

Community Building in Britain Newsletter

Number 75

June/September 2000

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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Editorial

Dear readers, Community builders and all ...

It is the autumn equinox as I write this, September 22nd 2000. Apologies you've had to wait so long for this issue. I am afraid I have a habit of taking on too many responsibilities in my life and then finding I do not have enough time to fulfil my commitments - a very stressful state of affairs. So I need to let go of editing the Newsletter (this last issue has sometimes felt like it was costing me my sanity - a price I am unwilling to pay any longer), which means we need a new editor...

I feel very sad, at present, as I look back on my year and I realise that the Community Building training which was a very rich learning experience for me lies still largely

undigested on my horizon along with several other deep and rich experiences this summer.

This is my last Newsletter. Any letters, articles, poems or cartoons should, in the interim before we get a new editor, be sent to Peter Cooper at 52 Sole Farm Avenue (PeterCBiB@aol.com). Peter is happy to continue handling the production and distribution of the Newsletter, and supporting the editor. See page 8 for how the roles fit together.

Yours
Rachel Castagne
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Community Building in Britain events

<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Fee</u>	<u>Notes</u>
6-8 October	Sheffield	Bill Horrocks 01909 560618	£65*	CBE
2-5 November	Othona, Dorset	Tony Jaques 01308 897130 (othona.bb@free4all.co.uk)	£155 residential	CBW
25-26 November	London	Colin Morely 020 8445 2514 colin@aw2.co.uk	£95	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.

Other events are being arranged so keep your eye on the newsletter or web-site.

* This fee is being kept low by asking people to bring lunch.

Poem 102

not always easy

truth to say

- or be

to share something

uneasily

one's lie

one's vulnerability

but truth's surprising knack

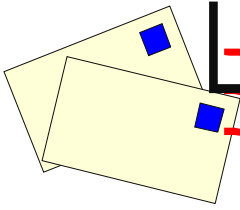
creates what we sometimes lack

(for me and for you)

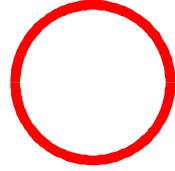
acceptance, friendship, love

to name a few

*Roger Greene
45c Moorhall
DE45 1FP*



LETTERS



Diversity and openness

Dear Newsletter,

I have realised I am in grave danger of being part of the "silent majority" unless I say something.

I have loved the diversity and openness of the Newsletter over recent few years, and especially that even Bill Thatcher can send poison pen letters and get them published (am I the only reader who found that letter sweet and vulnerable in its fashion?). I loved the A. P. Ilgrim stuff, and all the stuff from other networks, the sense of different star systems meeting and spinning off each other, when other stuff from other realms gets onto the pages.

(Also, I first heard about CB in 1991 because of something in Permaculture News. I would like to think people might one day discover Permaculture through reading the CBiB newsletter.)

I haven't yet told Anthony that I found his letter a bit parochial and ill-considered, but anyway, I would be very sad if it put anyone off from sharing these pages to build connections.

And thank you Rachel (who may not be editor at the time of my writing) for keeping it alive and beautiful.

Mike Roth

Braziers Park and Scott Peck

Dear Rachel,

Thank you for the interesting article on Braziers Park. Your readers may be interested to compare the sensory/executive differentiation of meetings used at Braziers Park with Scott Peck's ideas on "Task and

Process" (see pages 410-414 'A world waiting to be born' 1993).

Yours with thanks

*John Wood
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Holding Group

Dear Rachel,

I want to say that I have benefited considerably from being in the Holding Group over a number of years, it has done wonders for me in helping me to grow psychologically, besides giving me many good friends and great times.

I also believe that the Holding Group has developed wonderful ways of operating: it has evolved into a very effective working group, capable of consensus decision-making and impressive in its use of time.

These are learnings which I feel are of great value wherever groups gather to carry out tasks, and so they form a major contribution to the skills of Community Building.

For the last year or so we have had a policy of inviting people who have attended at least one CB event to consider joining us (that being the only qualification). A few people have done just that and the new blood has been very welcome.

Sadly there is a small wastage of people leaving for one reason or another; so we felt it important now to re-advertise our need for new members and to ask readers to consider joining us. If you think you may be interested please talk to one of our existing members. We normally agree a trial period and then, together, decide on ongoing membership.

The commitment is to try to attend the weekend meetings (usually four) which we have each year. There are tasks to be done outside these meetings, but these are done voluntarily by those who have the time. Any expenses incurred may be claimed and reimbursed.

I'm very glad I didn't miss the opportunity to join when it was offered to me!!!

*Yours sincerely,
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Letting go

Dear CBiB

My name is Dave. In the Feb/Mar 2000 edition I wrote a piece for the newsletter entitled "Gotcha". It was about my early experiences of Community Building and an eventual healing experience over the course of two Community Building events. In the next few workshops I went through an intense growth process when I began to realise my thoughts and opinions were listened to and very important. In fact, I began to realise I was loveable and capable of giving and receiving love.

I used to get a very deep sense of community and God but something has changed over the last five years, I've been on at least five CB events and I haven't sensed Community or God. This lack of community has totally baffled me and I've been racking my brain as to why I used to experienced community and don't any longer.

