Christine

Dear Christine

I am very aggravated by your letter in the last Newsletter expressing "deep sadness and pain" over the forthcoming events for men and Christians. I am irked by your unwillingness to communicate exactly what your problem is with these events. I feel manipulated to defend something I hold dear, and I feel it is rather devious of you to hint at some criticism publicly without being clear why you are disappointed with CBiB.

CB workshops for particular interest groups or specific organisations is nothing new or a departure from CB philosophy. CB is a group dynamics technique to enable groups - random or specific ones - to build trust and understanding and enable them to communicate

and carry out action effectively together.
Yours, Andy Wood (co-organiser of 'Men Behaving Boldly' CB event)
16 Spencer Street, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, MK13 0DW. Tel: 01908 222493.

More from Christine

I wish to express my thanks to all those who have replied to my letter in the March issue of the CBiB newsletter - in no way did I intend to criticise the two events, just to express my pain

What is "Community"? I believe this is a word we use all too loosely today in the British Isles. In 1994 in my search for a satisfactory definition I was led to read "The Different Drum", by Scott Peck and published in 1987. I was confronted by a serious challenge to all committed Christians throughout Europe as my search led me beyond "The Different Drum" onto Peck's later book "A World Waiting to be Born", published in 1993. In this latter book Peck tells many stories of how community building has been applied in America in various work environments - industrial, commercial, professional and also in the voluntary sector, including church organisations.

Avidly reading "A World Waiting to be Born" as a Christian worshipper and full-time provincial lay-minister, I excitedly turned page after page seeking examples where this had been effectively applied in a church setting in America. It was not until I reached the foot of page 351 that my search was rewarded - but what a reward! Peck writes "Most churchgoers simply do not have the time to "do" community at church."

Initially I was disappointed, then challenged by this seemingly damning indictment of an institution first inspired by the Spirit and built upon the experience of community which probably existed around those 1st century Galilee campfires at which rested and ate, talked and slept the band of disciples with their servant-leader Jesus.

at not understanding how they were acceptable. Finding it difficult to address an audience, I preferred to be challenged and supported on a personal level - that has certainly happened and my education has been enhanced thank you. My thoughts and good wishes go with you on these two events.

Yours Christine Short
46 Chatsworth Avenue, Carlton, Nottingham NG4 3JL

Happily Peck, referring still to the American experience, goes on to write at the foot of page 352 "Here and there a church does work seriously toward community ... This "tithing of persons" might well prove sufficient to achieve extraordinary results in God's service on behalf of the Church as a whole."

This suggestion of Peck's has in turn inspired me to take a deliberate and risky step to challenge those of us in the British Isles who call ourselves Christians to come together to learn through experience the concept of "building community from emptiness" and to discover ways in which this process can be introduced to churches throughout these islands.

If you are interested to participate in this event please contact me at 19 Readers Way, Rhoose, South Glamorgan CF62 3HP (telex 01446 711569). "Churchgoing" Christians is the descriptive phrase for participants which has been chosen by the planning group, to ensure all those baptised Christians, of whatever denomination, may feel included in this invitation, regardless of the degree of frequency or regularity of their church attendance. The cost of the three day residential workshop will be £165 for full-board. There is a limited bursary fund available to assist those whose attendance otherwise would be prevented on financial grounds. It is on October 7th-9th 1996 at Hothorpe Hall Christian Conference Centre, Theddingworth, Leicestershire, England. There

After participating in the workshop in London at the end of March, I've come away with one of the most intense experiences of real communication of my life.

Expectations

In coming to the workshop I was interested in Scott Peck's ideas and had been enthused through reading his books of a better way that things could be. I had had some experience of close community through contacts with religious communities in New Zealand, and was interested in finding out and experiencing more of this in my life. The phrase from the FCE about 'the glory of being human' echoed in my mind. The question of how to bring this vision to others was one that I wanted to ask.

What were we doing there? What happened? What did we take away? The workshop was an event complete in of itself. After meeting a new group of 50 people, with 3 days of intense communication I know less about them than almost any other group I've been a part of. I don't know what most of them do for a living, do for leisure, where they live or where they come from. But I have shared at a deep level with them and through their company and interaction I know more about myself. This is what I take from this time.

