

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

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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'.

In this issue:-

Details of forthcoming events.....	page 3
Sponsoring London events.....	pages 4-5
Community building in ordinary life.....	pages 6-8
Ongoing groups	page 6
Books for community builders.....	pages 7-8
Ongoing groups, and chaos.....	pages 8
Greenhill - the dream of a safe place.....	page 9
From the holding group.....	pages 10-13
News from abroad.....	page 13
An emerging new shape for CBiB?.....	pages 14-15
Resources available.....	page 15
ACE - "Community on purpose".....	page 16
Images of CBiB's development.....	pages 17-21
Men! We need you.....	page 22
The first Edinburgh CBW.....	page 17
The next edition.....	page 22
Details of local groups.....	page 24

From the Editor

Thanks for best wishes, and your comments on the previous edition. I am very encouraged by your response - and the interest many of you are showing in sending me information and articles. There are quite a few interesting issues addressed in this edition.

Resources

Particular thanks to those who sent in details of useful books etc. See Arthur French's article and the email I received from Jerry Hampton in Texas. Jerry is sending me a copy of his book on 'Ongoing groups' and has agreed that I could distribute it here in the UK. I have yet to determine the cost, but if you are interested could you please let me know? There is a separate section on resources which I plan to enhance as time goes on. If you have any suggestions they will be greatly appreciated.

Internet

For those of you into computers, I am able to receive text for the newsletter on 3.5 inch disks in almost any format (pure ASCII text preferred, but most word processors are OK). I am also able to receive email on PeterCBiB@aol.com, and this is perhaps the easiest way for me to receive text, and to acknowledge receipt. You may also be interested to know that I have begun to set up a World-Wide Web page under my own name which has some information about CBiB, and links to other community building resources on the web. I hope to expand this over time as a parallel source of information to the newsletter. The address is <http://members.aol.com/petercbib>.

Also on the internet, you may be interested to know that there is an on-line community building forum called mv2spk ("moved to speak"). I have subscribed to this for a few weeks and been impressed by what is contributed from around the world, although I have not yet contributed myself. If you want further information, please contact me via email.

The newsletter

I have been thinking, and talking with a few others, about the newsletter and where it fits

into the CBiB network. I hope to publish in the next edition more details about my thoughts in order to get your responses and reactions, but in the meantime do please send me your ideas or comments.

One idea I hope to initiate soon is the practice of having occasional editions with a separate section dedicated to a particular relevant subject. Each such edition will be edited jointly by one of you, who is particularly interested in the subject, and myself. We would give plenty of notice about the subject and when the edition is due to be published, and thereby will hopefully be able to generate lots of interesting and thought-provoking items.

Examples of the sort of subject I have in mind include:-

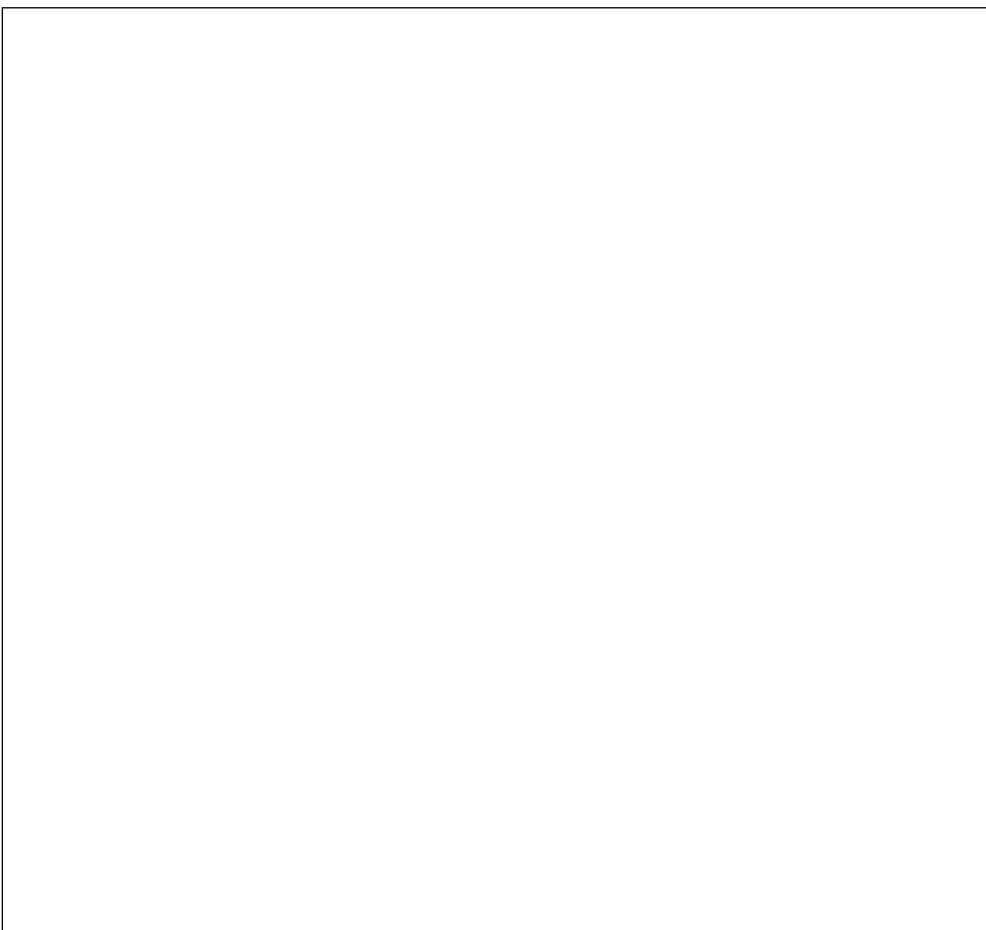
- CB in intentional communities
- Ongoing groups
- CB and religions
- How CB fits in with other similar techniques
- Visions for CBiB
- Use of CB in organisations
- The value of chaos
- CB and long-term committed partnerships

If you have a subject which you are excited about, and would like to edit a special edition of the newsletter (with my help), could you please call me? I have already had some of you express interest in this idea, and I would like set in motion one or two such special editions fairly soon.

