

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

Number 60

February/March 1998

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

Newsletter Accounts

<u>Newsletter</u>		<u>Net</u>
Income	1223.00	
Expenditure	-1102.70	+120.30
<u>Mailings</u>		
Income	624.00	
Expenditure	-766.49	-142.49
<u>Sales of books etc</u>		
Income	456.00	
Expenditure	-273.25	+182.75
<u>Other Income</u>		
Donations	27.00	
Interest	13.22	+40.22
<u>Other Expenditure</u>		
Network Groups	-50.84	-50.84
<u>Total Net Income</u>		<u>+149.94</u>

Building Society Account

Balance at beginning of year	864.99
plus Total Net Income	<u>+149.94</u>
<u>Balance at end of year</u>	<u>1074.93</u>

Net assets

Balance in Building Society	1074.93
less Owed to creditor	-60.00
less Prepaid subscriptions	-41.00
less Allowance for 2 editions	<u>-160.00</u>
<u>Total net assets</u>	<u>813.93</u>

Circulation

31/12/96	133
31/12/97	196
17/2/98	200

(+23 who have taken up the free offer)

Book Review

I have been sent "The Sufficient Community - putting people first" by Chris Wright. We can look forward to a review in a future issue.

1997

I am pleased to say that 1997 has been a good year for the newsletter. Thanks to all of you who contributed articles, and who subscribed. Thanks also to those who gave me ideas for change, and criticism. I said to someone the other day "I almost do not care how people respond, it is the fact that they have read an article in the newsletter and responded to it that gives me a thrill!"

Finance

The actual newsletter is still running at a small surplus, which has enabled us to do some marketing and absorb a deficit on national mailings. Sales of books etc has provided a surplus, largely because they were mostly from stock, and these (with donations) have enabled us to subsidise a number of subscriptions and initiatives.

Thank you for enabling me not to raise the subscription rate again!

Subscriptions

Subscription time has come round again (the subscription year runs from April to March). The cost will once again be £8 for UK and EU subscribers, and £12 for non-EU. What else can you buy that has not increase in price for 6 years? A subscription form with your name and address should be included in this edition. Please return it to indicate whether or not you want to continue receiving the newsletter.

An opportunity to share

I have also included a space for you to write a personal sentence or two about your own experiences of community building. This could be about, for example, why you are interested, what your experience of community at your first event was like, or what it means to you now. The reason I have asked is that the publicity group want to prepare some new publicity material and personal statements can be very powerful. We will only use what you send with your permission. Please do feel free to leave this part blank.

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>
20/22 Mar	Abingdon Oxfordshire	Sharon Usher 01235 848132	£120	CBW
28/29 Mar	Brighton	Jonathan Melville- Brown 01273 749520	£80 non-res (or £115 Residential)	CBE

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.

There are two other sets of initials you might hear about (although neither types of event has been arranged in the UK for a while). **CBSS** stands for Community Building Skills Seminar, which deepens understanding of community principles and behaviour; it focuses on the skills of facilitation and leadership and teaches how to evaluate and monitor the processes of community building in ongoing groups. **LEP** stands for the Leadership Education Programme.

You might find people talk about the **HG**, or Holding Group. This is the group who hold responsibility for the work of CBiB, do some of the work, but not all, and support ('hold') others who are engaged in the availability and development of community building here in Britain. The **FTG**, or Facilitator Training group, is the group from whom facilitators for public events are discerned, and who are supporting each other in their continuous learning and training as facilitators. The **LOG**, or Learning Opportunities Group, is the group who come together occasionally to explore different facets of building community, and to try out new approaches. Some local ongoing groups are listed on the back page. Opportunities to join all these groups, and reports of what goes on are usually reported, are notified in the newsletter when appropriate.



The next mailing will be in July.
Volunteers in the London area please
call Peter on 01438 813765.

If you can use more than one event
leaflet - eg among your friends or
colleagues - do indicate on the
subscription form how many you
would like us to send. Thanks.