Chaos

The process of community was not what I expected. The chaos was far more unsettling than I anticipated. The emptiness, when we finally got there was more profound, and the sense of wonder at community was immense.

I found the workshop was very experiential. Little guidance was given after the introduction by the facilitators and I think that it could have been good to have been reminded of ground-rules and principles during the chaos. As a newcomer, during the workshop, especially in the chaos, I got caught up in the issues being raised, in the feelings being expressed and I found reflecting on the communications process and underlying attitudes difficult. The larger picture of what

we were doing and what we were about vanished. The difference between ' I ' statements and 'you' statements was startling. I had never really noticed the threat implied in blanket 'you' comments before.

Emptiness

When we (or more accurately I) got to emptiness, to a time of acceptance of the process, all the things that had been said at the start made sense. I often found, whilst waiting in the emptiness, if someone said something which I disagreed with, another member of the group would express the response I might make, usually rather more gently and eruditely than me. The difference between what was happening within me and where the group was at, the experience of fifty separate individuals also all being part of this strange entity of 'the group', was very odd. This all seemed to be a part of the emptiness, of having the space inside myself for others.

They say 'Careful about what you wish for; you might just get it' and I can agree with this! Wanting to be more in touch with myself emotionally, in the middle of the third day I found myself in tears. Feelings bubbling up inside, broke through into consciousness for the first time. These feelings were too strong to share then and I'm still working through them, but the gift of awareness of these feelings, given by the group from examples of honesty, authenticity and courage in facing their issues, of sharing their vulnerability, has allowed me to grow. The feeling of safety with very difficult emotional issues has allowed me to lower my own internal boundaries.

So did I get what I came for? The answer has to be a loud "Yes" but I certainly didn't expect the form it came in. To build community with others I have to take responsibility for myself. It seems to be primarily an internal, not an external activity. The glory of being human was amply demonstrated and leaves me wanting more of this real way of living.

Matthew Dodwell

In a personal letter (in place of the old impersonal FCE guidelines leaflet) which arrived shortly before the event, the facilitators, Colin Harrison, Michael Jacobs and Anne Monger, prepared us for their new approach to a CBW. "The CBW takes place over three days. In the past this has been divided into a two day community building experience, with the entire group gathered in a large circle, followed by a 'workshop' day, reflecting on the experience. However, in the March event we aim to be responsive to the needs of the group, and will create a more flexible structure. The process of building community may be interwoven with periods of reflection, discussion, presentation or small group activity. There will be time to ask questions. There will be time to try and make sense of our individual and collective experience, and to look at how community building can and does apply to day-to-day living. In this process we respect the knowledge and insight of all the members of the group."

The experience was not a presentation of the FCE toolkit or package, as the CBWs based on the American manual have always struck me. But something which, for me, came alive, growing uniquely with the group's progress and needs.

Reflection

I particularly noticed and liked the fact that the facilitators encouraged our reflective process from the first day, by incorporating a brief reflective review (dots to express warm or cold in relation to the group) at the end of each day.

This also introduced a choice to leave the big circle to enhance our learning, initially to do quite a small task as an individual. Community building time was generously spread over the three days, with several opportunities within that time to experience making a choice to leave big circle ritual community building to do something else - transition to tasks, smaller groups, time constraints, and group reflection.

After lunch on the second day the facilitators invited us to take time in small

groups to look at "*when I have felt most vulnerable and what response did I receive*". In the big circle afterwards, I felt that this experience in the small group, shifted what had felt to me like an endless labour, that seemed not to have progressed, and drew more people in to the process. (Later I heard mixed accounts of the experience of these small groups.)

A couple of people didn't want to let go of time in the large circle: how the facilitators accepted and heard them, and how those individuals eventually decided to move into the small groups, made a positive learning experience for me. And still we had more than a whole day for big circle time if we needed it. I was able to deal much more constructively with transition between large and small groups, without the imposed loss or dilemma about separating from the large circle of the old three day model.