Thanks

Thanks to those of you who have taken out a new subscription this year, and welcome to those who have been given a gift subscription by a friend (*a lovely idea!*) - I trust you find the newsletter informative and interesting. Thanks to those of you abroad who have paid a bit extra to cover postage. Thanks to those of you who have sent me publications from your organisations in which you using your CB insights.

Lastly, it has been suggested that I list in the newsletter everyone who receives a copy. I am happy to do this occasionally, but would



Ideally 12 metres (40 foot) square, carpeted, fairly quiet, private. Separate room for facilitators to sit during breaks. Kitchen. 4 or more toilets (for groups of over 50 people). If you have somewhere in mind, even if it does not meet the ideal above, please contact Tom Deevy on 0181 444 9764.

Acknowledgement: In writing this I am conscious that, in my personal turmoil, I am not very together. This may influence the text. I could wait, but the optimum time usually evades me.

The first CBE I attended was November 1994 here in London. I then participated in the CBSS March 1995 also at St Vincents. More recently I have been involved in sponsoring both the CBE, November 1995 and the CBW, March 1996 all at St Vincents. The forthcoming London CBE September 21/22 will be sponsored by me.

In the course of this article I want to answer the question I pose for myself: What's in it for me? I want to share my dreams, my ambitions and my fears. I also want to verbalise the challenges I see.

What's in it for me?

The first CBE I attended was a special event. It touched me like nothing before. It took some months to put words on what it meant to me: It was my first taste of relationship in a group and I BECAME OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY: The possibility of being with others in an OK way, the possibility of fair play and the culture where control and manipulation can be effectively challenged. Seeing the possibility of relationship freed me to acknowledge my own lack of relationship, which in turn freed me to look into myself for the relationship I desire.

1. If I can pick up the possibility of relationship in community then others can in varying degrees. This gives me my primary motivation for sponsoring events. I believe that human relationship can be improved through community groups. And it is through improved relationships that life can take on more meaning and give more satisfaction to humanity.

2 Sponsoring events gives me more meaningful involvement with other humans: There is more possibility of being 'real' with others in the network - they know the same set

of rules as I and, theoretically, are capable of relating to me in a respectful way.

There is a personal challenge for me here: Persons above me, more experienced than I, tend to be cast in the parental role. So if they are found wanting, their behaviour provokes in me: pain, anger, frustration and ultimately sadness. The challenge to me is to remain in contact with what is happening and keep the channels of communication open. This is the spiritual path I am on: It's hard work but rewarding. It is the price of more self-tolerance and tolerance of others.

3 As sponsor I have power: The challenge is to use it rather than abuse it. My confidence is that community gives people confidence to question/challenge. And I want to encourage that in myself and others.

Dreams and challenges

My dream is to have a permanent venue to sponsor community events (including ongoing groups) here in London. My ambition is to find a suitable venue as near to Central London as possible where community building events can be run regularly.

The challenge, for me, is to keep faith with the process and accept what is: I have made explicit the areas where I need help. Ruth has offered to check out venues for me, Suzy has undertaken to phone around for information on venues, and Charles has pointed me towards Halls of Residence in London University. This apart, I have not exactly been overwhelmed with concrete help.

In this I am also conscious of my own limitations in relating and getting my needs met and this sets limitations on how others can co-operate with me. I am reliant on others' integrity and support to improve my own capacity to engage/ relate.

Accepting what is mentioned above is about accepting that my ambitions may not be realised. And I am not setting myself up to feel bad by assuming total responsibility.

My Fear

My fear is that, as we grow, CBiB will become an organisation where individuals may, because

of their programming, resort more to organisational answers rather than individual relationships to achieve their goals/ get their needs met. The challenge for me is to fight this tendency in myself: I want to value organisation to achieve my ambition to give large numbers of people access to community building, while at the same time being aware of the possibility of my using organisation to avoid individual contact. Having written this I

can now appreciate more clearly that it is MY FEAR I am talking about.

Appreciation

Colin, you entered into relationship with me to achieve our last CBW in London. I valued your reaching out, I valued direct facilitator involvement in compiling the letter welcoming and preparing participants and now I appreciate your interest in the flier we will put out for our September CBE.

‘The Road Less Travelled’ had a profound effect on me. When I read ‘The Different Drum’ I was immediately interested in community building. I wanted to see how my new found insights into my life meshed with a community building experience. I attended two of the London events in 1995. I wasn’t disappointed.

I found the two experiences very different. I felt one dealt with close personal relationships, the other with anger. I learnt from both. In each case the starting point was the same, but the people were different. It is the starting point that I would like to put into a more general context.

Free to be me

At both experiences the facilitators invited the circle to use ‘I’ statements in making our contributions. I try to use ‘I’ statements in my everyday life, so I relished the lack of ‘you’. When I hear someone say something like “You can’t expect your boss to be sympathetic”, I feel that person is making his or her view a condition of my relationship with them. I feel the person is limiting my freedom to believe what I like about my boss when I’m with them. I feel this even when what the other person really means is “I don’t expect my boss to be sympathetic”.

The facilitators also suggested we should only speak when we felt moved to speak. Again I felt this gave me freedom in the circle - when it was observed. It meant I didn’t have

to listen to people wittering on about nothing in particular. It freed me from having to pick out the wheat from the chaff. It left room for silence. It was like a half hour news programme on television, where the presenter says after five minutes “We don’t think there’s any more news of interest today, so here’s a blank screen. We’ll come back if we think of something else.” I was free to concentrate on the experience.

Then there was ‘Celebrate the Differences’. I liked that as well. I discovered at both my experiences that everyone I talked to was different from me. In the circles I felt I was free to accept this, and be different myself. I enjoyed acknowledging reality.

Freedom from rules

Another suggestion was ‘Make the circle aware if you disagree’ (I can’t remember the form of words here). Once again, I felt this freed me from having to accept compromises. If a member of the circle tried to impose rules on the rest of us I could simply say I didn’t agree to them. I was always able to escape from that person’s pigeon holes. I was free to be an individual.

