SACH
Soundings
Number 41 April 2010

The play's the thing

All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players, they have their exits and entrances and one man in his time plays many parts. Shakespeare did write some good stuff, didn't he? I was reminded of these words from *As You Like It* as I was appearing on stage playing the part of Kipps in *Half a Sixpence*. And, yes, that's the part that Tommy Steele made famous many years ago.

I was very conscious in this show of the importance of all the players, whether on stage or off. I knew that before, I suppose, but the pivotal role of the character Kipps seemed to make the other characters and backstage crew all the more important so that Kipps had some depth and perspective and colour. A one man show just wouldn't do.

I wondered about how that relates to healthcare chaplaincy. Does thinking about the chaplain as actor set alarm bells ringing? Or does it help in any way to see what we do in a collaborative way? It's not the first time, of course, that chaplains have been likened to performing artists. Forty years ago Hejie Faber described the role of chaplain in a hospital as like a clown in a circus; the clown who, among the daring of the trapeze artist and the agility of the bare-back riders, has to appear unrehearsed and spontaneous.

My analogy with the stage depends on the fact that, as chaplains, we cannot do spiritual care all by ourselves. We might like to think that we are the star of the show, and we certainly bring a lot of talent and commitment to the role, but we cannot do it as a solo effort. I can't push it too far though because unlike a stage show not everyone appreciates the part they play in delivering spiritual care. Part of our job is therefore to help other members of staff bask in the spiritual limelight. That's where a document like *Spiritual Care Matters* is so effective in helping us do that and it will be good to hear about the projects based on that publication at the NES meeting in May.

But before we leave the stage have a think about the different ways we can visualise ourselves helping people on their spiritual journey for we aren't going to be the principal actor in that story.

Perhaps we might be like the lighting person- illuminating the shadowy places or highlighting an important area; or the prompt, offering a re-connection to a forgotten story; maybe someone in the chorus providing harmony and company; or again the props manager providing just the right resource at the right time.

Do remember though that whatever part you have in whichever story, as Hamlet says, *the play's the thing.*

Derek Brown
President of SACH

What's the FORUM?
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Notes from the last Executive Meeting

Held in Dunblane on 23 March 2010

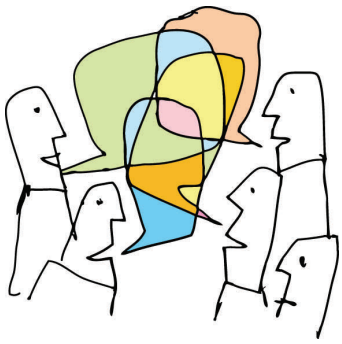
Discussion Forum
Following a request from the last meeting Fred Coutts had set up an online discussion facility as a trial for the Executive members to try. Jim Simpson brought information from Fred on three options. After discussion it was decided the system involving no cost should be used. Jim will ask Fred to publicise the facility in the next edition of Soundings with simple instructions as to how it may be used.

Committee Reports
CTAG – Andy Graham reported that most of the information discussed is to be found in Ewan Kelly's newsletter *Reflective Practitioner* or had been sent by general e-mail from Ewan.
a) Fewer meetings would be held due to financial constraints but much focus will be put on the Co-ordinating Chaplains retreat in November 2010.
b) It may be that SACH can provide a training day next spring if NES funds are not available.
c) As there will be no conference at the Beardmore this year and therefore no opportunity to hold the SACH AGM at that time, a decision needs to be made as to the date of the next SACH AGM. If it accords with the constitution, it may be held at the Carberry Conference in February 2011. Margery Collin will ask Ewan an if this might be possible.
ACTS – Margery Collin gave an update about the meeting of spiritual care reps with Nicola Sturgeon on 15th May. The subject matter has been confined to alcohol rehab with little opportunity to voice issues in healthcare chaplaincy.
SCDC – Derek Brown was unable to attend the last meeting.
a) New liturgy book – it was decided this would be too big to have in multiple copies. It may be best used as a chaplaincy resource rather than be on public display from where it may be stolen.
b) Ewan is keen to give SCDC a higher profile.
UKBHC – Derek Brown has been unable to attend the last two meetings
a) The situation in England is still unresolved with chaplaincy groups trying to duplicate the work of UKBHC. Anne Mulligan noted that some Scottish chaplains are under the impression that UKBHC has little interest in faith communities. It was agreed the next edition of *Soundings* may have an update on this in order that Scottish chaplains be made aware of the real situation. [See Page 4]
b) Any move ahead on behalf of Scottish chaplains with regard to professional registration is on hold for the time being. This may be discussed with Ewan at the next SACH meeting.