An experience

I decided to go to the CB training week in May 2000 with the belief that if I did not experience Community it would be my last CB event. It was my last, but I did get some idea of why I have not been experiencing Community lately. For the benefit of the rest of CBiB I'm going to repeat a true experience I told at the training week.

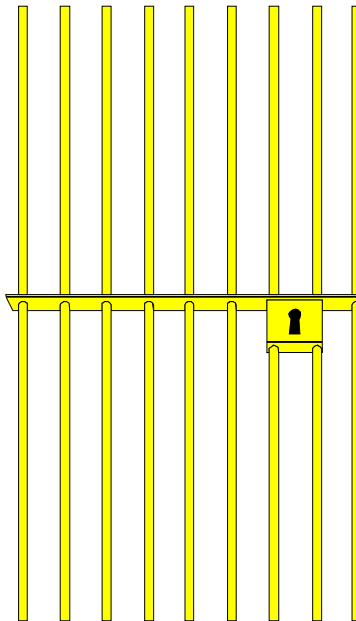
In November 1994 I went to my third CBW in London. It was awful, except for two people, me and another man, who out of 40 to 50 people were the only two to achieve Community. When I left that CBW I wondered why, and also what more I could have done to help the rest of the group achieve community. When I left that CBW I took on all the responsibility of the group not having a CB experience. This led me on to have a major mental breakdown.

Krazy things

To cut a long story short, during this breakdown I was out in public doing some krazy things and was eventually arrested, taken to a police station and put in a cell for the night. During this night in the cell I had the urge to go for a shit and decided to hold on until I could get to a toilet. I was hearing voices in my mind at the time and this voice was saying "what are you holding on for, why don't you let go? You believe in emptiness don't you? Let go and you'll get

to Community".

So a 25 year-old fully grown-up man decided to let go and shit himself, just like a little baby, all down the back of my legs and onto the floor. When the police found out what I had done they opened the cell door and said "We have run you a bath, you need to clean yourself up". After I had my bath



and returned to my cell, the shit that was on the floor had been cleaned up and you wouldn't believe anything had happened. To this day I will never forget the way the police handled me. They treated me with love and respect without criticism or condemnation, as an adult, even though I was behaving as an infant.

Emptiness

So what's all this got to do with Community Building? Well it got me thinking about all the emotional shit that people bring into CBEs. I also read Scott Peck's epilogue in the book "The power of acceptance" in which he talks about what individuals need to empty themselves of during emptiness. He says there are a vast amount of things people need to give up including:- prejudices, instant liking or disliking of others, inability to listen, particularly to matters that are painful, fear of silence, the self-centred need to fix, heal or convert, the need to control. Other things are more personal:- intense anger at a family member, guilt at having neglected your kids, pre-occupation with an illness, a habit of sarcasm, a fear of being found out, a fear of being accepted, fear that it's not safe - the list is endless.

Cleaning up

These are just a few of the shitty things that individuals and a group have to let go of. If it doesn't a group never enters unity. When a group has done this and enters Community I believe that the individuals and the group need to clean up each other's shit. This can only be achieved through a love for each other, and as a group I don't believe the letting go of one another's shit is been done by Community Building groups and the cleaning up of the mess through love is not being achieved.

This is the problem I feel Community Building is suffering from but it can be solved by the group's awareness being raised as to what each individual's barrier is to Community and having the guts to let go of that barrier. There is no other or easier way out.

I have written a poem just to make my point

If you feel revenge let it go
If you feel angry let it go
If you feel guilty let it go
If you feel fear let it go
If you feel like laughing let go and just laugh
If you feel like crying let go and just cry
If you feel resentment let it go
If you feel jealous let it go
If you feel in pain let it go
If you suffer from lies let them go
If you're grieving let go and let them rip
If you're feeling unforgiveness let go and forgive
If you feel the need to control let it go
If you have needs let them go
If you have desires let them go
If you have dreams let them go
If you're holding onto the past let it go
If you're worrying about the future let it go
It's just as hard to hold on as it is to let go
But try to let go and experience love

*All the best CBIB
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Sages

What does a seer see, and what does a hearer hear? What sets the sage apart, and why are people fearful of them? Probably because there's no certificate of qualification, people prefer to put their trust in others who have proved, to others, that they can be trusted, in some respects.

Unfortunately 'some respects' being the operative words and 'safer perhaps to deal with some parts at a time'. Yet those same people who say to a Doctor 'you shouldn't hold back the truth' are the same people who would say 'you could have put it more gently'. In other words 'I can't stand the truth but I've a right to know

Sages, since the dawn of time, have known what it is that people search for, so how come is it, that when they speak no one wants to hear and someone puts their lights out! It's no wonder the few remaining keep their heads down.

There never has been a monetary charge for truth, wisdom or love, yet it does carry the greatest price tag imaginable, once bitten forever smitten. Bound by moral law to help others, for it is as it has always been, righteousness not self righteousness, it means giving up your free will to the great will.