The Third Day

In the first session on the third day, without imposing a split into small groups, the facilitators drew together our experience of some of the characteristics of stages of building community, drawing examples from participants - very much as in an FCE three-day CBW but without the strangeness and disconnectedness of the rift into small groups I've always associated with that session in the past.

Most brilliant of all, as far as I was concerned, was the facilitators' commitment to respond to participants' questions. The question - and sense of disappointment - which so often has gone unexpressed during events and unaddressed in the past, only to be heard in grumbles afterwards - of *why do the facilitators not intervene or give more guidance?* - was very clearly and convincingly asked, and movingly heard and responded to by the facilitators. This had the effect of bringing to the whole group's attention some people's disappointment in some aspects of the group and individuals in it, the group being abused by individuals, laying responsibility

with the facilitators to intervene in something that participants new to the process might not perceive as abuse. I felt afterwards the group's ability to build community had gained considerably from having heard these people speak and be heard with great respect by the facilitators, in the question and answer format.

How the facilitators responded, guided and interacted with the group felt good to me. We did not focus a great deal on masks or obstacles as in the FCE manual exercises, but deepened our experience of community as a group. I guess that for many people at this CBW for a first experience of CB, these three days will have equipped them with a much greater and deeper grasp of how they engage with the dynamics and stages of building community, than the FCE package ever did.

By some mystery the circle was smaller than in London usually - very welcome to me. The fee for participants was high but more than usual concessions had been made available.

Emergence

Afterwards, Colin nudged me and commented

very quietly, "Well, I guess that was a CBX*?" "Yes, I've been thinking so too," I whispered. I really appreciated the facilitators' courage and the extra, and exhausting, care they put into this event. I also feel that what has seemed to me (from the holding group) like a long inward period of gestation in the facilitation training group has borne immensely rewarding fruit with the emergence of our British facilitators co-leading workshops together without facilitators or manuals from FCE. I feel very privileged to have joined in CBiB's development during this time in the last few years. A birth of a unique baby, a flowing spontaneous live event rather than the three day FCE package, I sense reflects work among facilitators in the training group supporting each other's development.

I feel sure that three day CB events will continue to evolve, and facilitators will continue to gain more experience. I felt very glad to be a participant at this event.

Ruth Goffe

*I wrote about this in Newsletter No 37,

Newcomers to CBiB may be confused about the facilitation training group, leader training group and several variations of that name. This is the ongoing group of CB ("Community Building") facilitators in this country that came together at a CBiB training event held in Brentwood in 1993. As well as supporting each other's growth as CB facilitators, and the development of CB in this country, those continuing in that ongoing group take responsibility for discerning facilitators from within the group for our British CB events.

In America, I believe that people taking the facilitator role at CB events more usually call themselves leader. In Britain, facilitator and leader are both currently in use, according to individual persuasion. I hear the group itself

also referred to as the training group, Brentwood group, or, since the joint meeting, learning group. (This is my personal understanding - and I am not in that group.)

Ruth

CBE stands for "Community Building Experience", which provides an opportunity to build community in a large group over two days. In a "Community Building Workshop", or CBW, a third day is added so that not only can participants experience the building of community but they can also learn about the process through discussion and reflection.

Peter

It was with a full range of mixed, and somewhat confused, emotions that I arrived at Tracy's house (hopefully for the last time - I'm holding the vision, Tracy!) on Friday evening.

In January I had tendered my resignation from the group - feeling that I didn't belong there, and that I was unable to put myself forward to co-lead another workshop after Edinburgh last year. After I resigned a whole host of hitherto unexplored feelings rose to the surface about that leadership experience, that I had unknowingly kept at bay. In beginning to explore those feelings, with my counsellor and in a letter to my American co-leader, I began to realise that there may still be a place for me in the group, and that that was where I needed to take my feelings about my leadership experience.

Being a member of this group has not always been easy for me (what an understatement!) - it is a place where I get stretched beyond my limits over and over, so that I question again and again whether or not I can do it. All the projections I have ever held seem to find a niche there and, in the two and a half years of the group's life, I find I am exploring, probing and talking about everything I need to, in order to be known and to bring myself more fully into the group.