On-Going Groups Page

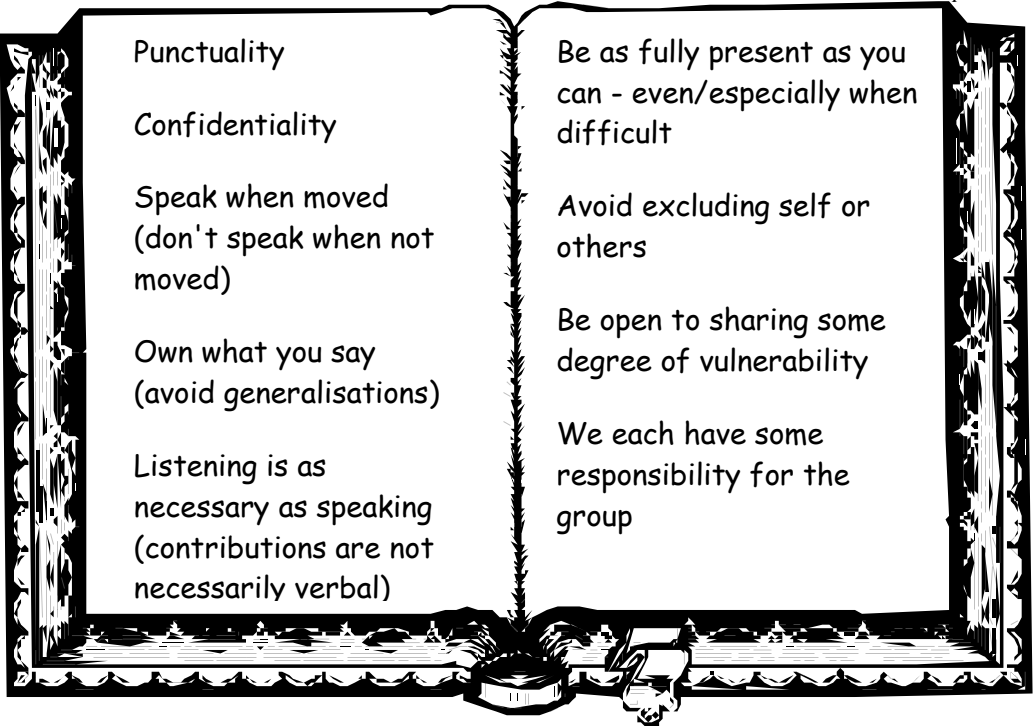
I attended a group recently where the two lists below were put up to remind us of some of the guidelines for the community building process. You might find them useful, or you might prefer a different selection.

Any comments?

There are interesting reports from several groups in this edition, and they are each finding new and exciting depths in the community building process.

I wish all the groups well - especially those that are newly forming, or transforming.

Peter Cooper



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 inc p&p.

Overheard on BBC Radio Thames Valley

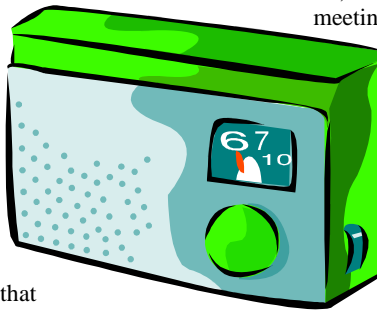
Sharon Usher is sponsoring the CBW in March, and she was interviewed on the radio programme 'One to One with Jesus' about it on Sunday 22/2/98. I thought that you might be interested to hear what she was asked, and how she replied. Thank you Sharon - I thought it came across really clearly.

Tell us about this workshop.

The Community Building Workshop itself is about a group of people getting together to meet with the express intent to experience this thing which Scott Peck calls 'Community'. This is difficult to talk about- because it is essentially mysterious. He describes it as trying to describe the taste of an artichoke to someone who has ever eaten one. It is something about a sense of wholeness, and unity and acceptance between people; and we know it has something to do with communication - how people actually communicate with each other. As lots of groups through time have explored this process we also know that there are certain things that can help it along and certain things that can hinder it. For a group that meets with that intention, and if it is facilitated in a certain way, it becomes more likely than not that the people there will experience this sense of community - of connectedness - it is something like the scales falling off your eyes, and being able to really see.

