



The Association of Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplains
Newsletter
 Summer 2008 No3

A word from the Editor

The Revd Anton Muller MA

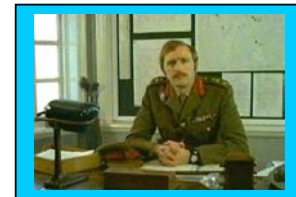


Welcome to this third issue of the AHPCC Newsletter. If you would like to see the previous two these can be downloaded from the Website www.ahpcc.org.uk

This is also my last issue as I am leaving the Eden Valley Hospice and therefore the Executive Committee of the AHPCC. I have accepted a post back in school teaching (music and drama – it must have been that Cinderella sketch that did it... alright?!!)

Contents	
A word from the President	2
A Word from the Secretary	3
Some Conference Reflections	4
The Conference Report	5
Are you up to Hospice Standards?	6
We all have a story	7
Something on Assessment	8
Round and About the AHPCC	9

Those that were at the conference will recall that I proposed bringing the newsletter to an end in favour of regular updates and articles on the website. The newsletter is fun to do, but quite time consuming and by the time its out some of it seems out of date. It has also been hard to extract articles and items from you the membership.... that's no criticism, just an indicator that now is the time for



“something completely different”

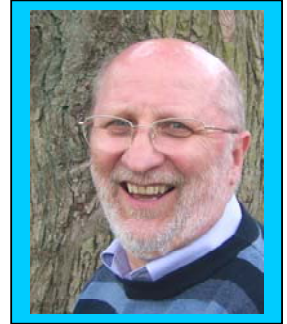
If you would like an article or anecdote published on the site please get in touch. Email: editor@ahpcc.org.uk





A word from the President

The Revd Tom Gordon
Marie Curie Hospice Edinburgh



Dear colleagues, I learned four important things in June –

- 1 Estonia is very flat, it's a boring two-and-a-half hour bus journey from Talin to Tartu!
- 2 Karen Murphy, Secretary of the AHPCC, is excellent company!

The context for such shattering discoveries was the attendance by your President and Secretary at the 10th consultation of the European Network of Healthcare Chaplaincy in Tartu, Estonia, at the end of June. It was an excellent consultation, and left us with new contacts with palliative care chaplains throughout Europe, as well as a widening of our understanding of chaplaincy issues in established and emerging chaplaincy situations.

It was gratifying to find that many of the issues raised at the Consultation are ones with which we also wrestle, and that our own chaplaincy organisation is looked on with great respect, often being looked to for appropriate advice and guidance. What we have done with Standards, Competencies and other aspects of hospice and palliative chaplaincy has enhanced our professional credibility in the UK and beyond. It was good to find that from external sources. We are looking forward to playing an active part in the organisation and facilitating of the 11th consultation in 2010 in London.

3 Our work here in the UK is important:

- We remain committed to working for the further professionalism of chaplaincy in collaboration with other UK chaplaincy bodies.
- We are committed to supporting you, our membership, in all that you are involved with in your own chaplaincy settings. It is vital to us that you feel you are listened to, that you have access to your Executive for advice, support and exploration of pressing issues, and that you feel that what matters most to you in your chaplaincy continues to inform our agendas and forward planning.
- We are exploring raising our profile with employing bodies and organisations throughout the UK, so that we can continue to offer our availability for advice in the standards, competencies, work-patterns and further professionalism of chaplaincy.

I have greatly enjoyed this first year as President of the AHPCC. There is much to do, but we are enjoying doing it on behalf of all of you. The next year will contain more hard work, challenges and excitement. Watch this space. There's a lot happening for all of us.

O yes... the fourth thing is simply this – the AHPCC is in excellent shape. Working with your Executive tells me that; the mood at and feedback from our annual conference tells me that; the contact I have with many of you in your local settings tells me that; the willingness of all of us to look forward, with a confidence in what we do and what we stand for, tells me that. Keep in touch!!