It was with deep pleasure that I found, particularly during the Saturday morning, that the group had become a place where I could SAFELY bring more of myself than ever before!

I personally had a huge tussle with which of my stuff was "personal" and needed to be dealt with privately and which was the group's, to be dealt with collectively. I realised that I had kept a large part of myself out of the group, because I felt I "should" deal with it privately - whereas, of course, sharing feelings like isolation, inadequacy, failure and jealousy resonates with other people in the room, and enables those parts to be present. Of course, I am realising that this is a two-way street - that my personal realisations inform the group in its process, and that the group's realisations

inform me in my own process. This is not a therapy group, but my God a hell of a lot of growing seems to me to happen.

This weekend the leader training group became for me the safe place that I had been wanting since its inception. Unfortunately, there were only twelve of us there, and there is a part of me that worries that that means that the learnings won't be carried over, but there is another part of me that has seen over and over again in this setting, that learnings do get carried over, regardless of who is present. It has been a magical process.

I have often cried, or been otherwise upset in the group, but this time I felt I was able to be truly vulnerable in a more open way (it was a qualitative thing) and was remarked upon by several others. Its all very "chicken and egg" because I'm not sure how much the group had changed or whether my new-found and delightful openness in my relationship had spilled over. I guess it was a bit of both.

The people who arrived for the final session on Saturday said that the different atmosphere was palpable and enjoyable. And, at the end of the weekend, someone said something like the group had become adolescent (and that maybe when we reached adulthood we would handle responsibility, decision making and money better [or words to that effect]!).

I do feel that the group has matured immensely AND we didn't leave enough time to finish all our business satisfactorily, and that was very frustrating for some. I only hope that what we have gained, in our awareness as a group of people seeking better communication, is able to be offset against the frustration.

We do, at last (for me anyway), really seem to be learning (I have my fifth form teacher's voice ringing in my ears about "not resting on your laurels") and I want to rest on these laurels for a time and feel proud that I have had some small part to play in this group maturing. Thank you to everyone else in the organisation that has been a part of my own personal evolution and growth.

Notes of our February meeting got lost at Armando's old address on their way to the last newsletter. Here they are, originally by Anthony, amplified for the newsletter by Ruth, with abbreviations by Cliff for this report....

17/18 February, Taunton

At this meeting there were six of us: Lindy Bailhache, Erica von Boltstern, Alrisha Gillies, Ruth Goffe, Cliff Jordan and Anthony Kirke. Selma Khan could not be present, and Aileen Ingham and David Byrne had decided to withdraw from the group.

We looked at:

- Venue for a JOINT MEETING between members of the holding group and of the facilitation training group to take place in March.
- NETWORK GATHERING: The gist of our careful consideration of this *did* reach the last newsletter. Selma had made a great contribution to enabling this, (but it still hasn't come to fruition).
- The NEWSLETTER: We welcomed Peter Cooper's offer to take over this responsibility. Many thanks to Chrissie Sugden for all the work she has done over the last two years. A considerable surplus had accumulated in the newsletter account, and subscription renewals were due in by beginning of April. We agreed that Chrissie transfer £500 to CBiB (national) account. Peter Cooper will take over responsibility for the newsletter account and become a signatory. Lindy and Erica will be alternative signatories.
- PUBLIC EVENTS: we gave some attention to March Hereford CBE and London CBW. Michael Jacobs, Hereford organiser, had put in place very thorough local publicity. Bookings seemed in line with our experience of other first time provincial smaller town events held to attract local participation - i.e. fairly slow and hard to predict. In anticipation of the possibility of Hereford not breaking even, Ruth had discussed pairing Hereford and London CBW (taking place two weeks later) with Tom Deevy, London organiser, who had responded that he will make the likely (may be small)

surplus on London available to support an event such as Hereford. We agreed to accept this fall back measure.

Both Hereford and London events have now successfully taken place, with a circle of 28 in Hereford, and of 45 in London.