Data Protection
It was agreed that the guidelines in the new UKBHC Code of Conduct should clarify any previous issues.

Treasurer's Report
The general fund stands at £5035.92 and the training fund at £2936.57.

Date of next Meeting
Tuesday 29th June 2010, Scottish Churches House.



forum *n.* (place or medium for) meeting, assembly for open discussion or debate.

At the suggestion of the SACH Executive, Fred Coutts has launched a Discussion Forum on the SACH Website.

Do you have questions, comments or opinions about anything to do with chaplaincy or spiritual care? Do you have ideas about what SACH should be doing? Post them on the Forum! You can use the Forum to ask a question or share your experiences as a chaplain, introduce yourself, discuss ideas and find out how others go about things.
You can find the Forum from the link below or click the Forum button at the top of each page of the SACH website.
You will need to register and create a password—but this is easy. After that, read what other people have written, then you can reply (just click the **Post Reply** button with the red writing at the top and bottom of the text—it's as easy as sending an e-mail). Or you can click the **New Topic** button and start a new topic for discussion yourself and get other people talking.
The Forum Moderator has to approve your first three postings before they appear. After that you are on your own and the sky's the limit……

SEE YOU IN THE FORUM!

Scratchings from the Programme Director

On his retirement Chris told me one of the most enjoyable things about the programme director's job in NES is being able to visit all the health boards in the country. He is right. As well as enjoying the company of friends and colleagues it has been really heartening to be reminded of the great job chaplains do on a daily and weekly basis in NHS Scotland. More than that, there are some fantastically creative and worthwhile initiatives that chaplains are involved in up and down the country. All of this makes a huge difference to the wellbeing of individual patients, carers and staff as well the communal lives of hospitals, hospices and primary care facilities all over Scotland. Everywhere I have gone in the past year it is obvious through meeting managers and staff from different disciplines that chaplains and spiritual care teams are highly regarded in their places of work.

But…but …(oh why do sound like the critical parent who is reading his child's report card) we (and I include myself in this until recently!) are not great at telling others how competent, capable and worthwhile employing we are. Yes – the parent bit of me says we could do better on this front. Chaplains make a difference and we need to find appropriate ways of sharing that with relevant others in the health service and beyond. There are still so many in government and in health boards, including in wards or in primary care work, that do not know what we do and how well we do it.

Currently, we have a wonderful opportunity to tell significant others (key decision makers and purse holders included) that we are exemplars of quality person centred and relationship based care in the NHS by engaging intentionally with the Scottish Government's new Quality Strategy. Indeed at a recent gathering of lead chaplains and spiritual care line managers, Claire Tester of the Scottish Government's Quality Team invited us to send her examples of projects, strategies and chaplaincy work which exemplify person-centred, timely, effective and compassionate care. We were also challenged to urgently and intentionally engage with our local health board quality champions to do the same and work collaboratively with others to identify and share best quality practice in our local contexts (please speak to your lead chaplain about these initiatives).

In short, we have the opportunity to reflect on what we do well and share it with influential others in the context of the outworking of the government's main healthcare strategy for the foreseeable future. Health boards have no choice in making quality a priority at their board meetings and in their decision making. Quality care is what chaplains are about – person -centred and relational. Let's blow our trumpet, tell others and celebrate that we are at the centre and not on the fringes of what is envisioned for 21st healthcare in Scotland.