Tom Gordon, President AHPCC , president@ahpcc.org.uk





A word from the Secretary

The Revd Karen Murphy
Weston Hospice

It's about 10 years since I joined AHPCC as a rather hesitant volunteer chaplain and wondered how being a member of this organisation would help develop my skills as a hospice chaplain. I needn't have worried, as the support and help offered to me through generous networking and sharing, has been tremendous.



I know I speak for a lot of people who have found the support of AHPCC equally helpful. So, as we look at AHPCC going forward, what are the aspects of the organisation to encourage?

Membership – it seems obvious but remember to renew your membership! Encourage volunteer chaplains to think about membership and get access to information; let us know if you are changing your job and a new appointment is made.

Vacancies – we are trying to make sure that any job vacancies are available on the website, but we rely on people letting us know of these. Alongside our 'guidelines for new appointments', we are in the process of putting together some extra information to be of use to interview panels. If you have any thought on this, please get in touch.

Pastoral care – I feel that as an organisation we exist to support our membership in many ways, and this included pastoral concern. If you know of any chaplain who is under a lot of pressure, is unwell, or for that matter, has some good news we can share, please let me know and I'll send greetings on AHPCC 's behalf. Sometimes it's good just to be reminded that people care.

I'll echo Tom's thoughts, I'm sure, in encouraging our members to keep in touch and suggest topics for discussion, things that are top of your agenda, and ways in which we can support you in the excellent standard of chaplaincy we are attempting to offer to those in our care.

Best wishes

Karen Murphy

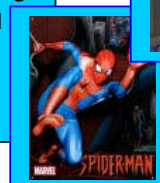
Some thank yous

This is a good opportunity to say thank you for the fantastic work that Karen does in keeping the exec committee in order and on track. Thank you Karen!!!

**Thank You Richard
The Webmaster!**

This is also a good opportunity to say many thanks to Richard Whitehouse who behind the scenes has not only kept up with but also anticipated Anton's many missives in order to create a dynamic, informative and bang up to date website. Thank you Richard.

Richard by day....
And Richard by night!





Some Conference Reflections

By Steve Barnes
Willen Hospice



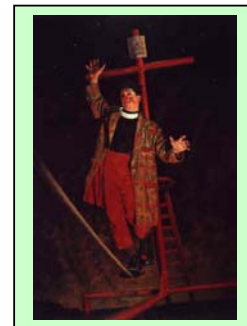
Whispered half-way through a dreary sermon; “Mummy, is this God’s house?” “Yes darling.” “Mummy, if I was God I’d move!”

Here's hoping...

The National AHPCC Conference
We hoped it would be good.... **But it wasn't!**

Hope on a rope; the tight-rope walk, balancing between fear and hope; ...epitomised by the person who arranged his funeral then booked a holiday!

The language of ‘fight’ – to admit defeat with the physical/medical fight - but the real fight is to maintain the self. Being with someone may mean attending so closely that we even imitate their breathing. “Hope is knowing that there is another human being who will come tomorrow.” Alright?



In conversation with a pentecostalist pastor in the week following the conference, I mentioned the difficulty we had with a triumphalist style of prayer that encouraged denial and inhibited honesty and preparedness. His answer (which I paraphrase) made me think. “It’s like it’s October and they are praying for summer isn’t it? How about you do your job – preparing them and addressing their fears, and we’ll praise God for the summer, whether it comes in this life or the next.”

As ever, Steve
Facing reality and keeping hope alive.