Yet I say verily unto you, the ultimate gift you would expect to have, the greatest price tag wouldn't you? Fortune in love and longevity of life remains a dream to most, a lonely reality to some and total fulfilment to a few. Yet to know you will be proved right in the future, for you truly understand that

which went before, does remain terrifying to most, for that is their fear.

But the reassurance remains, life is but a dream and dreams are the reality from which we came.

Yet how should I know that you seek me? By your uneasiness and if I should catch you making more than a passing glance at me, then I would know your heart. Seek not the dragon slayer lest your heart be young and strong and know that the dragon and the slayer are as one.

History says, Civilisation and Community therefore, only ever move forward when one individual is prepared to lay down their life, where their conscience proves stronger than capitulation to men's laws, of the past.

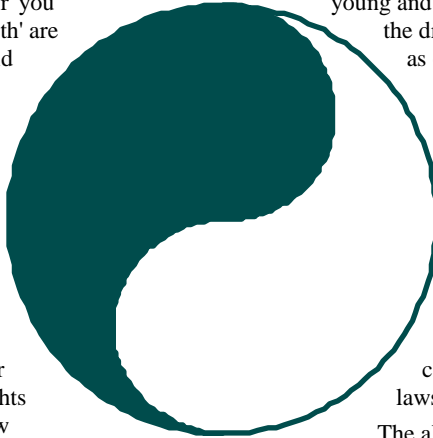
The allegory of language never changes, wisdom never changes from Moses to Gandhi, from parent to child. I am a part of your soul, it is mine and mine is yours.

Beware of rules and exclusive clubs, lest you become that which you despise. If Li is to succeed it must always be because of the Ren and Yi, of all peoples.

So start at the beginning with Confucius, or further back at the temple of Osiris, after all you were there.

Forgive me for using your podium, I shall find another. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

A.P Ilgrim



Newsletter jobs

Have you ever felt “I would like to do something to help develop community building in the UK”.

Would you like to be part of something that goes even wider (currently to Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Ireland, Republic of

South Africa, Slovakia, and USA)? Might you have a passion for opening lines of communication?

As Rachel has decided to hand over the editorship we thought it useful to outline the tasks involved in producing the newsletter.

I think of it as comprising three main jobs, and the main tasks within each are:-

Job	Tasks	Comment
Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deciding what goes in and how to edit contributions (if at all) Commissioning articles, photos, poems etc Encouraging potential contributors, and establishing rights to publish Generating interest among subscribers Writing an editorial, and/or other contributions 	Needs to be in contact with, and available to, people in the network; some decisions are difficult and encouraging contributions needs persistence - support available
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting all contributions into the computer Laying out, and adding artwork Getting it printed, stapled and folded 	Needs computer and layout style ability and interest – training and support available
Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the subscriber list Obtaining subscriptions, and reminding late payers Deciding concessions Producing labels for each edition Getting it stuffed, stamped and posted 	Needs tact and persistence – usefully done by the same person maintaining the main CBiB database

These jobs do not all need to be done by the same person, and some of the tasks can be moved around between the jobs. The jobs could even be done by a small team in various ways (for example an editorial team might divide it into different sections).

When I was editor, because of my nature and helped by having computer skills, I found it easier to do the whole thing. However I now think it is better done as a team.

While Rachel has been taking on the job of Editor I have been doing the Production and Distribution jobs, and supporting her. I am happy to carry on doing so, unless anyone else wants to volunteer.

However, as Rachel mentions in her editorial, we now need someone, or a group, to come forward and act as Editor. If you feel you might be moved to offer – why not discuss it with Rachel (01273 382 864) or me (01372 450434).

Peter Cooper

A flavour of the CB facilitation training

A 6-day residential CB Facilitation Training took place in May at Braziers Park, Oxfordshire. The huge gothic mansion, healing gardens, wholesome food and welcoming community were a nourishing background and the whole process was intense and rich.

There were 29 participants and 4 trainers and each morning we began with a CB circle. We also worked daily in small groups of 4/5 and “built community with our co-facilitators”, these were partners we had to choose at the beginning of the week – some of whom then had a chance to facilitate the morning circle time.

In the remaining sessions we explored issues around facilitation and community building in various different ways. Some of the issues covered were: The 4 stages of community and the work that needs to be done at each stage; Holding, Bracketing and listening; Power, status and competition; Issues of sexuality in CB; Workshops on clowning, gonging and using Japanese ink (a much needed alternative to constant ‘circle-sitting’!); and Coping with Transition back to life outside.

Flipsheet notes were taken during the training and many of us who attended have since carried on communicating and trying out CB-ing by e-mail. The following are some extracts from the training sheets and post training e-mails - categorised into topics to make them more accessible.

