

TCF News

Issue No 67 Spring 2011

The Compassionate Friends



We warmly invite our members to attend the next residential

TCF Gathering

4-6th November 2011

which will take place at

Horwood House -MK17 0PH



Horwood House sits conveniently on the outskirts of Milton Keynes amid beautiful Buckinghamshire countryside. 38 acres of landscaped grounds form a beautiful backdrop to this early 20th century manor house, restored and extended to combine historic charm with modern facilities.

The hotel is perfectly placed, just a short drive from the M1 and M40 motorways and central Milton Keynes.

Join us for a supportive weekend where you can safely share experiences and feelings amongst TCF friends old and new. Relax and reflect with others who understand in comfortable surroundings.

Further details and a booking form will be available shortly from the National Office: **08451 203785** - or visit our website: www.tcf.org.uk

TCF AWARENESS WEEK

Audrie Norris
Public relations Officer
TCF(UK)

DURING TCF AWARENESS WEEK, Jane Morris did an excellent interview with Radio Derby which bore fruit almost immediately with a call from a local bereaved father from a few years back who had been looking for someone to talk to, plus a few other enquiries since.

Audrie and John Norris were interviewed by Ashbourne Radio, a much smaller station but with a wide local circulation, and details of TCF have now gone on a public information programme which is broadcast at regular intervals throughout the day. They have also been invited back to do a more in-depth

discussion about TCF this month, and discovered that the programme manager is also a bereaved parent who actually knew about TCF but was unable to show a personal interest in it. He has now said he will publicise through Audrie and John and hopes to perhaps hold a charity auction later in the year to raise funds.

COPING WITH CHRISTMAS

FOR MOST OF US Christmas is one of the most difficult times of the year to deal with. The needs of other children and grandchildren often mean that we cannot just close the curtains or, if finances allow, disappear to a country where Christmas does not figure so large.

Our son, who died when he was 21, had for some years expressed a desire to work with the homeless at Christmas but had not been able to arrange it. With this in mind and with the desire to keep busy whilst the rest of the country watched TV or went to the sales, I volunteered for two days work with 'Crisis at Christmas' in 2009 and I repeated the experience this year.

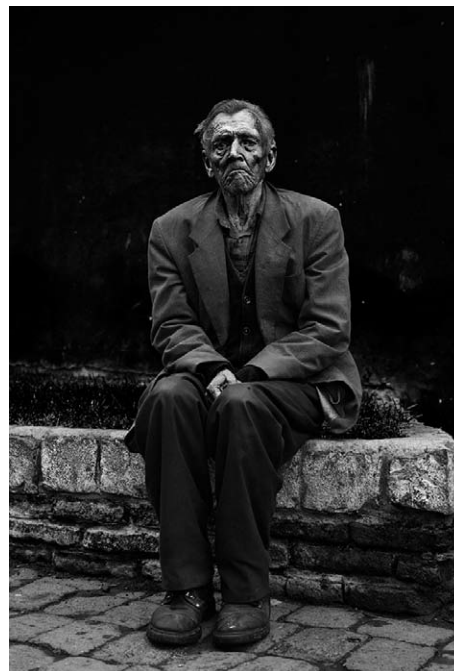
Crisis runs 9 centres in London, opening on 23rd December and closing on 30th December. Some of the centres are day only, catering for those who have hostel places or rough sleepers who do not want to leave the streets at night, some have beds, there is a women only centre and a "wet" centre, where alcoholics are allowed to bring their drinks in with them.

My shifts have been at a day centre set up in a college near Stratford in East London. There are 2 volunteer shifts and the centre is open to guests from 9.30 in the morning to 9 at night.

Cooked breakfasts, lunches and dinners are served and hot drinks are available all day and there is lots of entertainment for the guests including some well known names who drop in.

Crisis do not just offer warmth and food. The centres offer help and advice from doctors, chiropodists, dentists, opticians, life coaches, alcoholics anonymous, cocaine anonymous, the Samaritans, Citizens Advice and many others and there are follow up schemes running through the year helping to get guests into accommodation and jobs. Many guests, having sorted out their lives, come back as volunteers. The centres also offer new or good quality used clothing, showers, hairdressing, manicures and even massages and yoga. Arts and crafts, a library and games room and IT are also available and translators are found for guests from Eastern Europe who have found that the streets of London are not paved with gold.

