

THE LONDON GROUP

The group has also had great support from Marian Keane, who was the main contact for the group for several years, along with James Hunter.



Presentation to Joy Caplin on her retirement

In July 2004, Joy was instrumental in organising a support day, chaired by a Trustee at that time, John Cleary. Now, after a gap of four years, the London Group are organising a support day on Saturday 10th May, which will have taken place by the time the Newsletter goes out, which, we hope will prove successful.

More recent news from the London Group is that of Nina Kennedy's success in completing the Dublin Marathon on 29th October last year. So far, she has raised over £1,700 for the National Organisation. This is a wonderful achievement. We are also fortunate to have her serving as a Trustee.

NOTTINGHAM/EAST MIDLANDS SHARERS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE

The Nottingham/East Midlands Branch of Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide has after discussion with the Chairperson and two trustees representing the Board of Trustees become an independent group. As a result, we are no longer listed under the groups, which are governed by the National Charity. This change has taken place amicably and with mutual understanding between the Trustees and us.

The reason for this change is that our local group is, in partnership with Nottingham City Council, setting up a drop-in Bereavement Centre to be known as the Garden of Grace. There are so many discussions and decisions to be made at a local level, that having to go through the Board of Trustees would have complicated the situation. In addition, any major fund raising event needs local decisions and with our Nordic Starlight Trek taking place on June 14th, we realised that it is more practical to work independently. Helen and I will continue as Editors of the National Newsletter and will represent National Interests in our area.

Pictured below is the building that will become the Garden of Grace Centre around 2010 - 2011. Ted Baldwin, a long standing member of Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide, and his wife Cath, have designed and set up our website. So if you want to know more about our project, please visit our website

www.garden-of-grace-eastmidlands.co.uk



The Lodge - Forest Recreation Ground Nottingham

MAIDSTONE GROUP

In March of this year, I entered our charity into the Mall Chequers Giveaway Competition. The Mall Chequers put up £5,000 to benefit the people of the borough. The money was to be shared between 10 charities, all of which were nominated by KM readers. The paper was inundated with entries.

I was thrilled when I learned our charity was one of the 10 winners and on April 21st, I was presented with £500. Some of my group want to attend the London Support Day. This money will cover travel costs and other costs incurred during that day. The money will also help to buy more books and pay for a meal out for members. On behalf of our group, I would like to thank those who voted for us.

Sheila (Maidstone Group Leader)



National Awareness Day in Ilkeston left to right Gill, Christine, Lyn

We held our first National Awareness Day on 16th April 2008. This date was chosen because it was the anniversary of the very first support group meeting being held in Hull by our founder, Alice Middleton.

Various groups around the country held their own events, to raise awareness of suicide and the suffering of those left behind afterwards. There was coverage in various local newspapers and radio stations. We hope that this will be an annual event in years to come.

BOOK REVIEWS

A VOICE FOR THOSE BEREAVED BY SUICIDE

Sarah McCarthy Veritas 2001

Sarah McCarthy's story of her ex-husband's death is a first-person account of suicide bereavement. The book aims to 'speak freely and openly' about suicide, but disappointingly the story lacks the kind of detail that might have conveyed a sense of the reality of loss and pain.

It is hard to connect with Sarah and her experiences. It never feels as if you know the characters in her story, and the fact that she does not give names to anyone, even her husband and children makes them seem even more unreal. In my view what is profoundly lacking from this book is any sense that the author has lost someone she really loved, despite his faults. Since the events occurred in Ireland in the mid-eighties, this book might nevertheless, appeal to those of an Irish background who would appreciate the cultural influences on someone experiencing a suicide bereavement at that period.

(Reviewed by Member of the London Group)

DYING, BEREAVEMENT AND THE HEALING

ARTS - Edited by Gillie Bolton

ISBN 978-1-84310-516-9

I found this book very difficult to work through. It is a compilation of a wide range of programmes describing therapy through the arts, and is written for practitioners in the palliative care sector. Whilst the content was valuable, I found it a 'heavy' read. The book is 'generalised' to death and various types of bereavement. For those in palliative care, I am sure it would broaden their understanding of the various approaches available to help people through such times. However, as a book to have in our libraries for Survivors, it is not one I could recommend, apart from one piece of writing by a Survivor of Suicide, who lost her son to alcohol and finally to suicide, which describes the act of personal writing as 'A Lifeline Through Grief'. For any practitioner unfamiliar with suicide bereavement, it will shed some light into the complexity of such a death and such grief. (Helen Walker Nottingham)

A SERVICE OF HOPE AND COMMEMORATION AT ALL SAINTS CHURCH HIGH WYCOMBE.