A further suggestion was ‘Trust the process’. I think this encouraged me to have faith in the circle. Perhaps the reason the road is less travelled is because it doesn’t appear on the usual maps. With no pre-set objective we were free to wander where we liked, free to find a different type of experience. All I had

to do was trust the people around me. I wasn't disappointed.

So for me the dominant theme of my community building experiences was freedom. I was free to be myself, to disagree with others, to be honest about my feelings and still be trusted by other people. I could be different from everyone else, but at the same time close to them. In other words, I could be me and still have relationships with other members of the circle.

Beyond the circle

I suppose I could have put my experiences into a mental box and ignored them in my everyday life. I chose not to. I try to use 'I' statements all the time. I try to listen actively when other people talk to me, and only speak when I have something to say. I try to acknowledge that

other people are different from me by what I do and say, and I voice my disagreements when I feel strong enough to do so. I don't always succeed when I try, but I allow myself to make mistakes. I think I'm getting better.

I trust the process. I've noticed that 'I' statements are infectious with a fair proportion of the people I talk to. Also, I find that the more I allow other people to be free, the more they give freedom back to me. Whether at work or play, I think that every moment I'm with another person is an opportunity to build community. I derive tremendous pleasure from behaving this way. I don't say it will work for anyone else, and I can't guarantee that I'll continue my experiment, but so far I have no reason to change my mind. I enjoy the freedom it gives me.

I would endorse what Margaret Walsh said in 'News' last month. I also feel that many different things can happen in a small ongoing group because of the continuity and, for me personally, because there is no official leader to take the authority that I am gradually rediscovering can be my own. The framework of CB's 4 stages has more meaning to me when they happen as part of the process of mutual self discovery, and when moments of mutual insight can be savoured without comment. I was excited to read that Colin had said to Ruth that the last London CBW might have been a CBX. (An experimental development of the workshop structure.) I hope that Ongoing groups are contributing to this

expansion of CBiB to include other ways of building community. I am involved in a MIND womens' group, Survivors (of the Mental Health system) Poetry, a dreamers group, and Quaker enquirers. (I worked as an art therapist before I retired) All these use a variety of disciplines such as Gestalt, Humanist psychology, Psychosynthesis, self actualisation and Buddhist meditation. The task/process groups I have experienced in CBiB have the most to teach, and the nearest to them are Quakers. This is not well written as I am 'allowing' my dyslexia for a while as part of coming to terms with it and regaining some authenticity. Thank you all for your patience.

Yvonne M. Poulson

The request for information about publications in Newsletter 46 started me thinking about books I read years ago. I have always seen Scott Peck's work as arising out of, building on, giving a new focus to experiences in T-Groups and other training in group work. Some of this could go badly wrong, and be superficial or destructive, without the conscious aim to build community, but at its best it could be very positive.

What I want to say about books has to be put in a context.

Early experiences

My first group work experience was in 1966, in Uganda. A remarkable Canadian, Eric Hutchinson, persuaded the Church of Uganda to do some "Leadership Training". The facilitators were an American, a South African who had been doing group work with interracial groups (under apartheid!), ... and Terry Waite. I was training teachers at the university and I was invited to join in. I was in a group with one other European, two black bishops, a bright young youth worker just back from training in England, a woman Mothers' Union worker, an aged evangelist, and two clergy from the slopes of Mount Elgon whose command of English was a little precarious. Our task was to find out "how to be a good group". We started on Monday, and though we had all the conflicts that readers of "The Different Drum" might expect, by Friday our relationships had changed radically. Any sense of cultural or intellectual superiority had gone, and we realised that everyone had something to contribute.

I came away feeling that this had been a remarkable learning experience for me, but what had it got to do with what usually went on in schools? I have spent most of the rest of my professional life trying to answer that question.

Early books

One of the first books I read was "Anatomy of Judgement", a Pelican by Minnie Abercrombie. That would be a good start for any teacher who got interested in groups for learning. I went to

see Mrs Abercrombie and talked about it. In 1967 I went on a "Working in Groups" course organised by the Church of England General Synod Board of Education. The members were mostly clergy, but there was me and a woman. I thought: "What a homogeneous group compared with the one in Uganda!" The clergy, though, had had their first experience in a group entirely of clergy, and were terrified of doing this personal work with laity! We had to learn that people are people are people.

About this time I read some of the classics of group dynamics: Bion, W R, "Experiences in Groups" (Tavistock 1961/8); Klein, J, "Working with Groups" (Hutchinson 1963) - an easier read than her "The Study of Groups" 1956/67. There were many others: and I would particularly recommend some less formal books like "To a Dancing God" by Sam Keen (which is on Scott Peck's book list in "The Road Less Travelled").

Experimental

From 1975 to 1989 I was active in the South-East Churches' Training Group. There, we found it helpful to explore some of the more experimental approaches to counselling, for their potential influence on relationships in groups: Transactional Analysis (Berne, but even better Harris); Gestalt Therapy (Perls); Re-evaluation Counselling (Co-Counselling or peer-group counselling: Jackins, and a breakaway group in England with John Heron). We also read Saul Alinsky: "Rules for Radicals" etc. (Vintage, 1972).

Those interested in Christian ideas of community might read Jim Wallis "The Call to Conversion" (Lion) and "The Soul of Politics" (Fount).

For school teachers, it will be interesting to compare Peck's work with some of the ideas of Leslie Button on group work; or the Active Tutorial Work scheme (rarely done thoroughly but when it is it influences academic teaching as well); or the Developmental Groupwork network based in Devon; or even some of the health education schemes.

Perhaps that's enough for a start!

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(I hope to have Jerry Hampton's book on "Ongoing Community" available for purchase soon, but in the meantime here are some of his comments on my request for information last time on useful books to study in an ongoing group - received via the Internet from Texas! - Peter)

Ongoing Groups

Most ongoing communities struggle most of the time and that's as it should be, . . . something like life. It's the struggle and the journey that counts. Life is difficult as Peck has said.