Tell me about Dr Scott Peck and the books he has written

He was a psychotherapist, a psychiatrist, and a christian. He wrote the first book (The Road Less Travelled) which has been the best selling non-fiction book ever \apart form the Bible. He was trying to bring together the psychological world with this spiritual past, so he talks about meaning of love and connectedness, and what happens between people, and how the psychological understandings of what goes on meet with the spiritual and theological. It has touched many people.



What can people hope to achieve or gain at this weekend? Christians would say their main hope is surely to be closer to God, to know God better, would one hope to achieve that sort of thing?

It means many different things to different people, people who come on the workshop - some who have experienced it would speak in that kind of language for their experience, others of feeling more accepting of themselves and other people than they ever have done in their lives, and some people exercise the meeting with God through another person.

So self-esteem, building self-worth etc these things come into it as well do they?

That's certainly been my experience - I have not felt as accepting of myself and other people as in these circles, there is another depth to it that I have not come across

anywhere else certainly.

Have you had people on such weekends for whom it has been a life-changing experience?

People do say that, and there are quite a few people now in this country who have been to the workshops, and because of their experience are committed to putting more of them on so that other people can experience the same thing so there is an organisation called Community Building in Britain that exists to put on these workshops, and that is a companion to the Scott Peck organisation in America- FCE- one of whose facilitators is coming over to do this workshop in March.

Are there places still available on this weekend?

There are indeed.

(Sharon can be contacted on 01235 848132)

Learning Opportunities - a personal reflection

Learning Opportunities happened at Douai, near Reading, 6th -8th Feb., with Erica, Cliff, Ruth, Armando, Norman, Matthew, Teän, Barry and myself.

I wish to acknowledge the work Armando (and Erica and Teän) put into making the Llanberis week-end happen, as there was some 'beating ourselves up' for being nice facilitating people trying to keep everyone happy (and avoiding aggro??): especially as it was my agenda about whether CBiB was suitable for people with special needs that provoked a confused exchange about quality of listening.

Mixed message

The fact that Armando tried to encourage more dialogue was, for me, important in that I was thereby able to state clearly that I was annoyed, but that it felt OK to be annoyed at the same time as acknowledging that both special needs and the way I raised my difficulty with sitting still for long periods was not enabling the present group process to unfold. This was seen as a mixed message. I believe internal contradictions happen often and can be seen as a part of the process.

Experiments

The perennial debate about whether to stay in one circle or split for specific activities and/or silence continued until Sunday morning. When the two groups came back together the debaters were keener to talk about any differences than the listeners - understandably: specifically - we want to be able to say 'exactly where I am' at any given moment. We acknowledge need to bracket checking out and

responses to give time and space for emptiness to allow change. Also that many responses/difficulties need to be bracketed in task meetings so that the business may be cleared efficiently.

The priority of reaching community appeared to have been suspended. Regrets expressed by some members. How to take community into different aspects of life (maybe by stealth) was the recurring theme - and Barry will lead one Action Learning session at our next meeting.

Breaking habits

I was moved to let go of my lifelong habit of drawing negative attention which I had learned to divert my parents' quarrels and any outside attempts to seduce my obstinacy - but can I authentically hang on to that?!

Previous items from Armando's letter - structure of CBiB, 4 principles from Road Less Travelled, again - awareness of group process (+ personal), quality+ time of concentration, reviewing process. The end of session reviews were most helpful and brought out stuff that had gone on working under the surface.

As soon as I receive other contributions I will comment and send them to Peter.

*Yvonne Poulson
Flat 2 Linden Court,
6 Linden Grove,
Nunhead,
London SE15 3LF*

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

Teän's impression's of the Learning Opportunities Group meeting of 7th and 8th February 1998

Well..... this third meeting clarified a lot of what we are about, as a learning group that is on-going, for me (in a subtle sort of way!).

Developing

With a majority who had been to one or more of the previous get together, and a minority who had been to all three, it felt like that over the course of the three sessions we were developing a slowly deepening sense of community.

Waiting & experimenting

We also realised that individuals had been bringing at least two complementary ways of learning to the group (which alleviated previous discord in Llanberis). These were roughly defined as an active waiting for the learning to arise, and a more a purposeful experimenting using specific learning exercises.