It was GREAT!!!!
Thank you Jacki

Travelling the Journey.... With Karen Murphy, Weston Hospice

Thanks to everyone who participated in the workshop at conference. While I was sharing our vision for this course and the benefits patients and carers had gained from it, people had been thinking along the same lines but weren't sure where to go next. I really hope that all we shared in the workshop has inspired people to have a go and adapt the ideas I presented to their own situation. If anyone wants to contact me for further information, please phone or email. karen.murphy@westonhospicecare.org.uk



*You are older than the world can be, you are younger than the life in me;
ever old and ever new, keep me travelling along with you.*





The Conference Report

Jacki Thomas

Many thanks to all those who returned their evaluation forms – sixty-eight people in all. Eighty chaplains attended our Conference which was entitled “here’s hoping”. Three speakers with different styles took us through the sequence of Hope at the beginning of life, Hope changing in middle life, and Hope at the end of life.



We began setting the scene on Monday afternoon ourselves with input from the Executive and from the floor of the Conference on ‘hope is...’. Sister Frances Dominica was then our opening speaker, describing her life and calling and the setting up of Helen House and then Douglas House. She spoke without notes, entirely free of modern technology, inspiring and encouraging - even when straying from the brief! A couple of folk thought that Sister Frances missed the opportunity to give a theology of hope but that wasn’t part of her brief.

The Exec considered having a speaker on the theology of hope but decided that the subject is so broad that time limitations would necessitate a selective view and might result in losing the applied theology of hope in our practice.

On Tuesday morning Jacquelyn Chaplin inspired us with her enthusiasm and her knowledge of her subject. Her power-point slides supported her presentation on the changing nature of hope in patients diagnosed with lung cancer. Later on Tuesday Claire Henry’s presentation was full of information from the End of Life Care Programme. A lot of information was presented at quite a pace - thank goodness for handouts to refer to later!



Jacquelyn Chaplin



Clare Henry

The workshops were generally well received regardless of the style of the person leading. Delegate participation is evidently a valued means of adult learning, and in some cases more participation was requested

Resource sharing has always been a difficult session – some folk come prepared to offer resources whilst others are jogged into making a contribution on the spot – a nightmare for the conferencerganiser. So Jacki was delighted when Tom offered to lead the session – there were still a few adverse comments, possibly from first-timers, but we are encouraged by comments which indicate that the session had improved. No doubt these comments were from folk with memories of the chaos of the past!

Worship and prayer times received mostly favourable comments – perhaps a bit more silence in the future.

The plenary session at the end of conference was greatly appreciated for the opportunity to share in small groups and for Tom’s Quaker-style handling of the final offerings of ‘hope is...’. Concluding worship was a fitting close to a conference which seems to have been enjoyed by all who attended. The analysis of the evaluation sheets indicates that individually and overall the sessions were better than ‘good’ in both style and content and many were well on the way to excellent!





Are you up to Hospice Standards?

Following the conference in May this year a delegate left me a note as a possible piece for inclusion in this newsletter.

Here is the gist of what that note said.



I had been doing some art work/therapy with our patients and for many this represented a real achievement. It was felt the best place for this work was in the chapel. It was Christmas time and the work represented a Bethlehem scene for which each patient had constructed a little part of the scene. With great joy the little tableau was displayed in the chapel. Imagine the shock on being told that the tableau had to be removed because the artwork was not up to the standard the Hospice expects.

I am so sorry for that delegate, I am deeply sorry for those patients and a little concerned that someone who should know better has demonstrated a worrying lack of awareness of the very nature of palliative care. It is in the quality of care that we are called to be relentless in our pursuit of high standards. All too often the concept of standards is hijacked by a marketing approach to do with letterheads, logos, fonts, the Laura Ashley cum M&S design of hospice reception areas and so forth. These things have their place... but not at the expense of the patient.

In the end, hospice and palliative care units will be judged by the quality of care offered to patients and that includes the environment of the hospice. The environment however is there to serve the patient, their relatives and friends – and that is all. (In my humble opinion as editor!)

When a person has been told “there is nothing more we can do for you” (a phrase which I feel should be banned from all mouths of all doctors and health workers), it is easy for a person to be left feeling that there is nothing more that they themselves can do. The reality is there is much that a person facing the end of life can do. There is much that a person can do that demonstrates that, whilst they live, a vibrant life force continues to exist.