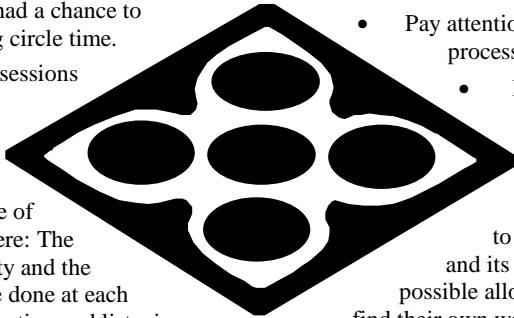
Some tasks of a facilitator

- Build and maintain community with your co-facilitator/s, before the workshop and during breaks- this involves:
 - noticing and expressing, when necessary, the whole range of your

feelings including: irritation, anger, hurt, love, and sexual feelings;

- giving space for your co-facilitator/s to do likewise

- Introduce the guidelines
- Hold the group
- Pay attention to your own process, noticing if you need to bracket, and remembering to return to those issues in the breaks in order to empty of them
- Pay attention to each individual in the group
 - Pay attention to the whole group process:
 - Recognise the stage they are in
 - Give feedback if they seem unable to recognise the stage and its work (as far as possible allowing the group to find their own way)
- Acknowledge progress and encourage them
- Model authentic communication and respect
- Aim to give 100% of yourself to all of the above and be willing to let go of your desire for the group to reach community, to surrender
- Notice when you’ve been knocked off-centre by your own process, and be open to feedback from your co-facilitators if you don’t notice
- Trust yourself
- Trust your co-facilitator/s and re-build that trust when necessary
- TRUST THE PROCESS
- Hold your pee for 1.5 hours



On the training process

“Boundaries is the theme I learned most about in Braziers. Redefining boundaries on the run, of time, of space, of process, of who is in and who is out, is certainly a demonstration of flexibility by the trainers and by the group that accepts those changes. But on the other hand this greater liberty for the trainers can become a smaller liberty for the participants; it can considerably decrease their sense of safety and their capacity to trust the process; and when the changes in boundaries are made by the trainers without any negotiation with the participants, the participants may be left with a sense of increased dependence on the trainers: “my process is in their hands”.

“I felt more community in the small groups, in enjoying the love and holding of the facilitators and with my partner than in the full group. I too didn't feel able to be spontaneous in the large group. I couldn't get beyond performing into free flow.”

On the CB process

“Do you remember that brainstorming exercise we did on the meanings of each of the 4 stages and what work needs to be done in each one? I naively suggested 'sustaining it' and there were sharp intakes of breath from around the room. You all (or many of you) seemed to agree that one of the most important things to be done with community was to let it go and I think you were probably right.”

“In community building the meeting room is an obvious metaphor for the psychological space that we are attempting to make up for our selves and for the others. Here the metaphor didn't fit. This is the fifth CB activity I have been involved in. It begins to look like an unwritten rule: “Thou shall cram as many

people as thou possibly can against the walls of the room and thou shall add a few more.” I can see an advantage to that rule: intimacy, ... and a big disadvantage: promiscuity and the psychological impossibility of escaping except by stepping across the circle.

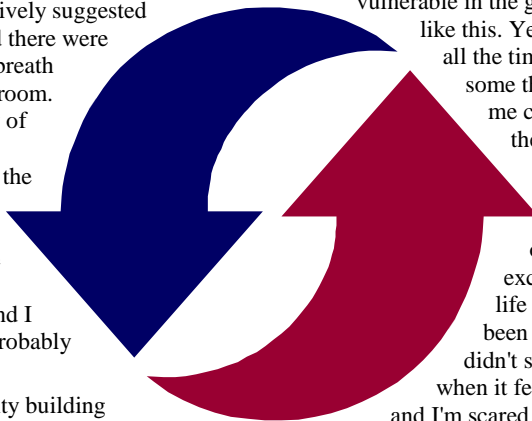
I think that a group should be able to breathe and to decide when it wants to sit tightly or loosely.”

Reflections

“I now know why I set myself the task of being more immediate in my responses while I was at Braziers, and that I failed. I wanted to take risks, to respond to impulses and intuitions, because I tend to be too thoughtful - useful some times, but perhaps not always in community building. Actually I failed at the first hurdle, because something stirred in me when [it was decided] not to read the Rabbi's story at the very beginning, and I couldn't remember enough of it to enjoy my memories of it. And now I wonder what would have happened if I had protested, or got up and read it, or something!”

“I'm having this internal discussion with myself about whether or not I made myself vulnerable in the group. It goes something like this. Yes, I did, I was present all the time and risked saying some things that now make me cringe when I remember them. No, I didn't, I didn't cry enough, reveal enough, get close enough, tell you all, or even any, of the excruciating events of my life of which there have been plenty. But then there didn't seem to be a moment when it felt relevant to do that and I'm scared of turning personal and fragile feelings into tools to gain approval in a CB circle. And so it goes on.”

“I am struck by what a respectful making process community building is...I have a deeper respect for both myself and my loved ones since I returned”



Results

"I am seeing people really for the first time and able to hold their gaze without becoming uncomfortable for the first time in my life. I've almost mastered the art of speaking sense while enjoying this wondrous feeling."

"My colleagues appear more receptive towards me and my style of leadership and me to them."

