

# Community Building in Britain Newsletter

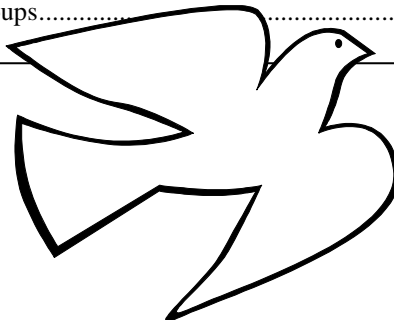
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*The newsletter is issued by a growing network of people in Britain who are committed to developing community building beyond that originally described in Dr. M. Scott Peck's book, 'The Different Drum', and as further developed by the Foundation for Community Encouragement in the USA (FCE).*

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## From the Editor

You will find a number of little contributions from me in various places in this edition, so I am not going to say much here.

I do hope that you find the articles and reports interesting and challenging - I certainly have. Once again I want to thank each contributor, and say how privileged I feel to be able to be part of this network. It seems to me that we have each caught a glimpse of something precious to us, and are struggling together to understand and learn more about it.

### Spirit

One word that has been ringing loud in my ears in several different contexts I have been in this last month has been 'Spirit'. I need to think more about what it means to me, now that I no longer believe in supernatural powers. It still seems to encapsulate something important to me, but how do you react to the word? How important do you think it is in Community Building?

### Responses please

There are quite a lot of subjects in this edition that might prompt you respond. Do feel free to write to me, and share with others your own insights, experiences, or feelings. Contributions for the next edition should be with me by **3rd January 1998**.

By the time you get this my family and I hope to be in Israel celebrating our silver wedding anniversary. May I wish you many blessings during the holiday period, and I look forward to working with you during 1998.

*Peter Cooper (details on back page)*



# Scheduled Community Building Events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1998 6/8 Feb	Nr Lyme Regis Dorset	Monkton Wyld 01297 560342	£110 (Residential)	CBE
20/22 Mar	Abingdon Oxfordshire	Sharon Usher 01235 848132	£?	CBW?

Note: - **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.

(Note also that there is a possibility of a CBE in Brighton in late March 1998 - contact Jonathan on 01273 749520.)



## UKCB Mailing list

Do you have access to email?

Do you want to be part of a discussion about community building in the UK?

I have set up an experimental online mailing list called "ukcb" for doing this.

To join "ukcb", send an email message to

**"majordomo@eejit.com"** (without the quotes), containing the single line **"subscribe ukcb"** (without the quotes) in the message body. To find out more before you join send an email message to

**"majordomo@eejit.com"** containing the message body **"info ukcb"**, or email me at PeterCBiB@aol.com (*editor*).

# On-Going Groups Page

## Sheffield On-going Group

The Sheffield On-going Group has been relaunched! We mailed out 50 people in a wide area around Sheffield who had previously attended a week-end event (thanks to Peter for providing labels). The group has now increased from 3 to 5 people, with one or two people interested in joining. Anyone else interested should contact Alison (see back page of the newsletter).

## 'Task-Process'

*(Peter writes)* I have been to two 'Task/Process groups recently, and so am beginning to understand better what the term means. The Publicity group has met just once for a few hours, and the four of us have very different emphases. I think that we were able to get on with the task but also gave room for, and respected, occasions when one or other of us felt something about the process needed saying.

The Holding Group is a long established group but has recently expanded. The new group has met twice, for the weekend, and again I observe that we seem to have got on with most of our business. However we have also given some time to being present together

in a circle, and allowed the business to be brought in as people felt moved.

What is your experience of Task and Process together? What does it feel like when someone 'facilitates' the group, compared to when nobody does? Does it make it more difficult if lots of you in the group are trained facilitators, or more easy?

## New Groups

If you are interested in joining a new group in the Manchester area contact Tania Nolan on 0161 736 1157.

There are other groups around, some of which are listed on the back page. If you want your group listed there contact the editor.

I know of a new group forming in the South Oxfordshire area - again call the editor for details. If you would like to know of people in your area who might be interested in joining a group call Peter on 01438 813765.

Is there any group in the Bristol area - someone has asked?

## Emptiness

As I understand it, in so far as there is a 'model' for Community Building, it is centred around 'emptiness'. Part of the teaching in the CBSS on emptiness is reprinted in this edition. How relevant is it in your experiences of on-going and task/process groups?

If you would like to share something about your experiences in a group - both positive and negative- why not do so through the newsletter? Sharing our stories is one of the most powerful communications, and I have been thinking that we might put together a collection of stories to encourage people in forming and joining on-going groups. Any thoughts?

*Peter*

## Booklet for Sale

### Ongoing Community

(Small Share/Support Groups)

### Formation and Maintenance

Fourth edition June 1994 By Jerry L. Hampton - 48 pages

Includes

How to start an ongoing group, Model Meetings, Guidelines for meeting conduct, Ideas for group starters, Group maintenance, Ongoing groups and their characteristics, Why some groups fail, Forming groups in a workshop, What now? - After the CBW, Books on community, Study Guide - 'The Different Drum'

Copies available from Peter Cooper (address on back page) for only £5 in p&p.