A major part of the palliative care work is about helping the patient regain a sense of self-worth and being. That work extends to the relatives and friends. Something has gone awfully wrong when this aspect of the work, which is largely pastoral, social and spiritual is obfuscated with an overly officious view that has more to do with the market place than with the people in the market.

Have you a similar story to tell? Let us know... “how was it for you?” There are lots of good stories out there too which outweigh such as this one above, so let’s have the wonderful examples of how spiritual carers and chaplains raise the bar of standards in our hospices and palliative care units.

Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.

Anton Müller
Editor

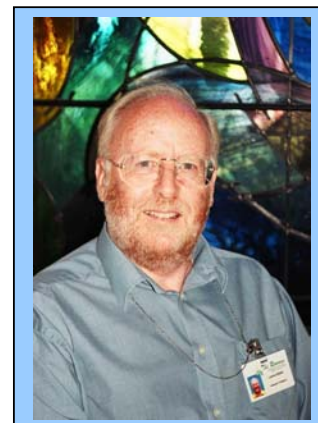




We all have a story

By Lance Blake SSF

I often say to people, 'We all have a story!' Some we are happy to tell, others we are less happy to relate, but this is often where my job begins. Many people think when they first see me, "Ah! the Chaplain," and therefore, 'Church and Religion.' But the truth is that the rites and rituals of religion are but a small part of what I do, and that's not surprising really when you consider that over 90 per cent of people who come to The Rowans have no deep religious affiliation despite a recent survey which says that 70 per cent of people in the UK regard themselves as Christians, probably because they were baptised at birth. But, the truth is that all people have spiritual needs even if they have no faith or recognisable belief system.



'Spirituality and spiritual care' is a phrase often heard today but more often misunderstood. For example, what is spiritual pain? And how do I begin to address this problem? The clue comes from when I said, 'We all have a story' because like all professionals, including our doctors and nurses, it starts with listening. As people come to the end of their lives they recap, re-evaluate and often struggle to make sense of their lives. The material things become less important, and family, friends, and plain loving tend to take precedence. We see family rifts resolved and other simple truths expressed as never before. I remember one man, as he was dying, telling his wife, "I really love you!" It was said with such feeling and her response was tears of joy followed by, "It's only taken him 38 *****years to tell me that!" And we all laughed.

Personally I feel that dying is much like the mystery of birth. It has its own timing about it. Like babies being born into this world, which come when they want to come, so being born into the next world, whatever you believe that to be, also has its own timing about it. In life we witness both births with awe and we hold the joy and tears of those who watch and wait with equal care. Both are a natural process but with the specialty that the hospice offers, dying can also be a special moment. I recall a lady, worn out by life and her disease, holding my hand and saying, "Lance, I didn't realise that dying could be so beautiful."

I am part of a team who knows spiritual care forms an integral part of our overall care, and the closing words from this lady confirm to me that, for the most part, we get it right.

Lance Blake is chaplain to the Rowans Hospice in Portsmouth.



Things people say about death:

"I'm not afraid of death,
I just don't want to be there when it happens" Woody Allen

"I told you I was ill" Spike Milligan

"Cry if you must" Joyce Grenfell

*No one on their death bed
ever said "I wish I'd spent
more time in the office."*

Charles Handy





Something on Assessment

Gary Windon (Revd)
Nightingale Hospice



*Look what I found on the web...
.... is this really our Gary??*

We have recently completed an audit of spiritual care within the hospice, from the perspective of the paid care staff, which gave some very interesting results. You will see that the questions are deeply subjective – and deliberately so. I wanted to find out what the carers felt about spiritual care, not to try and conduct an objective review of what was done. I have also enclosed part of the presentation I gave in-house regarding the results, which summarises the distribution and charts the results. One of the things I wanted to do when I came into post was to be able to make resources developed here available to other hospices, especially those who have no paid spiritual carers, so that they could nick the ideas and tailor them for use in their own hospice.