"I am feeling anarchic and boisterous and adventurous and greedy and impatient for rougher and riskier contact. I feel like rolling around and tussling and 'wrestling' with you all. I want to pull your hair and tickle you. I want to hear all the things you find difficult about me (and perhaps the odd thing that you like) and I'd like

to be able to do the same

for you. I want to know

who you are. What

makes you giggle

till you can't

stand up,

what you

worry

about

in the

middle

of the

night,

what are

your darkest

secrets and

your most surreal fantasies. And

I want you to know all those things about

me. "

".....(Afterwards on Holiday) on a lovely beach ... I skinny dipped and then sat and walked and danced naked all afternoon, relying on my watch dog and really not caring. Surely a product of a Brazier week!!!"

"My enduring sense of the training is one of love. I have felt loved, and loving and it has stayed with me. Love that needs and has no object, love that just is."

On closure

"(in the closing session) ... I saw quite early on that the energy and spirit of the group was not going to meet what I had 'courageously' decided to enter into - so my task was to let that go and I found it very painful. ... So many connections only started, so much potential left untapped, so much there and about to leave without going further....."

On CB by e-mail

"This is a bizarre extension of our time together I feel. but then my life feels like a bizarre extension of myself, so I can adapt. working out which bits of my life I like and which bits nurture me and in which bits I can share, love, well its a toughie."

"This is my one day off now for June now.

so I'm writing

to you guys.

it feels good,

like having a

futuristic ET-

inspired

community. weird

that 20-odd people

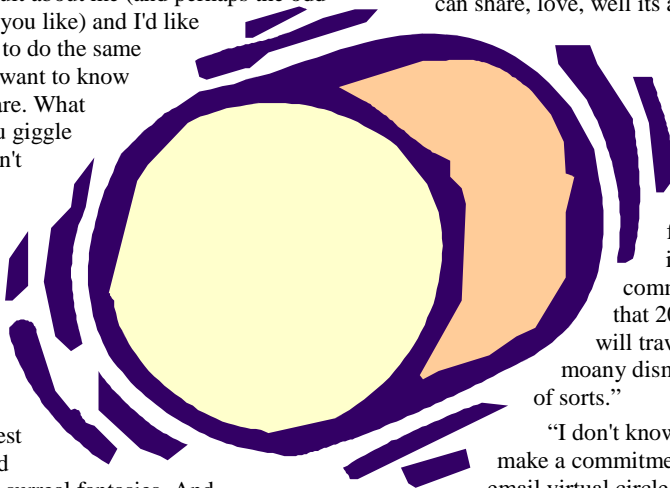
will trawl through my

moany dismal mail! a circle of sorts."

"I don't know that I'm able to make a commitment to sit in an email virtual circle, and give a genuine quality of presence on demand. On the ether net, I feel unable to give the quality of presence that I can give in a real physical circle. In a physical circle, the speaking comes into the circle, into some kind of centre, into a temenos or held and sacred space."

On transition back to life outside:

"What I was unprepared for was that when I have ventured out of the house I have kept thinking that I was seeing one or other of you, "oh there's so and so" or "that looks like such and such", and then realising it couldn't



be you ... its like after someone has died and you keep seeing them everywhere

Its something like spending all week tuning into all of you, becoming used to your frequencies, resonating with you at times and at others not being able to tune the dial in very well at all, but being used to tuning my dial to you ... and then suddenly you are not there but all these other people are, all these strangers walking in the streets, people with whom my only connection is that I am walking along the same street at the same time, and my dial gets all confused "I don't know these frequencies" ...

And, most painful of all, seeing a young homeless man sitting on the street begging ... and wanting to sit in front of him (like I imagine [one of us] doing) and make contact ... and being afraid because this is my home town and supposing someone should see me, supposing he should turn out to be an axe murderer, supposing its not safe here, and I'm supposed to be here shopping, not talking to strangers, and I can't take everyone home can I????? and almost having forgotten how to "tune out" all these strange vibrations, strange frequencies ... but remembering what Ram Dass has said about suffering, about opening the heart further, letting them in, not tuning them out"

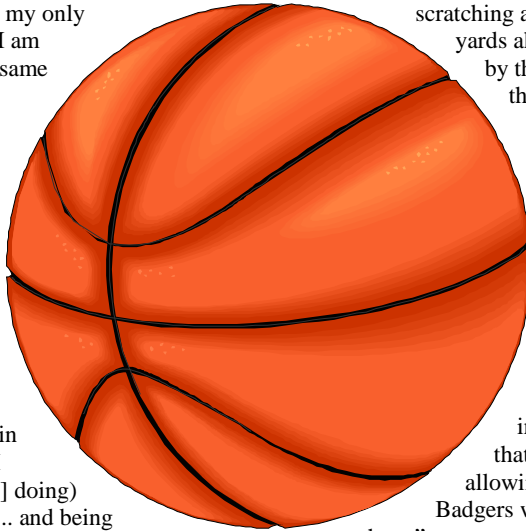
"(on returning home...) My experience with my family, including my animals was a transformation and very scary for them. I felt very peaceful but they felt wobbly and who is this person, I don't know her."

"I have had some trouble landing, for some obscure reason unknown, even to myself I got up and took my child to school on Tuesday morning, only to find it shut for half term!"