•LINK AND SUPPORT TO EVENTS: Lindy volunteered to be holding group support and link person for Edinburgh* (May) and Cliff for the Men's Event (June).

•AMERICAN LIAISON: We discussed difficulties which have arisen in CBiB over who is liaising with American facilitators, and over jobs needing to be handed over from one person to another.

Anthony would liaise with Colin Harrison about ES (Ellen Stephens) coming over to facilitate Autumn events.

•NATIONAL MAILING: Ruth offered to set about preparatory work (liaising with events organisers for material and to share costs, creating a printed list of events, spring cleaning the mailing list), towards sending out publicity for events from May to approx. early Autumn. This to be sent out early April. Later events will need another mailing: publicising, in one mailing, all known events over a huge period has only served to dilute the response to imminent events.

This has now happened, heroically stuffed by Alrisha, Cliff, and Ruth: the mailing went to approx. 1500 people.

•We recognised a need to address in detail how the holding group takes responsibility for the FINANCES of CBiB.

During this meeting Erica arrived at the decision that it was time for her to leave the group. She is prepared to carry on doing basic bookkeeping on the CBiB national account, making clear that the holding group must decide how financial responsibility for CBiB can dovetail with her bookkeeping role.

We scheduled an extra meeting in April to begin to focus on this, and to review the nature, tasks and purpose of the holding group and how we function.

Ruth

Cliff continues this account:

Since the February meeting Selma Khan has confirmed that she too has withdrawn from the holding group: there is a great deal else going on in her life.

9/10 March, Lower Rocks, Glastonbury

A joint meeting of members of the holding group and members of the leader training group took place: eleven sat in a circle, built community, and felt some of the fear and mistrust that impedes good communication between the two groups.

In the holding group we have long accepted that taking decisions is only a small part of our work, and this meeting reflected that. We had space to consider various issues, all of which deserve further reflection and discussion throughout CBiB.

Three broad areas emerged: *training, communications, power and authority*. We chewed them over a little...

Despite the lack of conclusion, I enjoyed the weekend a lot and got a lot out of it.

Over the next few days I was aware of far more phone communication than usual between holding group members: in this time, Alrisha Gillies and Lindy Bailhache decided to move out of the holding group.

This leaves Cliff Jordan, Ruth Goffe and Anthony Kirke: we met for a day on

12 April, in London

- We took a little time to get used to ourselves as a group of three - which feels very different from the group of 13 we started as! (at our first meeting after last year's network gathering).
- We acknowledged the London CBW as a significant event in CBiB's history - another step of independence from FCE in that it was the first CBW facilitated without a US-based facilitator.
- We remembered the importance of acknowledgement and appreciation of what is contributed to CBiB in many and various ways.
- Looking at Hereford and London events which had just taken place, we extracted two lessons:
 - that work put into an event in a new place takes time to bear fruit, many more people will attend once somebody else they know has done one;
 - that there is scope for more work to be put into press work, creating material that can

be used by papers and magazines to generate lots of interest at little financial cost. [*Any people out there with enthusiasm/experience for this?*]

- We confirmed that a network gathering is not happening at the end of May; and gave some time to each of the other planned events.
- We agreed that potential CB events shall not move from a list of *proposed but unconfirmed events* to a list of *finalised forthcoming dates* until the holding group is confident that they can really happen, which depends on the capacity of both the organiser and the holding group.
- In order to smooth out communications, we decided to ask the leader training group to adopt the practice that whoever is discerned to facilitate a specific event introduces themselves to the contact person for that event at the earliest opportunity. The holding group will continue to be responsible for supporting the event in all ways other than the actual facilitation.
- We decided to ask them also to include Cliff and Ruth in their mailings (Anthony is already a part of that group) that we may be better informed.