## Misunderstandings, Hurts and Rescues.

This was a CBE which, it seemed to me, was littered with misunderstandings. There seemed great anxieties about hurting people and difficulties with the concept that comforting and reassuring people when they are hurting is not always helpful.

Many misunderstandings seemed to arise around the word 'Rescue,' used by some in the circle in the Transactional Analysis sense (making a person a Victim by saving them from a situation which they are able to deal with themselves) and taken by others in its literal sense (a drowning person needs to be rescued).

On reflection I realise that I struggled, without resolution, about how to give a definition of 'Rescue' and stick to some rules I

have made for myself about not using my rational mind in CBE, or certainly not offering anything from it to the group! When the definition was given by a group member it was almost as an aside, so maybe I am not alone in thinking the head is best left out of CBE.

On further reflection I have a gut feeling (not head you notice) that if the explanation had been given loud and clear, even by the facilitators, the misunderstandings would have continued. At some deep level I prefer to save you from your pain because when you are hurting I get in touch with my deep pain and I would rather leave that for another day. Maybe that is the real learning of from this CBE for me.

*Penny Wooding.*



## The 1998 CBiB Network Gathering

A provisional date for the 1998 CBiB Network Gathering has been made for the 18-20 September 1998 at Unstone Grange near Sheffield. This needs to be confirmed in the next month or two.

In the last newsletter a request was made for feedback about the last one and ideas for changing this next one. I am prepared to co-ordinate the arrangements for the event, much like Anthony did last year but what happens in it is up to YOU! So please, if you have any thoughts on this now is the time to convey them to me.

There are also tasks that will need to be done, like finances/budgeting; catering; entertainment; childcare supervision;

enquiries; bookings co-ordination; and event logistics. So I would also appreciate hearing from any of you who feel able to help with these. It would be good if we could get together as a group sometime in the New Year in order to get things moving.

I work shifts which and am not always in at the convenient moment, but Ruth, my flatmate or Pace, the answerphone will usually be able to take and relay messages. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Tea'n Stuttaford  
58 Lightwoods Rd  
Smethwick. B67 5BD  
Tel. 0121 429 8947*

### New Address

Jill Firth has moved to:- Mowhay Cottage Polcoverack Farm Coverack Helston TR12 6SP

The Learning Opportunities Group (LOG) met in Llanberis on the weekend of October 4th/5th. The people present were: Armando Magnino, Yvonne Poulson, Barry Johnson, Ruth Goffe, Cliff Jordan, Teän Stuttaford. (Armando, Barry and Teän having taken part in the first meeting of said group in March).

I have at various times started writing this report and constantly got stuck between the need to actually report and share what has been decided/discussed and the awareness that a lot of the value that the meeting carries for me was in my own personal process.

## Structure

It felt to me that a lot of the process time was taken up by actually creating a 'structure' for the group. But we also addressed ourselves to some lighter and easier issues such as:

- what are the essential elements of Community Building? Is it about sitting in a circle? or being moved to speak? or what?
- what's the difference between the CB workshop guidelines (trust the process, speak when moved to speak, etc.) and the four principles as put forward in The Road Less Travelled (delaying gratification, taking responsibility, balancing and dedication to reality)
- and many more such puzzles we put down on our bit of flipchart.

## Essentials

The discussion about the 'essentials' of community building was very useful for me. It was suggested that what CB was all about was to 'communicate with honesty and care', i.e. speaking our truth tempered with genuine concern and care for others. Then emptiness was brought into it and we explored whether the process of 'emptying' was actually a personal or group process: people experiences seemed to differ (What a surprise!). Interlocking with all of that was the presence of Spirit, and I realised that that is a very

people to sustain the concentration and intensity of the process.

important element of community building for me.

## Experiments

We had an experiment where a couple of people withdrew from the group's process and observed from the outside - and then shared what had been going on for them. Another person then made a suggestion for an experiment, involving splitting in smaller groups. For some reason (that I am not clear about yet) the group did not pick up on the suggestion.

My difficulty around it was about the way it had been put forward - it was also suggested that it was about group's resistance to split into smaller groups, yet I hear from other people that they thought the group was actually willing to split. I still don't know. The result (at least I see it as a direct consequence of the chaos around that proposal) was, though, that the person that had suggested it left early, expressing a feeling that the group wasn't going in the direction they expected/wanted.

And as I write this I feel very strongly the urge to try and patch everything up and plead 'Come back. We'll do what you want, don't be upset with me!'. And I know that that's my stuff about wanting everybody to like me. AND I do hope that the issue will be brought back to the group so that we can explore what the resistance was and struggle with the decision making process of the group.

## Conclusions?

We had discussions about length of sessions, about splitting into smaller groups, whether to assume that the same guidelines that apply to public CB events would apply in this context, etc. In that context I think we reached some clear conclusions (while others I think are still left unfinished).