Once these were defined on the first day it seemed the process was able to move on quite smoothly, so that we had time and space to savour silence and companionship, discuss pain, suffering and sacrifice, and the potential for greater joy as one gets more practised at this; clarify what else we as individuals wanted from the group, and nip into town for chocolate/take in the fresh air and beautiful day outside!

Spirit

Spirit, a previous interest, cropped up again as He/She does, grounded in the environment we were in (the grounds of a Benedictine Abbey). An early cue for me was a very creepy image on the mantelpiece(!), which for a while took me out of the circle but forced me to recognise the reality of the interplay between Light and Darkness - which has great significance for me both in life and the CB process. Once I

recognised this and brought it back into the circle it led to an exploration of that topic.

Pushing boundaries

I find community building more of a God-enveloped activity than church-going these days, although I am not sure whether to regret or rejoice in this. This group gives me the opportunity to push the boundaries and experience them being pushed as well as discover the bits that work outside in "life".

As a group we stuck to previously agreed structure (to start and end the weekend in a circle, review each half day's process), and were also able, without too much chaos to move to another format, (smaller groups) as also previously proposed.

Love

The concept of 'putting energy into' / having energy for things is one that is cropping up a lot for me at the moment and this ties in with how much I do in 'love'. Peck's version being extending myself to foster my and/or another's psycho-spiritual growth.

I have had a feeling before in these groups that I know what it takes, but doing it and being sequentially aware/conscious that I am doing it is another matter.

Free space

I perceive the LOG as developing an agenda-free space in which its members are free to play with new ways of taking the community building experience back out into our other spheres of influence.

So, I found it very encouraging and meaningful although I am aware that it did not meet everybody's needs - what does?!

Teän Stuttaford

Community Building in a Small Group

The Community Building Experience held at Monkton Wyld Court on February 6 - 8th marks a break with precedent - since the facilitators and convenors decided to go ahead, with exactly 6 participants.

Does it work?

There has been a widespread belief (I think coming from FCE though I don't have anything definite on this) that the CB format "does not work" with a small group. The three of us who had been allocated to facilitate this workshop (Tracy Barr, Jill Firth and Mike Roth) felt confident that we could improvise something of value, however.

All the participants were contactable by telephone and all were keen to go ahead even with this unexpectedly small number. It seemed an ideal time to do something different.

Preparation

Tracy, Jill and myself spent a lot of the day before the workshop considering in what ways a group of nine people (five paying participants, one sponsor from the Monkton Wyld community and three facilitators) might be different, and in what ways it might resemble, a larger CBE situation.

We wondered if we might need to participate more as individuals. We also thought we might need to facilitate more actively, in order to prevent the collusion and stagnation we had been led to believe might easily happen with the smaller size of group.

Experience

As the workshop proceeded, however, we were surprised to discover that there were far more similarities with the "usual" CB event, than there were differences. The kind of progress through stages of community was not noticeably different.

On the other hand, we did find the nature of the chaos of this group to be distinctly different from what we have been used to -we do not know if this was because of the smallness of the group (less potential for

escalation of the anger in those familiar snowball-type ripples) - but it may also have been because this was an unusually mature and thoughtful group.

Interventions

There was one specific difference in the way in which we chose to intervene in this group's process. We all felt more relaxed in being able to give specific interventions into the flow of the interaction - and we found that these were able to be received in a "low key" manner perhaps because of the intimate form of the group.

We worked hard at fine-tuning the timing of what we said. We tried to leave space for the participants to sort out difficulties for themselves, but we did not allow them to remain "stuck" in mutual misunderstanding for more than two or three turns of the vicious circle.

We do not know if our style of intervention was *necessary*, in order for a group of this size to move through its stages. Our hunch is that the potential for blaming and judgement in a small group (and the piling of misunderstanding upon misunderstanding) could be much higher - so that the progress through the stages of community *might not* happen within the time available.

Pleasure

All in all this group, though challenging, felt like a pleasure to facilitate. It seemed to be a genuine and meaningful search for community.