In both cases, we want to make it clear that these are requests and in no way intended to be understood as demands. *Cliff*

Ruth continues this account

- *EDINBURGH: Lindy had handed over her care for the Edinburgh CBW to Geri Moriarty, who is one of the facilitators for the event, and Geri had attended the Edinburgh organising group's planning meeting a day or two previously to create a link. We had not yet heard from her, but Ruth was poised to take over the role of holding group support and link person following Geri's personal visit, whenever Geri felt this to be appropriate.
- Anthony showed us his letter to Alex Sharratt, who is organising the residential event at OTHONA Community, suggesting that a third facilitator, if discerned, would be expected to pay for their place at the event. (Othona has a maximum of 40 in the circle and limited accommodation.)

We decided that he should bring this

suggestion to the facilitation training group so they would be aware of it when discerning facilitators for the event. He had not yet sent the letter to Alex, so we did not know her response; the facilitation training group were to meet the following weekend.

•Othona's situation brings up the need for us to look in more detail at THE EFFECTS for some events on the CBiB/event organisers' contract OF THREE RATHER THAN TWO FACILITATORS being discerned. Before introducing the practice of discerning three facilitators for an event the facilitator training group undertook to cover the costs of this decision. Three facilitators have been included at several events already without their places needing to be paid for. The budgeted fees for two facilitators had been split three ways, and the training fund had borne the cost of the third facilitator's expenses, thereby not costing the event any extra.

How the situation with Othona develops, where places are more limited, may help inform us, and we will return to this at a future meeting.

•We began to address various aspects of FINANCE: One implication of this year's schedule of twelve or so events is that if all the moneys going through each organiser's hands were combined in the eyes of Customs and Excise, we might be approaching the threshold for VAT REGISTRATION. By events being organised as financially separate entities, and signing contracts between CBiB and event organisers, we have hoped to establish a separation so that CBiB (national) clearly remains not liable for VAT accounting.

We decided it is time to take reliable advice about this whole area. *Has anyone out there got experience of VAT and accounting for non-profit associations?*

•CBI B'S (NATIONAL) ACCOUNT: Erica keeps a record of moneys in and out, but does not wish to chase people to pay what they have agreed, or to hold an overall responsibility for financial management of CBiB. While the whole area of finance needs more attention from us at our next meetings, we made one commitment to ourselves, to review CBiB's national income and expenditure by next

January, if not before.

•ADVANCE FUNDING of CBiB mailings, and advances to events organisers to pay initial expenses: Ruth shared some of her experience of funds raised from previous CB events over and above agreed payments to CBiB (national), being held on to locally. This both provided start up funds and security against costs and risks involved in putting on events, and had also served originally to reduce funds going through the national account. We realised that there could be a number of such deposits held locally by various people around the country against possible future activity.

Ruth proposed taking this opportunity to establish one SEED ACCOUNT for CBiB. We agreed that she will explore what can be gathered in. Money could then more predictably be available to any people needing a start up float when beginning to arrange an event, and hopefully also to cover the cost of national mailings, which are shared by the events involved, but can only be recouped later when bookings have come in.

These monies will be kept separate from the general CBiB (national) account. The seed account will require a custodian acting rather like a librarian, with the responsibility to keep a tag on money lent out and to gently chase it back in again, if necessary, as each event takes place.

•HOLDING GROUP: *We wish to be a larger group: we want to hear from anyone interested in working with us.* We also feel a need for an introduction process of some kind, but did not reach agreement on specifics.

We will meet again on 14 May, 6 July and in September.

Ruth

We met on Friday evening at Lower Rocke's, a beautiful old farmhouse near Glastonbury in Somerset. Present were Erica von Boltstern, Colin Harrison, Christopher Cooke, Geri Moriarty, Ruth Goffe, Alrisha Gillies, Anne Monger, Cliff Jordan, Lindy Baillache and Tracy Barr.

Sharing

After a shared meal we spent an hour in a circle, building community. This continued on Saturday morning, the group now joined by Jill Firth, and missing Anne Monger who was looking after her children.

Many issues and feelings were shared in this time, including missing those who weren't present - that their unique voices would be lost to us. There was a sense that there had been much resistance to coming, and a wondering about the nature of that resistance. Fear and lack of trust were acknowledged.

The native american concept 'syet' was introduced; doing something to the best of our current knowledge. Could we extend this to ourselves and to other CB work groups, now and in the past?