The training and back up for volunteers are exemplary and the very professional (and unpaid) leaders, known as Green Badges ensure that everyone is safe and happy. Volunteers carry out a huge range of jobs throughout the day from helping in the kitchens to welcoming and registering the guests and the jobs are rotated on a regular basis to prevent boredom. The camaraderie is



"Down but not out!" portrait taken by Matt Wilson in Chile. The man is not a guest of Crisis.

such that no one minds what they do - even lavatory duties, known as the Marigold Shift.

A major hotel chain offers very competitive prices to Crisis volunteers who do not live in London. I will certainly be back at Crisis next year and I recommend it to anyone else. If you are looking for something fun and different, come and join us.

ANON

Registering as a volunteer with Crisis takes place in October. **Go to www.crisis.org.uk**

WEEKEND AT WHIRLOW GRANGE CONFERENCE CENTRE

May 20th – May 22nd 2011

You are warmly invited to join us for another supportive weekend at Whirlow Grange, on the borders of S. Yorkshire/Derbyshire.

The weekend will be a mixture of formal and informal discussions and, most of all, a chance to spend a weekend away with people who truly understand. You will, of course, be free to participate in as much or as little as you like. The price is £150 per person. This includes full board from Friday evening dinner through to Sunday lunch. It also includes an unlimited supply of teas, coffees and biscuits available at all times. There is a licensed bar.

For more details and a booking form, please contact Diana Hack on 01484 681514 or email dianahack2@yahoo.co.uk

A small number of day visitors may be allowed - price to be confirmed



The Memory Tree at Whirlow Grange where those who attend tie ribbons in memory of their loved children.

COFFEE MORNING and FLOWER ARRANGING WORKSHOP

TCF MEMBERS Stephen and Jannet Mathers and their supportive friends, Stephany Murdoch and Pauline Elliot, organised a 'coffee morning and flower arranging workshop' which was very well attended at the Mathers' residence.

"About 50 people came, and most of them had a go at making a door wreath or arrangement in a basket. We provided all the materials, which were partly bought from a flower wholesaler, partly raided from people's gardens, and other decorative bits and pieces we'd collected. Everyone really enjoyed themselves, and found it therapeutic, fun and inspirational.

We also had a raffle and handed out badges about the TCF worldwide candle lighting, which was two days later. We organised the event in order to raise awareness about TCF in our local area and as an introduction to our aim to start a TCF group in the area of Blackheath, Greenwich, Lewisham and Deptford. Special mention should be made



Stephany and Linda

of our neighbour Cindy Sheen who baked huge and delicious cakes enjoyed by all.

Including the gift aid for which people filled in forms, the total sum raised for TCF was £820 so we were very pleased. Many people said that they would like to come again, so we have decided to make it an annual event, it was a good focus at what is a difficult time of year."

All best wishes to you,
Jannet Mathers



The patio



Brigitte

FIFTIETH INTERNATIONAL SAMARITAN CONFERENCE

Dear Compassionate Friends,

I wanted to thank you for allowing me to display and distribute your leaflets at the recent ISC held at York University, September 24th to 26th.

I was fortunate to be invited to the conference as a guest speaker along with my friend, co-speaker and bereaved parent Liz Voysey. As well as speaking about traumatic bereavement we had a Bereavement Information stand in the exhibition section.

We wanted to let you know that there was a great deal of interest in TCF and when asked we were able to pass on your details and publications list.

Thank you once again and I hope I was able to raise the profile of the very important work that TCF do.

Regards,
Carole Adam

Independent speaker about traumatic death and Cruse Bereavement Care Volunteer.

GOLDEN WEDDING CELEBRATIONS 12th November 2010

RONA AND DEREK PHILLIPS write:

Please accept our cheque for £300.00 collected from family and friends on our Golden Wedding Anniversary celebrations. We found great comfort from the TCF group when we lost our daughter Deborah in June 2000.

Thanks for your wonderful unfailing support.