It confirms the belief that we three started out with: that the Community Building process does not need to be confined to the larger format of 20 or more persons. Our own sense is that, applied with sensitivity and commitment, the process is fully adaptable to the smaller group.

Of course, this experience would need to be confirmed with other small groups before it would be safe to generalise. The hypothesis has to be entertained, that the learning and the progress towards community which we

witnessed, was some kind of lucky accident - and only a series of more small group experiences could refute this convincingly.

Spirit?

Our own impression was a strong one, however, that we were participating in a meaningful group process and that the positive

outcome was a result of committed work by all participants - and with the additional and absolutely necessary factor of grace. (In Mike's terms this is the cybernetic serendipity factor, others call it spirit.)

Mike Roth

Network Gathering - or whatever we call it

The holding group 'held' and discussed the provisional booking made for a Network Gathering on 18th to 20th September 1998.

It resolved to confirm this, and at least three people will meet in March as a sub-group to take this project further.

There was some general agreement around offering a space to consist of some circle time, and previously agreed and formatted 'focus' type group time for specific issue concentration/sharing.

This sub-group of Cliff Jordan, Gerri Moriarty and Teän Stuttaford welcome those moved to contribute to all or a specific part of this 3 day event, to contact us and/or join us in bringing it to fruition.

Impressions of previous events, suggestions for this one, and practical input are all very welcome as well.

Please contact Gerri (initially) on:

tel: 012657 69139, or fax 07070 602963.



Jemima Jefferson has a new (temporary) address:

45 Hazelwood Lane
Palmer's Green
London N13 5EZ

Tel: 0181 886 3654

The other week I received this, and felt very moved by it...

After the first CB event I attended, I came away fascinated at how a few simple guidelines could seemingly unlock so much.

At my second, I breathed air fresher than I had known since becoming self-conscious as a child;

I experienced more life in three days than I usually did in a year;

and found more space to be truly me than I had dared to hope for any more in this world.



I believe that one of the most powerful ways of getting a message across is to use real personal testimonies. I 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 my first CB event"?

I have included with the subscription renewal form this year some space for you to write down a personal sentence or two, with the request that you either allow it to be used anonymously, or indicate that I should contact you to ask permission before it is used.

Please feel free to leave this blank, or to write as much as you want!

I have already received a number of sharings from several people, and I appreciate that not all of them are for publication. Thank you.

I look forward to hearing from you, whether or not you want to subscribe to the newsletter. Please pull out the page that contains the subscription form (I hope it pulls out without damaging the newsletter OK), fill it in, and send it back to me. You may want to reuse the envelope this came in, so I intend to include a sticky return label with my address on - otherwise see my address on the back page.

Thank you in anticipation, *Peter*.

Holding Group 20/22 February 1998

Suzy Adderley, Richard Benzie, Peter Cooper, Ruth Goffe, Cliff Jordan, Anthony Kirke, Gerri Moriarty, Yvonne Poulson and Teän Stuttaford were present at the meeting.

The more we empty ourselves, the more arises for us to contain

We had a mega-agenda, and a meeting that flowed, circled and often jumped up and settled back again. This report is even more partial than most!

Dreams

We gave some attention to desires, dreams, visions... with a reminder that CBiB does not gather around a shared purpose, but because we value a particular process.

We spoke/wrote the words in the box early in the weekend, and I believe they informed a great deal of how we dealt with "business".

We gave no conscious, focused time to the second item on our list - group discernment of what we each might do in CBiB.

How we operate

I think we did go through a significant shift in how we operate. We almost got rid of the label "Holding Group".

We have used imagery of "containment" - a pot within which ingredients are put together and stirred - and that this may be an essential stage, but now it feels constraining. There was excitement and liberation at the notion of "rubber bands" linking us all together. "Connection" rather than "containment"

becoming our task. Lots more space for initiative and movement, as long as attention and energy is still given to the links between us.

Support and trust

We recognised that frequently we have assumed we have to collectively resolve issues that individuals bring. In fact, instead of

working hard to achieve detailed consensus time and again, we can support and trust each other to reach our own conclusion and take our own actions on virtually all issues. Our meetings become an occasion when we can see how our contributions fit together, adjusting and negotiating as feels necessary.