We looked at the concept that there are different rhythms in public CBE events and in ongoing community maintenance type groups. We began to become conscious of our own rhythms. We then broke for lunch (and a brief trip to the Chalice Well for some of us).

After lunch we became aware of a possible door opening before us - the doorway into tackling the issues and problems which CBIB faces. We began this process delicately, drawing images and writing key words and phrases which expressed our concerns, onto a large sheet of paper in the centre. These included:- energy draining away, why? Gaps and mis-communications between holding group and training group. Questions of power and authority in the organisation as a whole. Training group as subservient to holding group. How can we stop losing our history? How to hand over to new people? How to create a flow within our structure which allows movement all ways - group to group, new

people in, people moving on, etc. ... We questioned assumptions, and recognised resistances.

Ending the first day

In the final session we reviewed the day so far, acknowledging how far we had come since we gathered, and adding some missing pieces to the sheet of paper. These included questions around how we deal with being in groups of all leaders (or groups of all followers), also how we take care of our wounded. We recognised how difficult it has been for us, in many groups over many years, to bring the organisation into form. We wondered, "What's in it for me?" and looked at the question of ongoing development for all members of CBiB. We included local organisers into the frame, as well as ongoing groups.

We ended the day by beginning to look ahead to working in more depth with this material, starting to re-draw maps, define boundaries, etc. ... We recognised that the current map of CBiB (Gateway 1 etc.) is incomplete. We probably need separate and additional maps, one illustrating power/ authority/ responsibility structures; another illustrating the flow of communications.

The group re-gathered on Sunday morning, with Anne Monger in the group but not Jill Firth. We spent a short time re-connecting, sharing dreams and further reviewing the work we had done on Saturday. Geri and Christopher helped us to recognise that the issues could be seen in three categories - power & authority; communication; training.

We then separated into three small groups, each to work with one issue, with an agreement to meet again at 12.15 to share proposals or ideas. There was a lot of energy around this small group process.

The groups brought back the following:-

Training

- As an organisation we stop using the word 'training' and address the issue of 'opportunities for learning'
- We make a name change to the 'Facilitator Training Group' bank account as a symbol of

change.

- We hold a meeting to mark the transition from ‘training’ to ‘opportunities for learning’, to which we invite people who have undertaken look at facilitating, and others who have been developing other opportunities for learning. Its purpose would be:-
 - to hear about the experience of the leadership training group so far
 - to share information/ dreams/ needs/ ...
 - recognise & note what happens already & how it feels
 - how it can be carried forward

Communications

We recognised that there are many different aspects to this:-

- flow of information
- trust building/ personal information
- structured opportunities for learning (where the ideas or knowledge which needs to be communicated is so complex that it can only be done in such a context)
- one-to-one, particularly when one or the other need support

We looked at a model of how information communication happens typically at the moment ... A contacts B, who refers them to C, who personally asks D who goes back to A and perhaps does some interesting work with them (probably without telling B). What gets lost is any central knowledge of what is happening, and thus the process is not available to others in CBiB who could benefit. An image might look like this-

The group proposed that a better model would be for all communications to go through a central, clearly defined person, who can log and disseminate the process, thus- They noted that a group is not a person. Communicating with a group is all but impossible without a person as conduit or channel.

They also noted that network gatherings and joint meetings of both holding and training groups are essential to the building of trust and personal communications. They proposed some kind of regular rhythm to this - separate meetings - joint meeting - separate meeting - etc.

Power/Authority

The group came up with the following provisional map of the present state of affairs:

The training group:

- discerner facilitators for CBiB events
- provides facilitators and format for CBE/CBW
- makes known level/type of facilitation available
- works within time constraints

CB event organisers:

- initiate and organise specific CBEs/ CBWs

The holding group:

- is responsible to outside bodies for CBiB’s behaviour (i.e. legal/ financial obligations)
- supports event organisers
- tends to be responsive rather than initiatory

The group recognised lots of ‘grey areas’ around responsibility and authority.