In particular:

- While we might occasionally vary it, there seemed to be agreement on keeping the length of sessions to 1 1/2 hours - longer than that seems to make it hard for
- At future meetings we will meet in the traditional CB circle for the beginning and end of the weekend. For the

remainder of the time we want to be able to be flexible so that we can explore and experiment with working in smaller groups, with different formats or with different methods (rather than just sticking to verbal communication): e.g. singing, dancing, drawing, if we want to.

- We will make time to review the process. After lunch and after dinner we will have 1/2 hour dedicated to reviewing the previous half day's work - to share what's been going on for us and for the group, with the purpose of becoming more and more aware of what happens during the 'process'.
- In order to facilitate the learning process the group is to become a 'closed' group: while every meeting is going to be different, not constantly having new people coming into it my help to build some group 'history' and so help us not to have to start from scratch every time. But not yet. We felt that we needed a bigger membership to be able to ensure a minimum number of people present... and there were lots of people that expressed an interest and then could not come. So.. for the moment we are still open. We haven't decided when to close down, yet.
- We will collect in a folder/binder documents produced by the group

(reports, flipcharts, drawings, etc.) as a group 'memory'.

## Fun

As well as all that we had time for a walk in the hills, time to play some silly American game about 'Frankly Speaking' (whoever suggested a thing like that!) and to discover some interesting facts about each other (as well as mum's favourite saying 'come on,

\*\*\*\*\*' - no, it's not rude,

it's just that



it's confidential.). And we are still waiting to hear about some Oxen, that somehow over the week-end turned into dragons.

## Next meeting

The date for the next meeting is February 7th/8th. Venue Douai Abbey - somewhere between Reading and Newbury. Care to join

us? Let me know.

*Armando Magnino*  
21 Aylesford Street, Leamington Spa,  
Warwickshire, CV31 2AL  
01926 337409  
[armando@magicol.demon.co.uk](mailto:armando@magicol.demon.co.uk)

## From Yvonne - at the L.O.G.

All I can say is that 3 men and 3 women spent 2 days in the house experiencing tension between the desire to stay with a known structure which had given at least 4 people insight and some spiritual awareness, and the need to include other structures, intellectual debate about form and content, previous spiritual experiences and disciplines, and chiefly how to go about satisfying the learning wanted by six very different personalities.

That one person left because he had a preconceived idea of how he wanted to learn seemed at the time to be very sound: now I wonder if it were possible to include someone not prepared to wait and see?

Some ideas/suggestions we might explore at the next meeting:-

- 20/30 minutes session moved by sound; vision (objects, drawing); sensation, touch, texture, movement, mime; dream

states, feelings, images. Draw and discuss. Each session beginning and ending in focused silence.

- within conventional CB format, having objects, action or symbols in the centre, or the possibility to be in the centre.
- carrying the 'pseudo' element with an agreed exercise/game
- a 'being moved game', but being moved by anger, laughter, tears, frustration, need to escape, someone in the group, some piece of literature, etc.
- a free for all of chaos of 20 minutes and round of individual impressions, finishing with silence.
- a total half hour (or more) of silence
- and more



## Alternative to Christmas and/or New Year for “Community Builders” (and possibly others)

We have booked Bradenham Youth Hostel near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire from 24<sup>th</sup> December to 1<sup>st</sup> January. The plan is to have a relaxed alternative, with walks, shared food and maybe some circle time.

The hostel is in the village hall at Bradenham, a National Trust village in the Chiltern Hills, including showers and toilets a short walk down the garden. The accommodation cost is £6.25 for adults and £4.25 for children (children welcome) per night minimum, although we may make

reductions or charge a bit more depending on numbers, and individual financial circumstances. Cost of shared food will be additional, probably less than you'd spend at home.

Please contact us if you are interested for more details, preferably very soon (because we may cancel if not enough people book by the end of November).

*Barry Johnson (0161 224 2011) Flat 1, 143  
Hamilton Road, Manchester M13 0PL*

*or Ruth Goffe 0181 675 4388*

# Holding Group (H.G.) Meeting - 21/23 November 1997

Suzy Adderely, Peter Cooper, Cliff Jordan, Anthony Kirke, David Saunders and Teän Stuttaford gathered on Friday evening. After eating we sat together. We intended a brief session, but in practice it was difficult to end on time. Ruth Goffe joined us on Saturday morning.

Anthony had prepared us well with some written proposals circulated in advance. Nobody volunteered to facilitate process or task, so we carried on regardless, with me keeping occasional notes.

## Facilitator Training Group

Something that came up straightaway was strong feeling around the Facilitator Training Group (FTG), prospective cb-facilitators, and what part the Holding Group might take in their process.

Lots of open questions were aired about the relationship between the HG and FTG. We moved through this stuff throughout the weekend.

We agreed to record:

*"The Holding Group gave care and consideration to what is happening with regard to prospective cb-facilitators.*

*We still rely on and trust the existing FTG to discern and provide facilitators for CBiB events.*

*We are open to the possibility of a new group forming, of people wishing to facilitate cb events, to support each other in their movement towards this.*

*We recognise there is a diversity of possible paths.*

*We hope the existing FTG will fully support prospective cb-facilitators in whichever way they seek to take this forward."*

On Saturday morning we also received various reports:-

## Finance

We had £3,600 in the bank account.