On a very mundane level, we generally accepted the value of circulating information beforehand, on

paper, to help us all be well-informed when we begin our meetings. This underpins, but does not replace, the raising of an issue in the circle.

Public events

A few weeks ago, a CBE at Monkton Wyld was transformed into a small group event, with prior consent of all involved. We received a report from Mike Roth (see elsewhere in the newsletter), and welcomed everyone's willingness to try something new. Apparently all went very well.

"Space to be me"
"Acknowledgement"
"Experiencing more depth"
"Unblocking"
"Allowing/valuing differentiation"
"Relationships and building community between communities"
"Celebrating re-combination"
"More"
"Deeper, broader, more diverse"

Two events next month are filling up nicely.

Three events are planned for the Autumn. This is a distinct reduction in the number of events taking place compared to previous years.

The 'Rusty' Event

A US facilitator (Rusty) is coming over for the two March events. We had hoped to make use of his skills and experience during the week between.

There has been little apparent progress with this, with both Sharon Usher and Suzy Adderley now recognising that they needed to let go of responsibility for it. As well as many other unknowns, there was some paralysis over financial issues.

Eventually, the Holding Group resolved:

"£300 from CBiB funds is available to pay Rusty's fees, enabling John Hoggett and whoever else has the enthusiasm, to convene some sort of event around March 23/24th."

CB in commerce

David Saunders, of the Holding Group, is acting as Training Consultant to a Dutch company who have subsequently commissioned FCE to provide a training for many of their staff.

The ensuing flow of phone calls, letters and e-mails has generated many issues and strong feelings around our ability to deal with commercial organisations, our internal coherence, and our relationship with FCE. Not forgetting "CbiHolland" (do Dutch people really speak in American all the time?)

Conclusions? Probably none yet. Along the way, admiration of David Saunders' holding strongly to his own position while dealing with powerful others; resentment at FCE's apparent dismissiveness of CBiB; and concern and support for those in CBiB caught up in this sudden interfacing with "them".

International relations

We noticed an ad hoc grouping groping together in response to the need for "International Relations" and that it seems

another new and strange hybrid. We usually seek to build community first, and then take tasks on afterwards, but on this occasion we are working the other way round, which is exactly what existing business organisations might require of us!

Anthony, Ruth, Suzy and David seem to be the core of the group, with Michael Jacobs of the FTG also very involved in this particular instance.

We returned repeatedly, at many levels, to issues around "dependency", autonomy, self-actualisation, and interdependence.

Administration

We heard from Peter Cooper about the recent mailing (which was only sent to people in the south of England), the newsletter and some other administrative things. There is more detail on this in his editorial.

Peter raised the possibility of charging for receiving mailings. He agreed instead to "update" the mailing list with a card-return exercise, probably in July. We agreed that, whilst money funds allow, the CBiB main account will pay the postage for national mailings twice a year or so.

Publicity

The Publicity group (Peter, Richard, Ruth and Fanny Calder) are meeting and moving onwards.

Fanny has met with a TV producer, and had a very encouraging report. If his proposal is accepted by the BBC, and he can get access to Scott Peck, he would hope to have a programme broadcast in the Autumn (around the 20th anniversary of the publication of "The Road Less Travelled"). He would like to include film of a community building circle for this - with consent of all participants.

Enquiries

At present Anthony's address and phone number are published in various places. Suzy and Peter will explore various options enabling us to share the burden amongst others.

Gathering

A lively exchange happened around the "Network Gathering/ General Meeting/ Conference/ Convergence".

We asked Teän to confirm the booking at Unstone Grange in September (18-20th).

One aim last year was to reinvigorate the Holding Group and FTG (very successfully). This year we wish to give much more attention to event organiser and locally-based ongoing groups. We also want a much more diverse event, that is not dominated by a single large circle.

Teän, Gerri, and Cliff, with whoever they co-opt, are to formulate plans and clarify issues, to share at the next HG.

Accounts for 1997

See elsewhere for the actual accounts. Erica intends to resign: she will deliver to the FTG responsibility for the "Training Fund", whilst handing to us the main account. Cliff proposed that we offer an honorarium but there was much resistance to this, so for now a voluntary post will be advertised in the Newsletter.