"... when I returned home, I decided not to go to my house but go for a walk I often take along the canal through woods and fields, etc. I was astounded (no I wasn't but it sounds good) when I saw a young Badger scratching about in the bank a few yards ahead, shortly joined by three other young and then mother and father. I was able to stand almost motionless watching them for quite a while. I have never before seen live badgers, although I have tried to in the past. After our group I experienced a great feeling of peace and in some way observed that this peace was allowing me to watch these Badgers without disturbing them."

"7 days later and I am still trying to work out how I feel. I want to say something because I want you all to know I think of you often and enjoyed being with you so much. Was it hyper reality or is this real life? At times my heart is very heavy. Its as though I've fallen in love and can't do anything about it."

Please Note: This is a personal selection made by Rachel and Sandy (training participants) in a limited amount of time – please forgive us our randomness and biases!



Feedback from the Braziers training

I walked off from a recent Community Building event with the 10 feedback questionnaires we have received from the Braziers Training in my rucksack. The consequence is I am now invited to summarise them for the newsletter, coming out very soon. "What a schmuck!" I tell myself, since I am not really in the mood for this. Anyway, point number one is that 10 out of 23 (3 other participants wrote reports for us in a different format) has to leave questions in the air about the thoughts and feelings of those we have not gathered replies from.

As an objective and impartial observer, who happens to have been on the design team, was a trainer at the event, and also participated in the learning community which is what actually happened - I would say the written responses did not quite reflect the intensity, the overflowing, multiple levels of sheer tumultuous happening, the sense of some kind of wild carnival unfolding - which is what I seem to remember having participated in.

The responses

One respondent wrote "no community" across the questionnaire sheet as the only comment - and I take it this reflects that person's feeling that the morning CB circles did not reach community, nor did this participant feel that the sense of community was fully alive at the event as a whole. (I think we are still friends, though.)

The other 9 forms were strongly positive in their overall outlook but made a range of specific suggestions for improvement (e.g. more reflective use of what had happened in the morning circles, more exploration of how facilitators might respond in specific

circumstances, a smaller total number of participants, so that the morning circle would not have felt too large for the room we were in)

The trainers were praised for their flexibility and willingness to improvise, and concerns were raised that perhaps the structure and timetable were not firmly enough held - or clearly enough communicated - so as to create the safety which some people needed.

Confusion

From these questionnaires and from other feedback I have received, there is a strong message that we caused ourselves confusion by having a significant proportion of participants lacking a strong interest in learning about facilitation, but came instead for an extended experience of building community. Inevitably (given this starting point) some people felt straitjacketed, and others felt themselves deprived of the focussed learning opportunities they might have hoped for.

I personally do not take this as cause for regret, but in the future I would want to emphasise the seriousness of the learning undertaking, and also ask each prospective participant to clarify more rigorously what their learning aims would be at a training event. That is what I would like to try in the future (as well as some careful reconsideration and clarification of design) - but perhaps if we had done this for the Braziers event, it would not have felt so much like a carnival.

*Mike Roth
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The Braziers experiment

The following is one community member's review of our last year in the Braziers community, the issues we faced, and how approached those issues. A previous article in CB magazine described our structure, where we strictly delineate our meetings into 'sensory' or process meetings (where we frequently use the CB model), and executive where we make decisions.

Mary, an old house team member, visited today. She announced that she was here in the 60's and had an interesting relationship with Marianne Faithfull; the other Faithfull children at that time being toddlers or babes in arms. I asked the question I invariably ask people who have come back to Braziers after a long time, "Well what do you think of Braziers now?" And she replied, again almost as invariably as all the others, "It hasn't changed a bit!"

This highlights the problem we all have with perception, and the distorting effects of fear upon one's perception. The changes I have seen in this organisation in my 6 years here have been relatively few and limited in their scope - limited in comparison to organisations and businesses in this fast changing world we live in. However, for some, Braziers has changed beyond all recognition. What is it that makes people's perception differ? I maintain that the factor that creates the difference is emotional, mainly fear. We have seen this repeated again and again over this year. It is what we do in the face of this fear, both individually and as a group, that is the important part of the Braziers experiment.

Many issues were discussed over the year, but it is the topics that repeatedly exercise our attention that I am most interested in. More interesting still is the recurrence of themes and concerns in Braziers that appear in minutes from 45 years ago, many of which if they had been copied and inserted in this years minutes would scarcely raise a comment. Why this is so, and the meaning of such repeated aspects of group dynamics and behaviour must

surely be a worthwhile research topic; perhaps a unique opportunity, given our 50 years' archives.

The areas that stood out as important and received repeated attention were almost all about relationship:

The relationship between the resident community and the outside membership.

This manifested in conflicts about:

- Felix Appelbe
- Braziers Courses
- The brochure
- Resident's charges
- Furniture.

While these discussions (and I am sure most members of the sensory committee will be well acquainted with them all) have important executive content, the underlying feeling content is what I am concerned with here. And my assertion is that talking about any of these topics will only bear fruit if we bring into awareness the underlying feelings and thoughts that these topics 'stir up'. We will be paralysed in our executive function unless the group tackles these feelings. The 'group shadow' will always trip us up, always lie in wait for the poor unsuspecting community meeting; either causing mayhem and uproar, or another boring meeting that seems to get us nowhere, because we're avoiding the difficult feelings. Group decision making is a slow, laborious, cack handed, frustrating process. The strong leader we had here for many years is sometimes ruefully missed.