Community Building in a circle is an artificial way of doing it. It is one of the best, if not the best, way to get started. But, the real meaning of community can only come from living the ATTITUDE(S) OF COMMUNITY every day. And that takes a lot of thought and practice. An ongoing group is a great way to do this.

Books

I know a number of books a group could study. My book lists some. You can also use the appendix of my book to study The Different Drum. A group leader can assign from 1 to 3 of the questions I ask for a meeting and use this as a subject. ONE CAUTION: What is the purpose of your meeting? Is it to share your lives in community with each other OR is it to study? You can really get bogged down in studying a book and not build any community. A very good self-help book is Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am and Why Am I Afraid to Love, both by John Powell S. J. Both of these are written from a Christian perspective, and it's hard to overlook, but the books have much good self-help stuff.

Another good book about life is Passages or New Passages by Gail Sheehy. I think the Passages is best for people up age 40-45 and New Passages is better for people 45 and older. Both are presented as being for all ages, but I believe it works out this way. Also, New Passages is slanted a little more to the female way of thinking.

Another great book, again with a Christian perspective is Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life by Henri J. M. Nouwen. I believe that Peck took some of his ideas presented in The Different Drum from this book.

I think the best way for me to answer the best book from my perspective is to ask you to ask your group several questions: What do I wish to accomplish in the way of learning while we build community together? I believe all ongoing groups need a task and the task should be a group task. However, the task should not over ride community building. This is hard to learn for a group and takes time.

Chaos

(On another subject Jerry writes...) A fairly new workshop I am doing is called Creative Chaos. I do this only in business at the present time and I get really good results. This is a very intense workshop where people stay in the same room for 12 hours minimum and only leave to go to the toilet. The food is brought into the room and the process never stops. Its gets the real chaos out on the table so we can resolve the issues. Chaos is highly creative and should be sought and not run from. One thing in life is certain: constant change. Chaos represent this change. In a CBW, there is often little emptiness without the personal chaos.

“Greenhill is a spacious single storey home, set on the West Coast of Scotland overlooking the Isle of Arran and Kilbrannen sound.

A safe place sums up how we see Greenhill, its role, and ministry. As a family home, centred around Christ, we enjoy two informal times of prayer daily.

Those who come are welcomed as part of the family.”

Peter Cooper suggested that it might be useful to jot down a few thoughts about Greenhill, how it is going, and the relevance that the CB process has had in its development.

What we are trying to do

Somehow, when we try to live on a day to day basis the ideals and principles that we hold rarely seem as clear cut or as simply applied as theory suggests. I read with interest the many enthusiastic letters and articles that folk, fuelled by the dream of a better world, write for the newsletter. The thing that always challenges me though is that, to be real, such experiences need to be used as building blocks in our attempts to grow, and in our attempt to be a positive force for good in the lives of others. To allow them to remain as experiences for experience sake is to deny who we can become, if we are prepared to take the risk.

At Greenhill this is what we try to do. Our humanity, weakness, tiredness, days of wearisome depression, are an enormous help. We are robbed of arrogance, blind theories, overnight fancies, daft notions, and intolerance by such things. As a result as each new person comes to share with us we rarely stay in pseudo land for long. The car journey from Campbeltown to Torrisdale is usually long enough! When you are facing personal crisis, as many of our visitors are, the futility of pretence is quickly dismissed. It would seem to me that crisis propels us into community quicker than anything else.

Ordinary people

So many people have lived lives that seem to no sooner get off the ground than they are broken again. To love such, is to learn love indeed. It knocks off our own edges, peels away our armour, challenges our prejudices, and in the middle of it all we discover ourselves covered with a sense of the Divine.

We grow, learn and discover through one another.

We are ordinary people, allowing our emotions to sail close to the edge in our attempt to hold onto those about to go over. CB has helped us to understand some aspects of the process, don't be fooled into thinking it is all there is, our learning goes on forever.

Our strength

To handle this by ourselves would of course be impossible. We are rescued time and again by the Father. He, oh so gently, draws us into the warmth of His embrace, the touch of His breath upon our cheek, the overwhelming joy of His passionate silent company enables us to discover ourselves. So it is that the adventure goes on, we have made many wonderful friends, have become family to some, best friends to others, and been loved in return. It is a wonderful way to live ... stretch your CB's a little go beyond the 48 hours!

Today there is a storm raging, it is wild and exciting, the trees are creaking, the waves pounding, the seals have fled out to sea. The chickens have retreated to the safety of their house. In the wider world there is a heart storm raging, we are building a safe place by attempting in some small way to facilitate others in their need for a glimpse of the heart of God. There is a need for a safe place - why not grow one where you are, give yourself a little, lose your life, for in doing so you will truly find it? Too directive maybe? .. yet the truth remains.

David Tomlinson

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Holding Group

Account from Ruth, built on brief notes Cliff made during the meeting.

Ruth Goffe, Cliff Jordan and Anthony Kirke met in Newbury on Tuesday 14 May.

We first caught up with each other, and spent some time celebrating and acknowledging that Anthony will be focussing more on aspects of facilitation this Summer. We recognised that he may therefore wish to reduce time and energy available for holding group business and Ruth and Cliff offered support to Anthony for any essential work he feels he needs to put down during this period.

We heard good reports of the **EDINBURGH CBW**, that the organisers had been pleased with the event. From an administrative angle, despite only a few definite advance bookings just three weeks beforehand, eventually a circle of about 30 gathered, nearly all for three days (the organisers had allowed for this to be optional) and many paying as much as they could afford rather than the full fee. Working on this more flexible fee principle had brought in many more people, and while finances were not yet complete when we met, the event appeared to have at least covered essential costs.

FINANCE in the **CBiB national account**, which had been down to almost zero, is currently at a level of about £2,900, having now received monies from the last four events. We expect to spend a substantial sum on the services of a US facilitator from FCE for two events in the Autumn.

Edinburgh event organising group are still holding £300 lent to them as a float: if they have no plans to use it again in the near future, we would like them to return it to CBiB national account.