We are very grateful to Erica for continuing to keep the books. She is very willing to pass on this role to anyone wishing to take it on.

More budgeting and financial planning would be nice. Peter and Cliff will try to work on this for the next meeting.



## Publicity

We were very pleased to hear that Richard Benzie, Fanny Calder, Peter Cooper and Alex Sharratt had met and focused on this. An excellent report from Peter, in response to which:-

We agreed to welcome any or all of the Publicity group at our next meeting, to make a presentation at one of our Saturday sessions. Each are welcome to be present for the whole weekend, although we ask that they remain sensitive to the Holding Group's needs, and let us know in advance of other agenda items they might wish us to address.

The Publicity group also asked who should approve their activities/output. We recognised our relationship with this new group is still very young, and asked for close consultation at this stage.

We hope that innovative texts for particular events will be checked with event sponsors, Holding Group link person, and facilitators where feasible. And that FTG members will be invited to input if they wish.

## **Learning Opportunities group**

Six met for a weekend, three of whom were also in this meeting, so it was a lively, diverse report. L.O.G. will have another open meeting, and then may close to new members for a while.

HG recognises it to be unique and valuable. We understand that it is self-financing, and require nothing of it, but look forward eagerly to it having fruitful effects within CBiB.

## **Network Gathering/ General Meeting**

Teän has received some, but not many, responses to her request for feedback about the 1997 General Meeting. We decided that nothing more is needed yet re September 1998.

## **Event support**

Before hearing about specific events, Anthony gave a presentation about the sequence we try to go through in bringing public events to fruition. Peter Cooper agreed to keep the necessary documentation in order, and to produce a clarified cancellation clause for the contract.

We then heard that the two latest events, Edinburgh and Othona, had both taken place successfully.

The next scheduled event, at Hothorpe, had as yet no firm bookings. We are concerned that the sponsor's enthusiasm be contained and expressed in conjunction with a balanced team - we hope such a team can get in place to organise a thoroughly successful event next September. Teän, Anthony and Peter to give some attention to this.

Monkton Wylde have just produced their brochure; Cliff is continuing as event support person.

## **1998**

A firm date, 20/22 March, has been set for a CBW at the Abbey, Sutton Courtenay. Sharon Usher (FTG) has initiated this and wishes to bring a particular US facilitator over for this event.

This threw our knickers into a major twist. Still not untangled by the end of our meeting!

Lots of resistance, and desire to welcome this as a great opportunity.... Maybe another event, possibly in Hove, could take place the following weekend, or some kind of "training event" for prospective facilitators, or cbib-ers generally; or a US-facilitated cb event for anyone active in CBiB (and filmed for TV for extra complication!?).

## **Ourselves**

On Sunday morning, we started by addressing ourselves: where we each were in the holding group. With minimal feedback we each spoke; we then let it sit, with resolve to feedback later in the day, as part of a process of group discernment of what each person's role/ place/ next step might be.

We also looked through the list of others who might have attended, and recognised that several are still possibly going to be very involved in the holding group.

We noted that several CBiB tasks were being taken on by individuals outside existing structures - we hope each will be linked to a specific person within the holding group. We will also welcome non-holding group members to our meetings on occasion, by prior agreement.

## **Tape-recording**

Cliff raised the possibility of tape-recording our sessions. Very interesting discussion, that was not pushed as far as action. How to deal with the inhibition, distrust and distortions was beyond us.

As a minimum, we agreed that tape-recording of any CBiB session should only happen with the consent of all participants in that session. And that any recording, or transcription, is only to be available to those participants.

We also asked how we would cope with a sudden surge of chaotic interest if we did try using some powerful tool such as TV!

## **Outstanding issues**

Before we finished, we noticed that all tasks taken on at our last meeting were carried out.

We asked Anthony to pursue the issue of small group facilitation at the next FTG, and to ask if there any German-speaking facilitators, in case we receive any requests from Germany. (Teän has passed on the news that Regina Has is setting up a CBW in Hamburg next autumn.)

## Closure

The last session got too "interesting" for me to keep notes.

We started with feedback about each other's place, and got excited about what might happen in march 1998. It felt to me like a real

effort to "close" at the end of our agreed session time. And that there is a lot of life in the beast, waiting for a good moment to burst forth. Risky words got mentioned like "passion" and "goals". By the end, I felt the group to be very solid and evenly-footed.

I eagerly anticipate whatever comes next!

*Cliff Jordan.*

*The dates of the next meetings of the Holding Group will be 20-22<sup>rd</sup> February 1998, and then 8-10<sup>th</sup> May.*

## Substances as a Substitute for Love

Substance abuse is rather a heavy term. What I am referring to is how we use substances, activities or behaviours compulsively to make us feel better (note: when I talk about a 'compulsive action' this is what I'm referring to!) e.g. eating a whole packet of chocolate biscuits in one go, or smoking heavily, or having unsatisfactory sex, or others. Whereas sex, or eating, for example are in truth joyful activities, they become a weapon turned in against the self to ward off buried feelings. I would like to explain how I feel this happens and what I believe to be the solution.