There is still a climate of fear within Braziers. Both the inside and outside group feel it. How do we diminish or banish this fear? This must be a priority. What are these fears? Individuals fear that Braziers will change in such a way that they cannot be a part of it. There is a fear of being taken over, or that the group will shun or push someone out. I am sure we could all add to this list.

Relationships within the resident community

Power

Concern within the resident group about taking in new members; especially in light of the bust up with Annabel and John

We who are living here now are a young community, a community struggling to come to terms with our identity and our individual places within it. New people have been welcomed and are in the process of integrating, and existing residents are finding new roles and shifting to admit the new ones. As with the previous heading, the whole hearted embrace of the group shadow can exorcise the demons of fear, jealousy, envy, anxiety, and other feelings that surface from time to time, but these are rarely 'named' and 'outed' in group meetings. Fear, yet again, is one of the main factors in this context. Recently the residents have started to have regular 'in-house' meetings, which may help issues to come out more completely.

We are currently failing to respond to the Residents Charges paper. My view is that this is irresponsible of us and that we will suffer the consequences of failing to deal with an admittedly sensitive topic.

Relationships between the community and the foreign Housteam

This is an important relationship. Problems that occur are superficially easier to deal with as the 'problem element' leaves in due course. This is not however a solving of the problem, but rather a removal of the symptoms. With the differences in age, culture, and interests this area could be a rich source of understanding and mutual learning. Instead the arguments and crisis are swept under the carpet, the hurts and pain are soon healed over by that most efficacious of balms: time, and the process

recurs in a slightly different form, in a new twist with the same recognisable flavour.

Sundry topics

The new large teaching space (Art studio)

Research; availability of papers, concerns about confidentiality, needs to protect identities

I have little to say about these topics except that as they did not fit very neatly into the above three categories, maybe that means there is more executive business in them, though I have no doubt that as change is a feature in both there will be a fair lot of emotion somewhere.

One other issue that has cropped up and is just below the level of group awareness, is the relationship between the sensory (feelings meetings) & executive, and the evolutionary process that is taking place. As Penny pointed out in her talk, we are all both sensory and executive, like the wave/particle duality. My assertion is that we will be able to preserve the distinction between sensory & executive, in our meeting structures, only with increasing amounts of discipline. We already blur the two and take decisions in all but name in sensory and similarly we find sensory discussion taking place in executive meetings; processing is never complete. Evolution is also never-ending, and any process, organisation, or structure that fails to evolve withers and dies.

The Braziers experiment sets a difficult and exacting task in group process and decision making. Whenever someone asks me what Braziers is about I say that it was set up as an experiment in group process and conflict resolution. "And does it succeed?" They ask. "No" I say, "We have been failing for 50 years." I fully expect that to continue.

George Giangrande

George_Sarah@compuserve.com

CB in small groups

A new format for a workshop: CB in intimate relationships or other small groups.

This is a research project: in the form of a workshop in which we aim to practise building community in any of the "ongoing groups" in our lives. The purpose would be to identify relevant skills, sensitivities and methods as we proceed with our learning and practice.

As of the time of writing it needs an organiser, a venue, and some facilitators. There would also be the opportunity for trainee facilitators to take an intermediate role, sitting with the small groups and providing a feedback link with the event facilitators.

To book, you would need to have at least one other person (maximum of 8 in any one sub-group) who will come with you as a sub-group, and with whom you will be practising building community during the 3-day event. Bring your family, your ongoing CB group, your lover, a friend, or your Workingmen's Club Management Committee.

We would alternate sessions of full-circle meeting with sessions in which the

sub-groups will be working with themselves. Each sub-group will also work regularly as helpers and facilitators for one or more of the other sub-groups. So we will be developing our observation and holding skills as we go along, as well as identifying trouble-spots and sticking-points in our own sub-group.

This would be a 3-day event, broadly following the CB format of facilitated sessions running for one and a half hours with breaks. Subject to views from the Holding Group (who are responsible for what is, or is not, covered by the insurance policy of CBiB) participants might need to sign an insurance disclaimer, saying they were participating at their own risk - or on the other hand we may get the usual insurance cover via the Holding Group.

Anyone interested in joining this project should contact Mike Roth on the net at Michelroth@aol.com or write to 3 Florence Villas, Milton Road, London SE24 0NN

Mike Roth



Holding group meetings

A personal recollection from Teän Stuttgart

June 17th/18th

Suzy, Ruth, Anthony, Margaret and I met at Douai Abbey cottages, on what may well turn out to be the hottest weekend of the year! For various reasons I am opting to keep this report brief, so if anyone is curious, please ring me and within the bounds of confidentiality, I will be happy to discuss....