London event organiser has asked whether we still require money, about £300, due on the November mailing last year, as they have a surplus of a little over this. We ask that this be sent to the pooled seed account being set up by Ruth.

We refined the **seed account** idea. (This will hold funds to finance joint mailings in advance of participants' fees coming in to events, and also be available to event organisers as start up funds.) Ruth is to contact anyone who may be holding money for CB uses and invite them each to either

- keep us in the holding group informed of how much is available to CBiB as repayable floats to initiate CB activities,
- or donate this money to the proposed pooled seed account. For now, this seed account will be under holding group control.

The **cost of the April mailing** to around 1500 recipients was approx. £430 and included a cheaply produced A4 sheet summarising forthcoming events. These costs should be recouped from six events.

PUBLICITY SUPPORT FOR FORTHCOMING EVENTS: We wish to support and encourage Alex Sharratt doing some work on some magazine/journal promotion - getting into free listings where possible, and placing some paid adverts. We agreed to make up to £500 of national CBiB money available, and Alex would presumably be in touch with local organising groups who might also contribute money, or be making their own plans for publicity in these areas. Ruth to liaise with Alex.

We are envisaging the next combined mail out during August, practicalities not yet underway. Probably CBiB material will cost more than in the recent mailing.

Fliers for events, now most usually the responsibility of event organisers: Anthony intends to expand an area of information which is currently not fully covered in the event sponsors support document, by re-creating a check list of barest bones that are essential to include in leaflets for CBiB events. He will send the draft to the facilitation training group, the holding group and to Alex for comments/approval.

We are aware that with events being put on more independently by individual groups, a consistent **concession place** policy has not necessarily continued. We decided that a description of our tradition in CBiB should be incorporated in the sponsors support document for information and guidance, (not as obligatory). Anthony will draft.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS: We updated each other at length on local organisers/groups progress with their arrangements.

We discussed around the fact that recently we have been welcoming and valuing other people's contributions of *support* to event organisers. Our intention in the holding group that each event be supported by a specific member of our group to create the necessary *communication link* has not been followed as a first resort or consideration by individuals in the holding group recently. We re-confirmed our appreciation of valuable support that has been given and that we still see a need to retain a specific holding group *link* to each event.

Cliff volunteered to be the link person for the London September CBE. Jill Firth has volunteered to provide support to the Othona event, we ask her to link through Ruth and Cliff. Ruth offered to support Crediton (Devon), and the Nottingham event which is in the pipeline.

THREE WAY FACILITATION: The facilitation training group is now discerning three facilitators for events as a norm. The extra costs this incurs have been carried by their training fund during an initial period, but this fund will be exhausted soon. They request that general CBiB funds help with this.

Some strong feelings were expressed about changes and how we make decisions in CBiB about allocating major amounts of money. A personal, favourable account of the different feel of three way facilitated events was shared. The care, caution and responsibility taken by the facilitation training group in introducing this change was honoured. If we have a small surplus, should it go to this area, rather than to other needy areas in CBiB? Or another way of looking at it was that to increase the facilitators working together at each event increases the spread of experience and learning through the existing facilitator group, creating our own British pool of experienced facilitators that much faster, thus saving on more costly visits from Americans and in addition ultimately hopefully making a training resource available in this country rather than only from FCE. In addition we have the dilemma that while guide budgets for events have included provision for the greater expense of more Americans than the facilitation training group have actually asked to come, at the same time final income from events is proving very unpredictable.

We decided that without quantifying the likely costs in the light of the events scheduled in the foreseeable future, we would be unwise to make a swift decision in principle. We agreed that Ruth, with Anthony's support, would obtain and use accounts of recent events to quantify the likely cost of this change, for us to look at at next meeting. Meanwhile only one further three way facilitated event will have taken place in July which is well before the next facilitator meeting.

We spent some time reflecting on issues which came up at the joint meeting we had with the facilitation training group at Lower Rocks in March. Both Ruth and Cliff, separately, had been developing **SKETCHES OF CBiB - HOW IT MIGHT DEVELOP**. We progressed

our ideas about this a bit further.

We recognised that since the facilitation training took place in September 1993 there have broadly been two groups covering CBiB responsibility: the group of trained facilitators, taking care of development of facilitation skills and provision of facilitators for events; and the holding group apparently supporting, coordinating and responsible for all other CBiB “work”, this includes supporting the numerous task groups organising events or other specific tasks, each of them also self-contained groups in their own right taking care and local responsibility for large areas of work.

We recognised that it is hard to carry well all the widespread concerns of CBiB work within one task group, and that in actual fact we in the holding group have increasingly specialised on responsibility for supporting events. Meanwhile the network, and other aspects, have remained far less developed, for lack of time.

NEW GROUP TO SUPPORT ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS AROUND CBiB NETWORK: We agreed that we want a new group to emerge, to focus on/put energy into newsletters, mailings, networking/directory etc. - all things that enable and support ongoing communications amongst everyone in CBiB. Ruth also brought news that, synchronistically, Peter Cooper has been expressing enthusiasm to work energetically in some of these areas. We agreed that Ruth will represent the holding group in developing ideas with Peter, to bring back to our next meeting, in the hope that from these beginnings vibrant energy will gather to develop these new areas of activity.

We agreed that we, as a small group of three, with our experience in the current holding group at this moment in the development of CBiB, have the task of introducing, sharing our awareness about and facilitating **THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW STAGE OF GROWTH IN CBiB**. We decided that we need to do more work defining roles and tasks in order that others can join both this group and the emerging specialised groups that we see in the future.

Peter Cooper has offered to produce complete issues of **past newsletters**. We want one copy for holding group reference, and possibly others for future use by groups continuing task administration work for CBiB, for whom the **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE** may be informative. Ruth will discuss this further with Peter, especially regarding cost.

CONSTITUTION: Anthony has been doing some work towards producing a constitution for CBiB. We agreed that it is important that CBiB’s shape and structure is described, as in “Articles of Association” for instance, to identify some features of CBiB, so as to clarify for us and others, where any liabilities lie for any specific acts or omissions and enable us to limit any harmful effects for individual volunteers, and for CBiB. We imagined a hypothetical scenario of legal action being taken against CBiB or someone working in it as a result of dissatisfaction or conflict that could not be resolved within CBiB.