Recommendations

- 1) In event of CB participants complaining
 - facilitator responsible for own conduct in event and for choosing limits of response afterwards.
 - complainant can go to a named person (customer care dept) who can deal with the complaint (e.g. refunds etc.)
- 2) Holding group asserts some choice over which/ how many events it supports and how to, when necessary, cancel events. It needs an overall view of finances/ facilitator availability/ publicity & energy.

Final thoughts

After lunch, we looked at the outstanding issue relating to facilitators refunding fees/ experimenting etc. and leaving unresolved personal issues in their wake. We shared in depth, including personal feelings about it, authority issues, whether there were adequate structures in place etc. We questioned whether or not there were fundamentals which we could rely on with one another in doing this work. A huge question!! One possible such fundamental might be - *If you want to be part of CBiB you need to commit to hang in through the difficulties and work through personal and other difficulties.*

We reached a deep place of agreement in

the recognition of how much we care - for the work and for the people in doing the work.

Finally we agreed to take all of this away for reflection and discussion both in our separate groups and with the wider network. We agreed a date for the next joint meeting - 18/19/20 October, but not a venue.

Colin Harrison

From Australian Community

Encouragement - gleaned from 'ACE Hi!' their newsletter... ACE is at a cross-roads. A member's workshop is being held 27-28 April to discuss their structure and plans, based on a 'White Paper'. They plan to hold an ACE community building meeting every month, and for some subgroups to materialise.

From Foundation for Community

Encouragement - from 'Communiqué' their newsletter... the international conference on "Emptiness" is July 25th-28th 1996 in Toronto, Canada. For details contact Sarah Martin (519/821-9364), or FCE (109 Danbury Road, Suite 8, Ridgefield CT 06877, USA).

From Laurence Brightbart - he would like to tell you all of his new address:- 177 Highgate, Heaton, Bradford BD9 5PU Tel:

01274 488657. He has recently been involved in starting The Foundation for Awakening Creativity, of which we may hear more in a future issue.

From Alrisha Gillies - au revoir to all of you I have sat with in circles. Please feel free to contact me via my mother's address especially if you are coming to Australia *c/o 60 Keats Ave, Bateau Bay, NSW 2261 Australia. Tel: 0061 (0) 43 324126*

From Margaret Walsh - we have had three group meetings so far, and each one has been deeper than the last. There is no meeting in June but we will be meeting from July onwards. (See the back page for details.)

From Ruth Goffe - I have a couple of hundred spare white lists of forthcoming events, as mailed out recently. If you can use

Taunton: New group. Contact Julia Forse 01823 257371

London: Both groups CB 2-6pm, bring lunch to share from 1pm if you wish, and a cushion. The South London group is no longer meeting. To connect with people who would like to build community regularly with others in South London contact Yvonne Poulson 0171 635 0181.

West Hampstead, North London - Second Sunday each month. New group: 'a seeking after deep communion with others'. Contact Margaret Walsh 0171 794 9158.

Muswell Hill, North London - Usually last Sunday each month. Contact Tom Deevy 0181 444 9764. (This is the long established group which has been meeting in Finsbury Park at Angelo's.)

Leamington Spa: First Monday in the month, 8pm. New members welcome. Prior attendance at a CB event necessary. Contact Tracy 01295 770367 or Debbie 01926 337 409.

Sheffield: Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 2301739.

North West England (including Darlington): First Sunday in the month. Road Less Travelled support group. Contact Indi Garcha 01325 468881.

Durham: Long established Road Less Travelled group. Fridays fortnightly. Contact Pat Watson 0191 388 8951.

General Enquiries

about Community Building in Britain or Community Building events:

Anthony Kirke, 125 Greenham Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 7JE Tel/Fax: 01635 47377

Newsletter

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Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the same address by 13th June 1996.

For convenience of personal contact, the address and telephone number of letter-writers will normally be published, unless other instructions are given. Contributions of any sort (articles, pictures, poems, letters etc.), and of any length, are welcome from all involved in any way with the CBiB network. While every effort will be made to reproduce items in full, please realise that the editor may have to shorten or alter them for publication.