Unresolved chaos

After a little while checking in on Friday evening (Ruth and Anthony) and Saturday first thing, we set about re-establishing our community with some process around the issue of personal risk in relationships, especially linking it to perceived unresolved chaos in various groups and sub groups within CBiB and its effect on the network and public events.

Energy rose and the conversation carried on in the break so that the thought of agenda palled for a while until taken up just before lunch. Picnic on the lawn, delayed by intrepid foragers, Suzy and Ruth, trekking across country to find choice vegetables for the spread, (while the rest of us soaked up the sun!).

Rachel, (newsletter editor and training event sponsor) joined us for lunch, on her way to Glastonbury-in-the-sun. She brought us news of how the training had gone and of other follow-up events. We cleared up a few event support issues and

then went on to talk about ideas for another Network gathering.

Focused attention

On Sunday we gave some very focused attention to our agenda! We agreed to invite Lorenz Brightbar to join us for the next two meetings in December and March with a view to exploring the option of membership. We looked at plans for compiling a directory of network members and interests and will come back to that in the autumn.

We checked out our financial status and Anthony and I will do some work on ideas for budgeting to bring back to the next meeting. Anthony and Margaret are going to discuss a change of insurance policy and decide how to proceed with it. We paid some attention to the events going on in the autumn, arrangements for a mailing, and potential events next year.

We discussed and made some decisions about a request from Julia Sadowska connected with her Ph.D. research work. We considered our energy levels in light of a couple of people moving on and leaving the group recently, circumstances preventing others from being present, and other commitments restricting the amount of work any one individual can do. We felt OK about it for the present but welcome anyone feeling moved to join us to get in touch!

*Teän Stuttgart
0121 420 4390*

6th August

The Holding Group met at Bookham on Sunday 6 August. Present were Margaret Bell, Richard Benzie, Peter Cooper, Ruth Goffe and Teän Stuttaford.

We discussed the forthcoming joint HG/FTG meeting in September and realised, in the light of information collected by Ruth, that attendance at this meeting was likely to be rather thin. We decided to cancel the meeting, but hoped that a forum for communication between the two groups might arise at some point soon.

We also discussed the news that Rachel's editorship of the newsletter is coming to an end. We were grateful for what Rachel had done and recognised the continued importance of the newsletter for CBiB.

Suzy Adderley had sent us a letter including a suggestion for a Network Nurturing Event next year. We welcomed this, and Margaret said she would talk to Suzy to move this idea forward.

We reviewed the four forthcoming community building events. We are supporting these as best we can, but are very conscious of our limitations of energy and finance at present.

Request for people to review books

I have long had a book on my desk waiting for me to read it...
The title: Sex, Spirit and Community by Mark Josephs-Serra...
It looks really interesting, I simply do not have time to read it.
If anyone feels moved, please phone me and I can post you the review copy to read and hopefully write about for the newsletter.

We also have a book by Philip Rogers called
“Do you feel loved by me?” for review.

Also, William Stephens who has written a book entitled ‘Civility in an English village’ - about community in an English Village and would like someone to review it. He can be contacted on wstephens00@hotmail.com and has a web site at www.wstephens.net

*Rachel Castagne
(01273 382 864)*



CBiB calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>HG</u>	<u>FTG</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event/comment</u>
6/10/00			Sheffield	CBE
20/10/00		FTG	Douai	
2/11/00			Othona, Dorset	CBW
25/11/00			London	CBE
8/12/00	HG		Douai	
19/1/01		FTG	Stanbrook	Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester
9/2/01			Douai	possible
16/3/01	HG		Douai	
27/4/01		FTG	Douai	
11/5/01	HG	FTG	Douai	joint meeting
22/6/01	HG		Douai	
14/9/01		FTG	Douai	possible
12/10/01	HG		Douai	possible

Note that the additions since the last issue are marked with * (none), and changes are:
 19/1/01 FTG meeting is at Stanbrook

For information or queries about dates or activities in the calendar contact Anthony Kirke, 125 Greenham Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 7JE Tel:01635 47377.

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... Check with the local contact person.

Brighton: Meets on the second Saturday of the month. Contact Tracy on 01243 775745

Leamington Spa: First Wednesday of each month, 8pm. New members welcome. Prior attendance at a CB event is not necessary. Contact Debbie or Armando on 01926 337 409

Sheffield: Meets monthly. Contact Alison 0114 263 0177

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 events: Tel **07071 880858** (premium rate), write to 52 Sole Farm Avenue, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3DE email to PeterCBiB@aol.com, or see the Web page: <http://members.aol.com/petercbib>*

Newsletter contributions

*Please send items for inclusion in the next issue to the administrator Peter Cooper 52 Sole Farm Avenue, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3DE by **1/11/00** (Tel: 07974 961301; email: PeterCBiB@aol.com).*

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.

Subscriptions and mailings

Subscription rate [UK] to March 2001: (Apr-Jun) £10; (Jul-Sep) £7.50; (Oct-Dec) £5; (Jan-Mar) £2.50. Please send cheques (payable to "Community Building in Britain") and any address changes to: Peter Cooper, 52 Sole Farm Avenue, Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3DE Tel: 07974 961301 (PeterCBiB@aol.com)