CBiB exists as an organisation, an association, and has some shape. It is not a company, charity, workers coop, or friendly society, it is simply an unincorporated association. If clearly described, this may be the most adequate structure for us, and at least the describing of CBiB for this purpose will enable us to judge whether this is the case and whether to consider alternative structures.

Anthony will seek advice from various sources and also try to track down work on this that Colin Harrison was involved in previously.

We discussed that our aim is to produce a constitution that honestly describes CBiB, rather

than to try to squeeze or distort CBiB's shape and process into an ill-fitting framework.

FUTURE MEETINGS: We meet again on 6 July and 3 September. We meet jointly with the facilitation training group on 18/20 October.

Contact details of holding group members:

Ruth Goffe, 0181 675 4388, 11 Veronica Road, London SW17 8QL

Cliff Jordan, 01684 540138, "Glen Lea", Upper Colwall, Nr Malvern, WR13 6DH

Anthony Kirke, 01635 47377, 125 Greenham Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 7JE

Ruth Goffe

From FCE

(The Foundation for Community Encouragement in the U.S.A.)

Diversity endowment

"In virtually every community building program that we conduct, there are members of the group who see applications for the community building process in some area of their own lives: family, church, workplace, neighborhood, local government, etc. Others are excited by the possibilities for conflict resolution in racial, ethnic, religious, and political arenas around the world. Some of the more energetic alumni contact FCE for help in translating their ideas into action. As a result, FCE conducts over 100 group experiences in a variety of settings each year." (Then are listed various projects that FCE members are promoting, and the request that people donate into a 'Diversity Endowment', the income from which will be used to subsidize attendance at workshops or support local projects.)

May 22nd 1996 was M.Scott Peck ('Scotty')'s 60th birthday, and this was celebrated with a dinner and the establishment of the M.Scott Peck Fund. "Never afraid of dreaming big, the Foundation can only respond to its calling in direct proportion to the expansive generosity of its friends."

Other items

Two videos are available from FCE, and I can provide further details if required. "The Rabbi's Gift" (7 minutes) has the familiar story narrated by M.Scott Peck, and "Searching for

Community" (45 minutes) has clips from a lecture by Dr Peck interlaced with interviews of the management of a 500 employee car dealership who are dedicated to managing by community principles.

Other items include a number of responses to experiences during and after CBE/CBW's, a list of events in the US and Canada (including the CB Skills Seminars, the 9th annual network event or Community Continuity Conference, and the 8-day long Leadership education program) and elsewhere, letters and items from 'mv2spk' (see editorial), poems, and Reflections on a prison workshop. There is even a reprint of an article from our own newsletter, and the opportunity of giving to someone through a CBW Gift or scholarship certificate.

(The FCE newsletter, Communiqué, is sent to everyone who donates to the work of FCE, and I receive a copy in exchange for our newsletter - Peter.)

And from ACE

(Australian Community Encouragement)

There is a report from a CBW held in New Zealand in an intentional community - "it was very intense with community reached a number of times".

The five who were at the May monthly meeting felt a renewed commitment to ACE and community building. "As a result we felt moved to express our individual commitments,

Building community is a process - not a place, a feeling, or a particular type of organizational structure. Strong leadership and commitment must be mustered in order to maintain it; only through purpose and discipline will the community process be maintained.

The agenda at each holding group meeting always seems to grow as large as any sheet of paper we use. We focus remarkably well on a few issues, and give barely enough attention to many others. We endeavour to deal with a wide range of issues in detail. I believe we have been making our job too difficult for us to do well.

Zones of Activity

I'd like to separate out some areas that the holding group has repeatedly been concerned with, and endeavour to see that each gets the attention it deserves. Three main ones suggest themselves to me:-

“Event Support” - this has kept the holding group very occupied, as we have been going through a transition in the way CBiB relates to events (attempting to devolve responsibility for them). Establishing and evolving a system with elements of predictability and flexibility. Identifying responsibilities while trying to be sensitive and capable of accommodating enthusiasm.

“Opportunities for Learning” - the word “training” used to appear regularly on our agenda. There are many people within CBiB who have voiced desires to study the process more. Since the Lower Rocks meeting last spring, I'm hopeful that a programme of some sort may come together. (Personally I value the function the leader training group carries

out for CBiB, and would like that group to continue with its own specific tasks.)

“Network Support” - to encourage and support communication within the network. Ruth Goffe and Peter Cooper are at present giving this some attention.

Responsibility

If each of these areas could become the responsibility of a group outside, but closely linked to, the holding group, it might free the holding group to attend more to the overview, allowing space for wider perspectives and deeper discoveries.

This development may appear expensive (“does CBiB have funds to support all this activity?”). In fact, a 13-strong holding group cost CBiB a lot in travelling expenses, and may not have dealt as well with its tasks as three groups, each much smaller, could do. (In fact, I'd like to see the new groups as “zones of activity” for now - their shape and membership may vary enormously and I don't wish to presume that they would each emerge as familiarly-patterned CB circles.)

At present, this seems to be the direction the holding group is taking: I hope we will receive a positive response and active support.