This was a warm service that had been arranged by Janice from the High Wycombe Group. There were display boards for memorial notes or pictures to be attached. Some lit candles and some wrote the names of loved ones on special notes which were then blessed at the altar. The hymns were uplifting

as the sun shone through the beautiful church windows. Janice and Marie attended to the readings and the Right Reverend Alan Wilson (Bishop of Buckingham) who was taking the service spoke of his own experiences. The ladies of the church were a welcome sight after the service when tea and biscuits were served. It gave me chance again to talk to those from the group or others who had just come along having lost a loved one to suicide. We laughed and shed a few tears together. One lady who had travelled some distance, told me that just being with people who understood had made her realize she really wasn't alone in her kind of grief. To be there on that day and feel that support, shared by so many, made my journey home very easy. My thanks to the High Wycombe Group for giving me the chance to share in their day with them. (Lyn Rabbitt)

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN PETERS

Jean and John Peters recently visited Australia, Jean to see her new grand-niece and John to receive a Masters degree in Suicidology from Griffith University, Brisbane. He started working on this degree in 2004 via the Internet. He received his degree in December 2007. He joins Karl Adriesen from Belgium, who spoke at the 2006 Birmingham Support Day, as the only holders of this qualification in Europe.

It is also an opportunity for our National Charity to thank both John and Jean for their years of work to promote and develop the charity at both an International and Local level.



THANK YOU

On behalf of everyone in Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide we would like to take this opportunity in thanking everyone for their kind donations, fund raising events and for the funding we have received.

We would also like to thank everyone for their hard work and commitment to the organisation.

Many Thanks.

SURVIVOR SUPPORT DAY BIRMINGHAM

John and Jean Peters, along with their daughters, Heidi and Wendy, organised another excellent support day for survivors on 17th May.

Characteristic of this day is John's ability to draw people from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures that are working in the world of suicide bereavement. This year we listened to Paul Kelly from Northern Ireland describing how the traumatic loss of his sister to suicide led him into developing the charity CONSOLE. Paul emphasised how this charity is founded on the concept of maintaining good practice throughout his organisation, so that the services delivered to those bereaved by suicide aim to have the hallmark of quality. Paul did not hide his pain of loss so that his personal openness, along with his energy and passion for caring for others who have experienced bereavement by suicide was an inspiration.

Equally, Mary Creaney from Belfast held our attention with her description of the support groups she has initiated and developed. A particularly outstanding initiative has been the lapel badge that she has promoted and designed along with other members of her group. The metal badge is ribbon shaped one side blue and one side pink to represent all those men and women who take their lives, with a tear drop in the centre representing our loss and sadness. Mary hopes that this badge will become the universal symbol of Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide and recognised among the population at large as we recognise the pink ribbon for loss through cancer. We hope so too!



Left to right Alice Middleton our founder, Heidi Birch, Mary Creaney and Caroline Simone


Our afternoon speaker Caroline Simone, a lecturer and researcher from the University of Derby, shared with us her on-going research into the effects of a parental suicide death on the children left behind, whether they are young children or young adults. Her presentation was clear and interesting provoking questions from parents on how to deal with the subject of suicide with their children. Caroline, also a survivor, dealt extremely sensitively with questions presented to her giving sound advice and gentle encouragement to those who are faced with this particular dilemma.

LYN RABBITT OUT AND ABOUT

REPRESENTING

SURVIVORS OF BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE

On the 19th April 2008, our charity was invited to be present at the **Out of The Blue Service** at Chester Cathedral. This was a service of remembrance and thanksgiving for those in the farming and agricultural industries who were victims of sudden death. Keith Ineson Agricultural Chaplain in Cheshire, who organized the day, invited us to be present. The service was most inspiring, it made me realize that not only were the fields very quiet without the animals through the bad times, but also how much pain the farmers and their families went through. For some, it was too much pain, and they leave behind those survivors of suicide bereavement trying to re-build their future. I feel very privileged to be part of an organisation that can offer that help. After the service, we had refreshments and more time to talk. Our stand was well visited and our information was given out. I talked to Georgina Lamb from R.A.B.I. her stand was next to ours. Her work is to support the farming families, she is also a survivor. Georgina has offered to bring her stand and talk to us at our Conference, so I hope some of you will meet her. A shared thought from my day at Chester:

I had thought that your death was a
waste and destruction
A pain of grief hardly to be endured, I
am only beginning to learn
That your life was a gift and a growing
and a loving left with me

The desperation of death, destroyed
the existence of love
But the fact of death, cannot destroy
what has been given
I am learning to look at your life again,
Instead of your death and your
departing.