### Behind self-abuse

Many people are unaware of what may be the reason they smoke all day or have dull sex and many maybe don't want to know either. Here I am suggesting a few ideas behind self-abuse and its causes, I don't propose to know all of the reasons behind it. I am a "want to know" person. I want to know 'why?'. I guess this is because I have a strong vision of how beautiful we are as human beings and I want us to be that - to be as beautiful as we are.

### My experience

I would like to describe to you my own acute experience of being a compulsive eater. I'll tell you why it happens. I wake up in the morning, feeling excited and motivated, my life is fun and interesting - I'm happy with my life. Yet inside I feel a kind of yearning a deep

sorrow, that I really don't know how to describe. I hope some of you know what I mean by sorrow. I don't know how to talk to anyone about this and believe me I've tried. No one notices and no one says anything - people just carry on as normal.

No one notices so I go and buy myself some chocolate and stuff myself. If anyone right there had cared, had noticed, I wouldn't have felt alone and I wouldn't have hurt my body.

I get worried about stuffing myself too much because I know it hurts my body. I want to be healthy. I don't want to be stuffed up with sugar until my cells get tired and give up. It's a slow form of suicide. I say I want people to notice because I feel alone - the feelings are too much to be on my own.

### Friends

I have some friends, two brothers, who I love dearly and I who I lived with for a time. One friend used to drink all day. He'd get up and open a beer and then go out and buy some more and carry on drinking all day and evening. My other dear friend drank a lot too, but not quite as much as his brother. Sometimes they'd get really drunk and fall over and do things that were a bit dangerous. They are both beautiful, sensitive people and I could feel the desperateness they must have

felt to need a beer in order to get out of bed in the morning.

No one chooses to be an alcoholic, for example, or to cut themselves or to hurt their bodies in other ways. One is taken over by it, through lack of choices or lack of alternative options.

## Options

What I feel the other options could be are this: I am proposing love as an alternative to compulsions - noticing each other - feeling the feelings and letting out a wave of caring for all the feelings that we cover up. I believe Daniel drinks because he has so much love in him that his heart is torn apart by sadness at being cut off from his own truth. I'm talking about a feeling of alienation, about being separate from yourself and from your own feelings. If our own natural state as human beings is love then how do we cope with so much inhumanity in the world. I believe we close down to the truth because it hurts, it feels too painful. We shut down and use different mechanisms to numb off from it all.

## Loneliness

I feel the loneliness - deep loneliness at being separate from other people, so cut off from other human beings. I want the connection to be unspoken. What I mean by this is that I can feel what the other person is feeling. Because I feel it, I understand it and I feel love for the other person. I can hear their small voice inside saying they're afraid and will do anything not to get hurt.

I know so many people who've stayed longer than they wanted to in unfulfilling unhappy marriages, because the feeling of being alone was so terrifying. Imagine if there had been just one person who had said - "I can really feel what you're feeling - I know it. I'm gonna help you change this."

## Protection

Some people get into habitual emotional reactions, or also a kind of image they present to the world as a protection. One could be being compulsively shy or compulsively angry, or have the need to control other people

in order to feel safe. The controlling separates us from the truth about our feelings.

A habitually shy person could say "I feel worthless, everyone knows I am, so rather than face my feelings about myself I'll stay behind this shy person-image". Shyness could be a gift and an attribute if it doesn't take over the whole way you present yourself. It's easier to hide behind a compulsive action than it is to know the truth of what it's really about.

Whatever it is, it helps us to survive and live in the world, where we are often desensitised to each other.

## Becoming aware

The most exciting thing that could happen, as I see it, is that we become so aware that no-one feels alone, no one feels unwanted, or suffers through fear when actually they could be supported. One word or action can change everything.

Is my heart big enough to hear my own small voice crying out for love and comfort? Is my heart big enough to hold the next person who is grieving, who is lonely and tired - am I strong enough to reach out and really feel the truth of another person?

## Someone to notice

I want to create a world where pain can be heard immediately by people around and felt and understood, held and comforted. I don't want to hurt alone, I don't always want to talk either - just someone to notice - just to understand and share my heart for a moment.

It can happen and it will happen because this is why I am saying all this. I love my life and get excited about what we are creating on the earth, something which I know we are creating in "Community Building" circles. I hope I achieve my purpose of wholly uniting my heart with the heart of the 'other'.

If I experience the whole truth and beauty of human beings in this lifetime, then I will have lived fully.

*Rachel Walmsley (Sunflower)*

*4 Clitheroe Road*

*Longsight*

*Manchester M13 0GE*

# Facilitators Training Group 19-21 September 1997

We went to the General Meeting feeling sure we needed and would welcome 'new blood' on the FTG. Our numbers were down to around twenty. It was felt by some that we are ready to mount our own Leadership Education Training Programme. What we were not expecting was the rush for membership. Five or six had written to say 'interested' - but as many as fourteen names were in hand by the end of the General Meeting.