*Cliff Jordan
(see also next page)*

Key to above sketch map

- Facilitators Group - provides facilitators for events; discerns, supports, accredits facilitators
- Learning Opportunities - provides structured events for further learning about community building; possibly prepares more facilitators
- Event Support - coordinates calendar; supports event organisers; holds documentation; deals with enquiries
- Network Support - encourages and supports contact between all participants; newsletter; mailings etc.
- Holding Group - ‘Council of Elders’?; place for all others to be heard; reflects, develops overview
- Local On-going Groups - another layer of CBiB activity, overlaying this “map”

Resources Available

via Peter Cooper (see back page)

- Book: “Ongoing Community” - by Jerry Hampton
- Videos: “Rabbi’s Gift”, “Searching for Community”
- Past copies of the CBiB newsletter, and index
- Book lists and other FCE material on the internet
- “mv2spk” on-line community
- FCE and ACE newsletters
- Paper: “Adventure Education: Two Approaches” by Armando Magnino

**Australian Community Encouragement
“Community on Purpose”**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EXPERIMENT TO CLARIFY VISION

USE ENERGY AS AVAILABLE

CHAOS IS ALLOWED

WE CHOOSE TO EMPTY

AIM FOR THE BEST POSSIBLE

TRUST EACH OTHER’S DIFFERENCES

FEEL THE PAIN AND HOLD THE VISION

CHOOSE TO SERVE THE SACRED WELLBEING OF THE
WHOLE

Some Images to Represent the Development of CBiB

from Ruth Goffe

At the joint meeting of members of the holding group with members of the facilitation training group in March, we began drawing maps and diagrams to represent the relationship between our two groups and within CBiB. In response to our attempts in two dimensions, I had a strong sensation of needing to include a flow in a third dimension. At the time I could only describe this as sap in a celery plant. Since then, this image transformed into a bulb of fennel.

Within a circular structure, branching begins, proliferating to form lobes of activity alongside each other. Fresh interest and energy is contributed by people with the combined motives of wishing to learn more about using CB processes and skills, with wishing to support the development of this work. People's input draws up from the roots as nourishment flowing into our task-process circles, building and developing the plant. Petals, fruits, seeds and leaves, which may have been a major part of the plant, may go back to the ground, into the world, lives affected by CB experiences taking root, (or exhausted but still contributing to the soil in our world!...)

Another image from the joint meeting was of an apple tree, propped up to support the fruit it bears, actually then symbolising the newsletter in relation to CBiB over the last couple of years.

These images have stayed with me as I carry on with my involvement in CBiB work. I am very aware of the leap of development I need to make in CBiB now that the size and number of tasks have multiplied. This leap of development is not just something I can make on my own: a number of individuals who take work forward (as in branches) are needed to make it together (as in a division of cells in an embryo), eventually developing into several organs, or lobes alongside each other, specialising on different functions and areas of activity.

At the same time, for several years many organising groups, or individuals, bringing about CB events, or other tasks, have not necessarily been tangibly included in a connected structure. My perception of CBiB and the "web" which we all inhabit needs to adjust so that these groups and individuals belong within it, and have access to each other and a whole area of focus in which they can address their experience and issues among others interested to share and hear, and for their experience to contribute to how different parts of CBiB relate and cooperate in future.

I feel that the responsibilities of the current all purpose holding group have been seen by many as all inclusive, and that a perception of two broad groups, *facilitators* (most of whom withdrew from administrative activity for CBiB while they concentrated on mastering CB facilitation skills), and of a *holding group* to be responsible for everything else - while this is a real and unique stage CBiB has gone through - has provided a naive structure which is now limiting to CBiB's growth as a whole. Although network gatherings were envisaged, no group caring for this has formed alongside the other two broad groupings, and I see many undeveloped aspects to supporting a network apart from gatherings.

I now guess the Brentwood facilitation training group has evolved, and currently operates

increasingly as discernment and support for facilitators for events. From this, potentially, a new lobe may spring concerned with creating further opportunities for extending CB skills. The role and function of the holding group is also of necessity dividing to give better support to wider development and to the larger scale web the work demands. Other areas of development now require more space and attention.

For the future, more geographically-based awareness in how we carry responsibilities for CBIb seems crucially important: it is not easy to carry detailed responsibilities with others in a group of people who are from far corners of the Country. I imagine increasingly nurturing the development of interest in practising community building locally. Some events are more locally focussed and attended. Hopefully, this will have an effect on our network, so that organisational frameworks for CB activities can remain small, grass-roots linked, responsible to themselves, rather than one giant organisation which is over centralised and lacks a true ability to relate to individuals and individual circumstances on the ground.

My last drawing - and Cliff's - are, I think, about *now* and fit into larger longer scale visions (such as Alex's presented at the last network gathering). My drawings may look quite detailed, but I want to emphasise that they are actually only rough approximations. Individuals involved bring with them vast differences. Whatever structure envisaged now will probably be fairly randomly shaped as it evolves by the individuals participating in it, the spread of their interest, the skills and experience they bring, their styles of working.

Each lobe contains several or many groups (or individuals) all working specifically, but usually quite separately and in different places, on related concerns.

Each lobe would need its own holding group or similar connecting and coordinating function.

One person might be involved in a number of "places" on this diagram, interacting with other people in various groups. Each lobe is not totally separate, as the people/activities in each interact in all directions. For example, the network lobe would provide an infrastructure, as well as improved communications, to CBIb as a whole as also the events build an infrastructure from which the network emerges. Facilitators work on facilitation for public CB events, learning opportunities and satisfying requests from groups and organisations asking for CB. The joint holding space in the centre, as in Cliff's drawing also, ensures we remain open to new areas of development while also building and maintaining standards in CB work.

I am struck by how small some things appear on this drawing - like an event or the group and process which discerns and supports facilitators - yet at times these have been all that can be sustained - the *whole picture*. This is the extent to which CBIb has and is growing, from a small number of identifiable people to many clusters each with a whole identity and contributing, everyone, spurts of energy and commitment probably every bit as large as the initial thrusts that got CB events off the ground in the early 90's, formed the beginnings of CBIb and created the 93 training event. Each working group (little circle) may be an intense experience, offering potential for developing skills. Leaps of development are inherent in the proliferation and interactivity of all these thrusts *simultaneously* and will contribute to the evolution of an overall functioning organism.

EACH LOBE has its own holding group or similar connecting and coordinating function. ?Possibly each of the lobes could account financially for itself independently from the others, but might need to contribute to the overall structure. (This needs further detailed thought.) *Any lobe, or smaller part, within the whole could be a charity in own right, have paid workers alongside volunteers, or whatever.*

?FIFTH LOBE Possibly a fundraising lobe needs to be added, at some stage whenever energy comes forward for this, which could seek monies for bursary and support funds for various different parts of these lobes.