We used a sliding scale for the answers because it helps people to be more honest, rather than having to pick a number between 1 and 10, where most people go for 7 so as not to offend! It makes more work to compile the results, because you have to measure the point on the line for each individual answer, but a spreadsheet can then do all the hard work!

If any other hospice does want to use this, I am willing to work with them to process the results, especially the smaller hospices among our number. Our senior management team (and I) would very much like to create an anonymous set of data from as many hospices as possible to compare results, as we were fascinated and surprised by what we found and believe a cross hospice comparison would be of benefit to us all.

We wish to use this as a basis for seeing if there is room to improve the spiritual care offered.

I am confident that I understand spiritual care in relation to the patients I meet.
I believe spiritual care is important for patients.
It is appropriate to discuss significant spiritual issues in the MDT, at handover or with other staff
I am aware that my duty of care includes a spiritual element.
I believe that medical and clinical staff should deal with spiritual issues.
I have been given adequate training in dealing with spiritual issues.
I feel well supported in giving spiritual care.
I know how and where to document spiritual issues to do with any given patient.
Any concerns I have raised about a patient's spiritual care have been taken seriously.
Appropriate referral mechanisms exist for complex issues and I know what they are.
I know who the members of the specialist spiritual care team in the Hospice are and how to contact them.
I am comfortable dealing with spiritual issues.
I feel supported in my own spiritual concerns by the Hospice.
Any other concerns or comments you would like to make about spiritual care in the Hospice:



If you would like to see or make use of this assessment please contact Gary.

Revd Gary Windon, Chaplain Coordinator, Nightingale House,
01978 316800 Ext 234 gary.windon@nightingalehouse.co.uk





Round and About the AHPCC

It could only happen to a Hospice Chaplain – actually it could only happen to Karen!

Now I'm back and got through many of the messages, thought I'd send you a funny story that happened to me the other day! I'd been to my college course in the morning and returned home at 1.30pm to change for a funeral at 2.30pm. Unfortunately the new house key I'd had cut on Saturday refused to work and I was unable to get into the house to change from jeans and tee shirt! Imagine the consternation therein!

I had to go the crem in this attire in the hope there may be an odd robe lying around there wasn't. So feeling totally overwhelmed by the dilemma, ended up explaining to the family why I would be taking the funeral in casual gear. They were great about it and felt the patient would have much preferred the informality. The congregation were equally gracious and the crem staff will not let me forget this in a hurry!

I think this is much funnier than my arriving to conference last year without my trousers! No jokes about 'Cinders' at the crem please! Anton

Thought you'd appreciate this and chuckle as I now can. Karen



CONGRATULATIONS AGAIN.... Dawn!!

All of us on the executive committee would like to wish, on behalf of you all, our best wishes and congratulations to Dawn Tierney on her appointment to the post of Spiritual Care Co-ordinator at the Eden Valley Hospice in Carlisle. Dawn will take over from Anton Müller in September 2008.

Dawn has a background in IT in will take up Anton's work for the AHPCC in the website.

Anton says: *"I could not have wished for a better replacement – not only is Dawn better looking and far more talented, she is also latterly from South Africa – I really have "met a nice South African" ! (If you can recall the song from Spitting Image which my father from Kimberley SA described as 'not funny'!)*

Your new member of the Executive Committee

Judy Horrocks

I am a Church of England priest; full-time Spiritual Care Co-ordinator for St. Ann's Hospice in Manchester, with its two hospice sites and supportive care centre; collector of hedgehogs (not the real kind!); a sci-fi buff; and a vicar's wife (not the proper kind!). Curious factoid? Probably my penchant for reciting 'The Cremation of Sam McGee' whenever I get the opportunity. (A reflection of my Canadian roots...)



(Editor's Note: I googled the poem and found this great picture... for a photo of Judy you will have to visit the website!! Better still make our website your homepage

www.ahpcc.org