They were all invited to attend two meetings of the Training Group with 'no strings attached'. In the event ten new members attended our September meeting 'with a view'; but with no commitment on either side. It was a stimulating meeting and our facilitators (Mike and Jill) enabled us to break free from the (magic) circle and to work effectively in smaller groups on various themes. Much clearing of the air was accomplished and Old Members were finally agreed that we must take our power to discern and to choose who might join "us" and who might not. Not that we were ready to actually do this until after further steps.

## Decision

This is what our decision looks like: -

Do you want to borrow *Diggers and Dreamers*, or *Places to Be*, or *The Power of Acceptance*, or one of Scott Peck's books?  
Call Peter if you want to refer to them.

## A Living Together in Community

Are you committed to personal and planetary healing?

Would you like to experiment in communal living?

My idea is to rent a large house within 1 hour of Central London (e.g. Victoria) and attempt such an experiment using the community building model. If at all interested please ring me.

Margaret 0171 794 9158

*We (the old Facilitator Training Group) agree that we are in a discernment process about new members. The process will include two weekends, this (19-21 Sept) and the next one (Jan 16-18). A questionnaire will be designed to help us and to assist the candidates in self-discernment. We undertake to provide a basic Leadership Education Programme. We (the original group) are empowered to hold the "bottom line" concerning possibly saying "No" to some applicants.*

## The process began

Thus our selection process began, causing distress to some and heart-searching to all. It will take longer than we had expected. It was a 'first' and we had to act in everyone's best interest -not least the general public 'out there' whom we feel called to serve.

Now that we have protocol or 'way of going about it' -perhaps the next occasion will be easier!

*Ian Davidson*

*(Date of the next meeting is 16-18<sup>th</sup> January)*

# Evil

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"If we flee from the evil in ourselves, we do it at our hazard. All evil is potential vitality in need of transformation. To live without the creative potential of our own destructiveness is to be a cardboard angel".

Sheldon Kopp: "If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him"

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Evil is a subject that has interested me for a long time - I remember particularly, at the time of the Gulf War, being fascinated by Saddam Hussein being presented as a monster who eats babies for breakfast, whilst George Bush was presented as our hero, our knight in shining armour. Recently it has come up for me again, around community building, sometimes with Scott Peck being quoted as an "expert", as someone who knows about human evil.

## Scott Peck

Because of this, I have almost finished re-reading his book, "People of the Lie", and note a few comments that he has made, that I feel are important to add to this piece. In the introduction he states "I apologize to my readers and to the public for the harm this book may cause, and I plead with you to handle it with care". I frankly believe that this book could be a harmful one, and has been used/cited in order to harm others, to flee from taking responsibility for the darkness that is inside us all. In short, I feel, in my experience anyway, that it is not being handled with care, although I do know of one person who felt really helped by the book to make sense of an otherwise incomprehensible childhood.

Scott Peck, himself, seems confused about the issue, in one breath he asks us "to remember Saint Augustine's advice to hate the sin but love the sinner" yet in the next he goes on to talk about "labelling certain human beings as evil". My learnings from my years with the Parent Network have taught me about the serious danger of labelling human beings, about how we can come to embody our labels, to live up to them, and it is something I have found very difficult in reading this book.

If we are to look at the subject of evil, or darkness, or the shadow, surely it is important to look upon it as evil behaviour, to separate out the person from their deeds, otherwise it seems that there would be little chance of redemption for any of those people labelled as evil.

## The General Meeting

At the General Meeting, a few of us left the main group to go and talk about evil, at my request. I am interested in it, and interested by other peoples' reactions to it, their thoughts and beliefs. It is an emotive word - some people have told me to be careful in raising it as a subject - I guess that is why we often call it darkness or the shadow, somehow it doesn't seem so bad - we know that darkness just is, we can be afraid of it because we cannot see into it, but we know that it is not inherently bad. So, with shadows, we can see them, they are what happens when we are in the sunshine, nothing to be frightened of.

This has been highlighted for me recently with a spate of television programmes claiming that the earth is fighting back, and winning - programmes about el Ninio, and volcanoes - rather than seeing the earth as just being itself, just doing what it does in a completely amoral manner, not to hurt anyone, just because it is.

## Possession

The discussion that we had at the General Meeting seemed to me to come down to evil being about stuck energy; it is a metaphor that works for me, as a practising acupuncturist, especially as we even have treatments for "possession". Possession, another subject that

frightens many of us, spooked many of the acupuncture students I was in training with, including me. We were told to keep windows open slightly when doing the treatment so that the "evil spirits" could leave the room. Over the fourteen years that I have been studying and working with it, I have come to understand possession as a really deep energetic block, where the energy has really gotten into a rut, and the person is stuck with a belief, an idea, a relationship.

To be able to aid the process of healing for that person with needles is very exciting, and obviously only the very beginning of the healing process. To label these people as evil would, I feel, be doing them a very grave disservice.

## Scapegoats

It is not so very long ago that women healers were seen as "evil witches" and a whole heap of evil was unleashed onto the world in the name of goodness and light. The holocaust was begun, and then carried out on a daily basis by people who saw themselves as ridding their world of evil. Ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, single mothers "sponging off the welfare state", immigrants "taking our jobs", drug dealers, Louise Woodward. We live in a society that longs to find scapegoats, people who will carry our darkness, our evil for us.