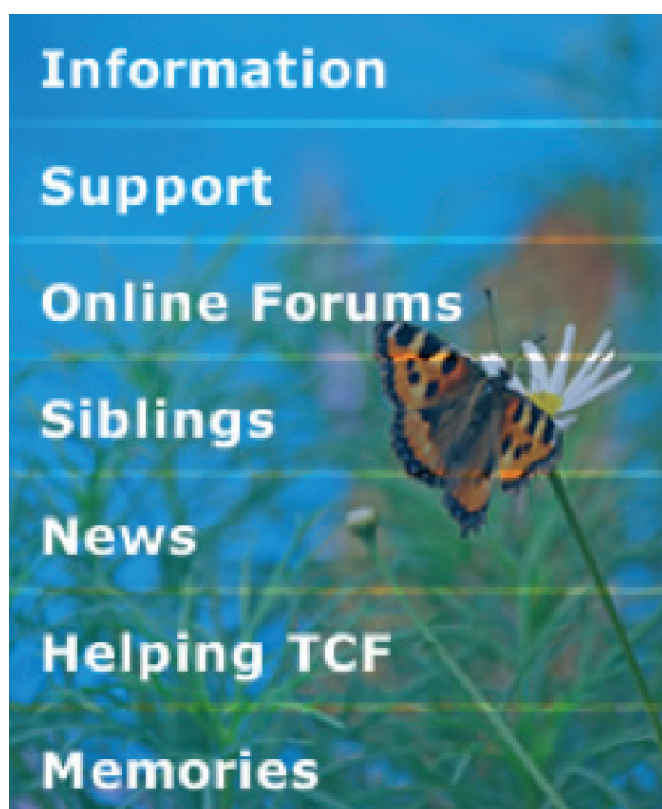
Sincerely yours,
Rona and Derek



Rona and Derek at their Golden Wedding Anniversary

Please note that photographs submitted to TCF Newsletter must be of sufficient quality that they can be reprinted satisfactorily. Digital photos are best, particularly if they are forwarded to us via email.

THE 'NEW LOOK' TCF WEBSITE - www.tcf.org.uk



FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO DON'T USE THE TCF WEBSITE VERY OFTEN (or ever) I'd like to announce that we have had a facelift. Hopefully the 'new look' is fresh and friendly and easy to navigate. If you've never, or only rarely visit, just look at what you're missing.

Under **Information**, you can find out who's who in the organisation and how to contact them directly, then there's links to other useful organisations, including TCF groups around the world. Whilst under **Support** you'll find out about TCF events, the postal library and local support.

Then there are links to the **Online Forum** and the **Siblings** website along with TCF's latest **News** and 'must have' merchandise. Click **Helping TCF**, and amongst lots of other helpful information you can find how to help raise funds with your old stamps, mobile phones and ink cartridges.

I'm only lightly scratching the surface of a very full and interesting website here, there's a lot more for you to find if you take a look. But, if you can't find something, or you have something you would like adding or an event advertised, please just let us know, you'll find the address on the website!

Finally, one of my favourite pages; Have you heard people talk of the TCF quilts, but have never seen them? Well pop along to **Memories** and you can see large photos of the '30 years of TCF', 'The Millennium' and the 'Scottish' quilts, and I hope to be adding more pages to Memories very soon.

Shaun Hewitt
part of the web team

The Editor writes: Many thanks for this explanation Shaun. It's just what an old and incompetent website user like me needs! Are there any more out there?

BROUGHT TO BOOK

I HAD NOT FULLY REALISED the consequences when Gil said that she would run the library herself rather than see it close. Be careful what you wish for! For years Gil has encouraged me to get rid of books not keep them - on more than one occasion I have bought a book at a jumble sale only to discover that it was one of mine that had been donated!

Now books have arrived in the house in their thousands. From Gil's first suggesting taking on the library to its being up and running seems to have taken no time at all. I have very much left her to it apart from a trip with her to the library in Chatham before the move (an excuse to go to the Dockyard museum) and humping boxes when the library was delivered.

I have almost forgotten what Gil looks like, as she has laboured away getting everything back into shape but I know how much her efforts will mean to so many of us. Sam was a great bibliophile and I do hope that he would approve of his room being used to hold such a precious resource.

Patrick Roberts

(left) The new TCF library



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Opinions expressed in TCF News by individuals are not necessarily those of TCF, the Editor or Editorial Team.

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