Anyone claiming money from CBiB for expenses is asked to do so in the same calendar year, so that the accounts more accurately portrays reality.

Constitution

We nudged into this area and backed out a couple of times. We aired it some more, and are continuing in an information-gathering stage.

Ongoing groups

Little space for looking at the health of the FTG, LOG, Publicity and local groups, which I reckon is a shame because I believe we would be much supported and encouraged by the vitality and diversity that is arising in CBiB.

Achieving Community

Teän raised the issue of whether CBEs/CBW's reach a palpable sense of community less often now than they used to, and if so why this might be.

Have our expectations been reduced, our facilitator competence/confidence declined, or our relationships with "Spirit" become thin? Some very challenging questions were raised that were received beautifully gently. Teän was entrusted with the task of delving further.

We again recognised "exit surveys" as a resource that we find it very difficult to make any use of.

Closure was "nice".

Cliff Jordan

Want to know more about building community?

Perhapsyou have been to a Community Building Event and want to understand a bit more about what goes on?

Perhapsyou have not yet been to an event, and want to experience building community in beautiful surroundings?

Perhapsyou want three days away in a still and receptive atmosphere with a group reflecting on the experience of building community?

Now is your chance (possibly the last for a while)!

There are still some places at the Oxfordshire Community Building Workshop on March 20th -22nd (Friday-Sunday).

For information contact Sharon Usher on 01235 848132, or write to The Abbey, Sutton Courtenay, OX14 4AF.

A Poem by Oriah Mountain Woman

This poem has been going around for quite a while, and has touched many hearts. I do not know who originally wrote it, but I have heard it attributed to someone called Lewie who sent it to Mary McCurry (Kripalu Yoga Teacher Training 1997), and said it was written by someone called Oriah Mountain Woman.

Other versions have attributed it to Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Indian Elder.

It doesn't matter to me what you do for a living -

I want to know what you ache for,
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are -

I want to know if you risk looking like a fool for love,
for your dreams,
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon -

I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow,
if you have been opened by life's betrayals,
or have become shrivelled or closed from fear of further pain.

I want to know if you can sit with your own pain, without moving to
hide it or fade it or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with your own joy,
if you can dance wildness, and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of
your fingers and toes,
without cautioning yourself to be careful, to be realistic, or to
remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true -
I want to know if you can "disappoint" another to be true to yourself,
if you can bear the "accusation" of betrayal and not betray your own
soul,
if you can be "faithful" and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty, even when it's not pretty every
day,
and if you can source from your own life Beauty's Presence.

I want to know if you can live with your failure,
and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the
full moon "YES!".

**It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money
you have -**

I want to know if you can get up, after a night of grief and despair,
weary and bruised to the bone,
and do what needs to be done for your family.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here
I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and
not shrink back.

**It doesn't interest me where, or what, or with whom you have
studied -**

I want to know what sustains you from the inside, when all else fails
away,
if you can be alone with yourself,
and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.

Report on the Facilitator Training Group Meeting, January 21 - 23 1998

The main business for this meeting was to continue the joining procedure for new members, which we had begun with enthusiasm but quite a lot of confusion at our previous meeting last September.

Small groups?

There was a question about whether to do some of our exploring and discernment in small groups, but the feeling of the meeting seemed clearly to be that we should proceed as a large circle for all the business.

Unlike on some previous occasions this felt like a genuine group decision, leading to a high quality of work together, and not the "addiction to the circle" syndrome which pops up from time to time to bedevil CB work and lock us into our misery.

Discernment

Early on the Saturday we had evolved a procedure for discernment. It depended upon having the question open (since we never settled it): *"Is this a group that can/should include people who aren't expected to facilitate public workshops?"*

The effect of having this question open, was that prospective members had a choice of what question they could offer to the group for discernment. They could ask: *"Can I join this group?"* or: *"Am I a potential facilitator? (of public workshops)"* or alternatively: *"Can I come for 1 (or 2?) more meetings (have a decision later)"*.