BIG QUESTIONS requiring research/reporting back with recommendations, such as

- Which bits might be eligible for charity status?
- Is our non-profit association the best structure? What alternative structures might be suitable, either for the whole, or for subsections of it?

JOINT HOLDING is for people actively involved to communicate, hold regular joint meetings, etc, also, as in Cliff's drawing, to ensure that space is held open for new initiatives, to air themselves and to develop.

Also for *big questions requiring joint consideration* such as

- is CBiB a structure for professional protection of CB facilitation skills, or an association to help spread learning and use of CB skills wherever they are wanted. (Possibly answer is both these and more.....)

- How to include paid workers within various parts of the overall shape without reducing the scale of enthusiasm and energy among volunteers on whose millions of hours' work CBiB depends. (Who earns money? Who enjoys free/reduced price places? Who pays?)

GENERAL ENQUIRIES provides personal response, general information and current contact details, map(s) of CBiB, forthcoming events.

CB PUBLIC EVENTS, AND EVENT SUPPORT AND COORDINATION A group of people who gather together *knowing* this is their true purpose might be more supportive than doing it from the holding group.

NETWORK AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT Regular gatherings to share experiences, ideas, join the network, have fun and get involved.

Regional development in various ways, for instance incorporating care about this in what happens after public events, and how the network operates. I would encourage areas of work being taken on by people living reasonably close to each other so CB task and process skills become more actively practised and available. More task groups forming more locally seem to me really *crucial* to functioning more easily within CBiB; I think this depends on a more tangible network manifesting and developing.

GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS WISHING TO USE CB This might be the area of potential development for which Colin Harrison, Wendy Payne and Ann Rutherford announced plans a few months ago. It will be interesting to hear how this develops. I have not attempted to think through the detail for this area.

DEVELOPING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES TO EXTEND SKILLS There is interest in further CB training from people wishing to learn, and I believe that there is now interest, growing experience and skills among people in our current facilitation training group to develop ways of satisfying much of that interest. In addition, some input from FCE facilitators or trainers might also be desired. (Possibly this area could include setting up another training as took place for the original 25 British facilitators at Brentwood in 93; alternatively, input from FCE trainers might extend the learnings of people from the old British training group alongside a new learning group.)

Men!

We need you to

Boldly Go where no Men have gone before

to a CBiB Men's workshop at Redfield, 18-21st July

Giving ourselves time and space to explore our feelings about being men in a changing world is something we often don't recognise as important. We're too busy with our work, our good causes or with family commitments.

We know the old gender roles have gone forever, but we're still searching for the new ones. Intimacy is still a little scary, particularly with other men.

This workshop offers you a wonderful opportunity to, explore these and other issues around masculinity, in a supportive but challenging environment.

Don't miss out by thinking it not a high enough priority. There are places left, but call me right away to book yours. Prices: £110 - £150 inclusive (concessions negotiable). See you on the 18th.

Andy Wood

Tel 01908 222493 or 01908 222332

16 Spencer Street, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, MK13 0DW

I spoke to Margaret Paterson over the telephone and she told me a little about her experience of helping to organise the Edinburgh CBW.

Ongoing group

She had been to six events before and although she found the first one painful because of the openness and honesty it encouraged, she had found all of them life-enhancing. She mentioned she had been a member of an ongoing group (meeting fortnightly for six months) which chose to be 'open'. This had been very challenging because the 'safety' of the space had to be established each meeting and the group experienced that numbing feeling as it contemplated its death. She felt that the inexperience of the members led to an avoidance of emptiness - as the only creative way forward - because it is so scary.

A small group did the bulk of the organising for the Edinburgh CBW, and the workshop has been such an encouragement to them that they plan to organise another event. Margaret says it was hard-going up until the last moment because so few people were coming. However in the event 27 came, and most people seemed

to appreciate it. And they had a tiny financial surplus to give to the CBiB funds.

The CBW

The workshop was structured in a similar way to the London CBW, which Ruth wrote about last time, with the group moving out of the large circle into smaller groups several times over the three days, rather than just once between the second and third days. One facilitator commended the group for the sensitivity of its listening to the quiet minority voice and 'staying with the pain of indecision' until everyone agreed to the first break-up of the safety of the large group - a classic example of consensual decision-making.

Margaret especially appreciated the facilitators' three-dimensional picture (using string and paper bases as in American baseball) to illustrate the way the group spiralled in and out of the various stages - quite unlike the movement of a steam-road roller, slow, heavy, inflexible...

Would anyone else like to contribute their reactions to the event? Thank you Margaret and the team for your hard work and for sharing

Could you spare an evening to help stuff, address and stamp envelopes for the next mailing? It will probably be in early August, and be done in Peter Cooper's home in Hertfordshire. It is also an opportunity to meet, and even have some fun together.

If you might be able to help, please call Peter on

I hope to have in the next edition:-

More visions for CBiB, including a copy of Alex's vision shared at the Network Gathering in January 1995. (If you have a vision for CBiB, whether it is pictorial or in words, whether it is well-thought out, or just fragmentary, whether others have seen it or not, would you be willing to share it with us via the newsletter? If so I would love to have it for the next edition. Perhaps also you have some thoughts in response to Cliff's or Ruth's pictures?)

More news from events, and task/process groups, and FCE and ACE, and ongoing groups, and individuals, and intentional communities. (Whoever is willing to share their

news with us.)

More thoughts about the newsletter, and ideas from various conversations about encouraging our network. (Again, if you have any thoughts, either for publication, or for private consumption, I would love to hear from you.)

Advance notice of special editions and who is co-editing them with me.

A list of those who receive the newsletter (if you think this is acceptable), and a list of items in past editions.

More news from community builders, more letters and responses to this edition etc. etc.

Peter Cooper

(Note that the closing date for receipt of copy

Taunton: 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. '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

Subscription rate [UK]: (Apr-Mar) £8; (Jul-Mar) £6; (Oct-Mar) £4; (Jan-Mar) £2.

Please make cheques payable to "Community Building in Britain" and send to the newsletter editor:-

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Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the same address by 30th July 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.