## Terrible things

And yet, undoubtedly, there are terrible things in this world. We people do do dreadful deeds, hurt each other unnecessarily, refuse to take responsibility for our actions, act in a destructive manner.

Scott Peck cites schizophrenia as an illness that results from being parented by people who act in this way, mystifying their children with

webs of deceit, and, having now read Laing and Esterson's account "Sanity, Madness and the Family", I would tend to agree with him, for those cases cited.

## CBiB

But where does that leave us, in Community Building in Britain, whose work is founded by a man who has written a book that labels the people who perpetrate certain acts as evil? Obviously, as an organisation, we do not have to take everything he has said on board; what I am concerned about is that it is a part of our culture somewhere. It has been stated to me, and I feel I must do something in response.

I want to talk about it, to hear what others of you have to say. I cannot go along with Scott Peck's labels. I am much more inclined to Sheldon Kopp's views, as quoted at the beginning of this piece.

If I have learned anything from

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To label these people as  
evil would, I feel, be  
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disservice

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Community Building, it has been about reclaiming the bits of me that I have pushed away, discarded, hated, about opening up myself in order to take in the people I meet, about questioning what it is about a person when I find I

cannot empty myself of a barrier, about seeing all human beings as having equal worth.

## Looking into our depths

As Sheldon Kopp says, somewhere else in his book, until we have looked into the depths of our own darkness we cannot receive our own light (or words to that effect). Its not about being "nice", for me its about being human and owning my own capacity to hurt as well as my capacity to be hurt, to own my darkness, so that I can begin to claim my light, and become a more whole human being as a result. This is my hope, at least.

*With love,  
Debbie Collins*

# Resources Available

All via Peter Cooper (see back page), cheques payable to CBiB  
Most can also be borrowed

Book: "The Power of Acceptance" by Doug Shadel & Bill Thatcher (£11 inc. p&p)

Book: "Ongoing Community" by Jerry Hampton (£5 inc. p&p)

Past copies of the CBiB newsletter, with binder and index (1-32 £10, 33-49 £10 inc. p&p)

Binder and index for newsletters (£2 inc. p&p)

World-wide web page (<http://members.aol.com/petercbib>)

"mv2spk" on-line community

"NGCB" on-line discussion on Next Generation Community Building

"ukcb" mailing list for discussion by UK Community Builders

FCE and ACE newsletters

Paper: "Adventure Education: Two Approaches" by Armando Magnino

## Copies of Past Newsletters are now available

Issues 1-32 £10 including binder, index, p&p

Issues 33-49 £10 including binder, index, p&p

*"They make fascinating reading!"*

*"They help put the present into context"*

**Why not find out what has been done and said in the past?**

Single binder and index for the current issues of the newsletter just £2 inc.

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## Book for Sale

### **"The Power of Acceptance"**

By Doug Shadel and Bill Thatcher

published 1997 price £11 inc. p&p

Forward and Epilogue by M.Scott Peck, M.D.

Using in-depth interviews and scientific research this book addresses the questions: -

What happens at a community building workshop?

How does it happen?

Will it result in lasting changes?

It also places the community building model within the context of  
the encounter group movement of the last 50 years.

Now available from Peter Cooper (see back page)

Doug and Bill have been involved with Community Building in the USA, and FCE, for many years.

*I have never done a CBSS (a Community Building Skills Seminar - at which people with the experience of one or more CB Workshops can gain more insights into the skills and techniques associated with Community Building), but I would very much like to attend one. I have also heard the same from a number of people, so perhaps a group will feel moved to arrange one in 1998?*

*Jerry Hampton has led a number of CBSSs and he tells me that "The FCE model is based on emptiness (many people do not know this). As a facilitator I am not trying to facilitate community. I am trying to facilitate emptiness and when that happens, community is sure to come into the room as a gift."*

*The following text, taken from the latest CBSS manual, is used for discussion leading into an exercise about listening from emptiness. I understand that it can be a powerful experience for the group as they begin to 'listen out of emptiness'.*

*Once again many thanks to Jerry for sharing this with us. Peter.*

## Emptiness

Emptiness is a word relating to open space - "nothing in a space". It is also a metaphor suggesting making room or space for others or the spirit by removing your personal ego from that space. If you are very "full" of yourself with whatever makes up your self-identification, then it is often difficult to be accepting and understanding of others' vulnerability. It's also difficult to allow another's reaching out to come in to you.

This emptiness, or the process of emptying oneself, is making space for others by transcending your ego to accept others just as they are. By letting others in, we find out important things about ourselves and we let community begin to happen.

### Space

Emptiness also has to do with making space within yourself for something new to come in. People are often so full that there is no room

for the new. By searching inward and looking at what occupies our thinking or self-talk we find things to let go of. Sometimes we choose to share a painful event with the group and in so doing let go of some or all the pain. The painful event will then not occupy so much mental space and we are often open to letting something new into our lives.