A way of working

We settled on a way of working: people "booked" time with the circle; they started out

by putting their question and making a brief communication about where they stood with it.

They then received feedback for about 23 minutes, with Erica facilitating, and at the end of the time helping to move the group towards whatever decision it was able to make in response to the question asked (which could

include "don't know" as one possible outcome). We were aiming at consensus decision wherever possible.

Delicate work

This was delicate and difficult work, and there were serious glitches from time to time. Yet on the whole it seemed to be done with real integrity and sensitivity, and I think most of us were surprised and pleased at the quality

we achieved.

We discerned three people definitely "in" to the group. One person was, in effect, mutually discerned out - insofar as what the group seemed to be wanting from them was not something they felt able to offer.

Two people were referred for a decision at a later date, and invited to continue to attend meetings in the meantime. Three more had their discernment postponed for a later meeting.

Other business

Two workshops were discerned for (Sutton Courtney and Brighton). A contract between the Holding Group and the FTG will be worked on. There was a broad feeling of support for initiatives in Holland in which David Saunders is acting as mediator for CBiB; communication will continue about this over the next few weeks.

Mike Roth





Job Advertisement

Book Keeper

CBiB requires somebody:

- to hold the cheque-book
- to reliably pay incoming cheques into the bank
- to rapidly write cheques and forward them for co-signing
- to keep careful, comprehensive records of all transactions.

Chief requirements are thoroughness, reliability and a fixed address.

Probably thirty to sixty cheques a year (some weeks there is no work at all)

Virtually no decision-taking

Advice and support available

To find out more and/or volunteer your services

contact Cliff Jordan at 01684 540885

Station Bungalow, Colwall, Malvern WR13 6QX

Do we know what we are trying to do?

I want to respond to a question asked in a previous newsletter: How would I express the purpose of CBiB?

The purpose of CBiB is not the really important thing which encourages me to participate. The really important thing for me is the practice of building community.

My starting point is therefore my attempt to describe what happens when we build community. Describing an experience can never be entirely satisfactory, but I nevertheless believe it is worth trying to do.

Building Community

When a body of people build community we:

1. have no formal or rigid hierarchy;
2. value paradox, discovery and the tension between holding on and letting go;
3. value silence;
4. relate with love and respect;
5. are respectful of individuals and bodies not present;
6. have a collective wisdom;

7. as individuals, express ourselves honestly, personally and self-consciously;
8. take decisions in a spirit of utmost consideration for those holding minority opinions;
9. seek to include each individual irrespective of the views they hold or express;
10. are conscious of the limitations imposed by time;
11. value and respect the wider physical world in both its animate and inanimate forms;
12. are aware of the profound and glorious uniqueness which is given to every human being.

The purpose of CBiB

What is the purpose of CBiB? I believe its purpose is to help create situations in which groups can build community. Among the ways in which this is done at the moment are: two- and three-day public events; the general meeting; ongoing groups in particular localities; the facilitators group; the holding group.

Richard Benzie

CBiB End of Year Accounts 1997

Income

Events	3247.72
Donations	2070.00
Interest	107.24
General Meeting	476.44
L.T.G.	<u>237.00</u>
Total Income	<u>6138.40</u>

Expenditure

General Administration	893.22
Facilitator Training Group	1136.14
Events	2402.53
Holding Group	89.10
CCC conference	590.07
Transfer to FTG	<u>342.84</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>5453.90</u>

Bank Account

Opening Balance	2998.88
Net Income	<u>684.50</u>
Closing Balance	<u>3683.38</u>

(With many thanks to Erica for all her hard work on the accounts these last few years.)

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

Issues 50-60 £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.
p&p

Book for Sale

"The Power of Acceptance"

By Doug Shadel and Bill Thatcher

published 1997 price £10.95

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.

Note that this is now available through your local bookshop.

(Peter can provide it but would need to charge an extra £2.05 for postage)

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

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.

Central & North London: Meets on the third Sunday of the month 2-6pm. New members very welcome. Please call Fanny Calder on 01986 873422 if you are interested in coming along

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

Oxfordshire: Currently not open to new members. Contact Sharon on 01235 848132

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:-

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Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the same address by 4th April 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