Best wishes in all you do and embody,

Ewan

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Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy

Just glancing at Ewan Kelly's first issue of 'The Reflective Practitioner' it is clearly an exciting and demanding time to be a healthcare chaplain. There is a real buzz and energy around. There is a need to clearly articulate the role of healthcare chaplain within the wider healthcare community. This is a time when we need to be reflective and to support one another in the work that we do. During this time of opportunity and change it is pertinent, for me as I step into the role of co-editor of the Journal to remind myself of the core aims of the Scottish Journal of Healthcare Chaplaincy.

The Journal is there as a key resource for you and aims to assist healthcare chaplains and healthcare workers to provide effective spiritual, religious and pastoral care. This means that at a time when we are asked to be more research aware, when we are being asked to audit what we do, as we explore the interface between healthcare chaplains, faith communities and the society in which we work, - at this time of energy and reflection we have a forum in which the latest research and the deepest reflections can be aired and shared.

My hope is that the Journal can be responsive to the changing needs and demands of healthcare community. I encourage you therefore to become involved in the life of the Journal; read it and critique it; send in submissions for book reviews; offer insights of your own lived experience which can encourage and push out the boundaries of best practice, use the Journal as a place to disseminate your research findings, copy articles and share them with your multidisciplinary teams.

I look forward to hearing from you and trust that the Journal will continue to be a source of inspiration in the delivery of the highest quality of spiritual and religious care to the people of Scotland.

Ian Stirling
Co-Editor

UKBHC

Members may have been a little confused and perhaps perturbed by the ongoing debate in England between the Multi Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy and the UK Board for Healthcare Chaplaincy. One of the major sticking points is the perception, which is not confined to England it has to be said, that chaplaincy is moving away from its faith community roots.

SACH was involved, along with our sister professional associations in setting up and supporting UKBHC and we are quite sure that there are no grounds for concern on this matter. Please see the letter below, issued by the UKBHC in response to a publication by the Multi faith group last month.

Response to MFGHC Bulletin 20

The UKBHC is deeply disturbed by the inaccurate and misleading summary conclusions of the meeting between representatives of the UKBHC and the MFGHC held in October 2009 printed in Bulletin 20.

The statement *"it was concluded that UKBHC did not envisage joint working with the faith communities and did not wish for their involvement in the regulation of chaplains"* is a gross misrepresentation of the discussion. The UKBHC is and always has been committed to working with faith communities throughout the UK.

To infer that the UKBHC does not wish faith community involvement in the regulation of chaplains is also misleading and untrue. Faith community and belief groups are an essential part of professional registration: the UKBHC cannot 'authorise' or 'endorse' chaplains. At the meeting in October the UKBHC and MFGHC the two groups were in agreement on the following:

- Only faith communities can authorise/ endorse the faith/belief status of chaplains
- A faith/belief background is essential to practicing as a chaplain
- Interfaith ministry is not an acceptable model for chaplaincy

The UKBHC does not support the development of a parallel system of regulation as proposed and being developed by the MFGHC for England. The Board believes chaplaincy should be developed UK wide and working with the health departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales already has in place much of the work the MFGHC is proposing to develop including:

- Standards for Healthcare Chaplaincy Services
- Spiritual and Religious Care Capabilities and Competences for Healthcare Chaplains
- A system for accrediting education and training courses for Continuing Professional Development
- A voluntary register for healthcare chaplains

The MFGHC were invited as one of a number of groups representing faith communities in the UK to attend and participate in the NHS working parties developing this work which has been under development since 2005.

It is distressing and frustrating to the Board that while the rest of the UK is working together in partnership there is confrontation and divided agendas in England. If you as constituent members of the MFGHC have any doubts or questions about the UKBHC its beliefs and intentions please contact us directly and we will be pleased to meet with you. Alternatively you will find all our work openly available at www.ukbhc.org.uk

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You can find this (and previous) editions of ***SACH Soundings*** in full colour on the SACH Website:
www.sach.org.uk/news.htm
If you would like to receive the colour version of SACH Soundings by e-mail in PDF Format,
send your e-mail address to: **Fred.Coutts@sach.org.uk**

The next edition of *SACH Soundings* will be published in July 2010.
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