### Need

Emptiness can also be a need for intimate contact and sharing our lives with other people. We may feel "empty" because of the longing for closeness to another person. This need may just be to have another listen and hear our feeling and who we are. It may be to have your person validated as being fully human in your vulnerability and be accepted for who you are and just as you are without judgment or attempts to fix, heal, or convert.

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"Emptiness is the most crucial stage of community development. It is the bridge between chaos and community. The stage of emptiness in community development is a time of sacrifice. Such sacrifice hurts because it is a kind of death, the kind of death this is necessary for rebirth."

Dr. M. Scott Peck, The Different Drum

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## Skills

A number of skills go into allowing emptiness:-

- It takes courage to look deep within yourself to discover with increasing awareness of what is not working.
- It requires the ability to risk to "let go" of what is no longer needed.
- It involves acceptance and validation of the person.
- It uses silence as a most essential ingredient of the emptiness process. Silence allows us to hear ourselves and to hear others and to even hear the Spirit. Learning to be still and accept silence is often a difficult skill to learn.
- To facilitate emptiness in another, it requires listening with your whole person to another, even to the point that the other person feels physically and emotionally "held" and accepted by you.

## A personal viewpoint

Let's look at emptiness more from a personal viewpoint of what may need to be emptied:

- To empty ourselves of our agendas in order to be able to hear those of others.
- To empty ourselves of our prejudices, biases, stereotypes, projections, etc. in order to see and hear what is real.
- To empty ourselves of our expectations and required outcomes.
- To empty ourselves of the need to organise or control the group or our environment or an outcome.
- To empty ourselves of the need to be "Captain of our fate"; to surrender our lives to a "Higher Power" as we understand the spirit.
- To empty ourselves of the defensive barriers we create that prevent the intimacy we all want.

# Thoughts from the Publicity Group Meeting 2/11/97

Present: - Richard Benzie, Fanny Calder, Alex Sharratt, Peter Cooper

(These are some of the questions we raised for ourselves to address, and shared with the Holding Group. If you have a view on any of these questions, or on anything else relating to publicity please do share it with one of us.

Thanks. Peter)

- Is our link to Scott Peck still our unique selling point? If so, is everyone happy with this? Do we have any other unique selling points that we can use?
- In terms of publicity can we assume there will be a steady stream of open national events, so it is worth publicising generally? Or shall we just assume occasional events and aim to help sponsors publicise them?
- We are intending to revise the complete 'pack' given to potential sponsors, including the guidance about leaflets and publicity. What do people find helpful, and unhelpful, in the current pack?
- Do we want to 'fill' events (with at least say 30 people) and hence actively publicise them, or are we content for events to have small numbers and so we do not need to put much effort into publicity?
- Do we need more groups and contexts into which people can link once they have been to an event, even a process by which people can go further (e.g. CBSS and LEP - stages 1, 2 etc.)?
- It is easier to publicise, and hence fill, events where the dates are fixed a long way ahead. Is it feasible to ask event sponsors to fix dates 6 months ahead?
- We recognise that some events are 'national' by nature, and others are more 'regional' or 'local' events. Do they have different publicity needs, and need different leaflets?
- Is there any useful information to be gleaned from the entry and exit surveys from events, and how would people feel about letting us have a look at them?
- Is there a way we can have a budget for publicity that does not put an extra load onto event sponsors?
- We need to communicate with the network, and will do this by reporting to the holding group and putting something similar into the newsletter. Is this enough, or do we need to do more?
- Who needs to approve what we come up with?
- Fanny will do some thinking about how a television documentary on Scott Peck might use Community Building, and give us some positive publicity
- Our group is currently open to others. Does anyone else with an interest or experience of publicity want to join?

We believe that one of the most powerful ways of getting a message across is to use real personal testimonies.

We would love to have personal statements from you that we could use as quotations in leaflets and advertisements.

Something like "what Community Building does for me", or "what I gained through a CB event"?

Thanks. (Peter)

## Local Ongoing Community Building Groups

*Some groups are open to anyone interested in experiencing Community Building, some are open to you only if you have already attended a CB event, some are open all the time to new members, some may not be open to newcomers just now; some build community as in the CB events, some are support groups based on The Road Less Travelled... Check with the local contact person.*

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

**Malvern Hills:** Meets fortnightly on Thursday evenings. Contact Susie on 01684 540138

**Central & North London:** Meets on the third Sunday of the month 2-6pm. New members very welcome. Please call Fanny Calder on 0171 700 1134 if you are interested in coming along.

**Sheffield:** Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 263 0177 (note the new number).

*Other groups exist but are not currently publicised. If you are interested in joining, or forming, a group please feel free to contact Peter Cooper (address below) for information and help.*



## 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:-*

*Peter Cooper, 1 Evergreen Close, Woolmer Green, Herts SG3 6JN Tel: 01438 813765; Fax (telephone first): 01438 814986; e-mail: PeterCBIB@aol.com; Web page: <http://members.aol.com/petercbib>.*

*Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the same address by **3<sup>rd</sup> January 1998**.*

*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*