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EDITORIAL

Happy New Year to all our readers and our hopes that you all came through the Christmas period none the worse for wear! As ever, I was hoping to get this out before the festive season but life, and a busy treatment centre always has other plans.

Brian has written at length about our year at Prinsted but the only thing he didn't mention was the one and only trip we managed to make during a year in which our travelling had to be severely curtailed! In early November, Brian, Colin and I attended a conference in Avila, Spain entitled Psychiatry and Religious Experience. Not for the faint hearted! Actually, it was very enjoyable and we met some really interesting people as well as managing to spend some time with our good friend Nacho who is now settled back in Madrid. Also in this issue Paul, our first counsellor trainee placement writes about his experience with us, and the residents

as usual contribute various pieces from creative writing.

We have started the year in good spirits with a nearly full house so we all wish that the next twelve months is a peaceful and fulfilling year for all of you and please remember that we always love visitors!

Caitilin

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Family Workshops 2011

March 2nd, 3rd 4th
June 15th, 16th, 17th
November 9th, 10th, 11th

Summer Reunion to which all are invited: Saturday July 2nd 12-5pm

Prinsted Family Support Group Workshop and Lunch

Saturday April 30th 10am-2pm

Spiritual Renewal Weekend at Dunford House

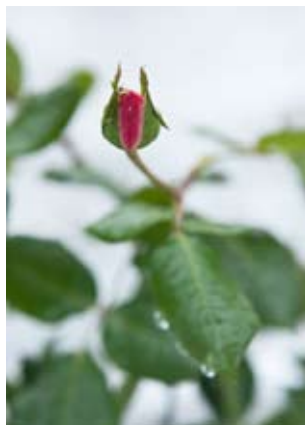
May 6th 7th 8th

STAITH HOUSE UPDATE

It's hard to fathom that Staith House has been running for nearly two and half years already and has had over twenty residents now. The house was very full in the early part of the year, with a lull in the middle and has been filling up again as the year draws to a close.

The social highlight of the year was undoubtedly the summer reunion barbecue in September, traditionally arranged for the most inclement day of the summer / year and this year's event was no exception. The attendance was high and it was a great chance to catch up with a lot of the people who make up the membership of a quite unique club.

Rob



REFLECTIONS ON 2010

Well, what a year this has been both for Prinsted and personally. We started the year with continuing low numbers, requiring us to be extremely mindful of expenditure and to be honest, there were many times when we wondered how long we could survive. But despite these worries we continued to keep the faith that we would be shown the way forward. With a major focus on marketing and evaluating our strengths and weaknesses with a view to improvement of what we offer and do best (thanks to Sarita's help), Prinsted started to emerge with even more strength and commitment.

In early March we very sadly lost Mike at Prinsted as a result of the long term consequences of this illness on his body. Mike had been known to us since 2005 when he was first in treatment with us and over the years we had all become extremely fond of him, being continuously aware of his journey though a selection of treatment centres around the world. His passing was felt deeply by many people whose hearts he had touched and this was clearly evident in the overwhelming numbers that attended his memorial that we arranged on

March 23rd.

Then in April my Mum died unexpectedly which I still find hard to reconcile myself to. It's all very well counselling others in their grief but when it happens to oneself it's quite another matter. Anyway, I am slowly coming to terms with the loss and have been deeply touched by those who have sent their condolences and well wishes.

In the early summer our numbers began to increase dramatically and we have embraced and met the challenges that have followed, celebrating what we know to be a life changing and miraculous experience. Recently we learned of the death of a treasured colleague, Hugh Robinson from Tabankulu in Cape Town. He had only recently married Mandy so our hearts go out to her and all their family. A salutary reminder of the stress of the job that we all do.

Our residents recently located new stables nearby where they can do their voluntary work, but we also found out that they also provide equine psychotherapy which we are particularly excited about adding to



Brian, Caitlin and Colin in Avila

our programme, as it appears to add such an enhancing quality to people's recovery throughout the world. The need to increase our clinical staff has become very evident as Caitlin concedes to age (!) following a hip replacement in September reducing her working days to 4 a week, so we are engaged in the search to find the right person to fit with our existing team. At this point I really feel the need to acknowledge the dedication, versatility, reliability and professionalism of our staff across the board, from Carole who holds us all together, to all our clinicians and support staff. The quality and stability of our staff make Prinsted the extremely special place that it is, especially during this difficult year.

Brian

CREATIVE WRITING

A New Way

*Walking on a street today
Coming from a sleazy café
I remembered my journey
That brought me up to Horley*

*It wasn't an easy one
And some fights are still to come
But I must go with the flow
The end I don't want to know.*

*It began in a strange place
Full of sun and smiley faces
Then my path went in the dark
In the shadow I just cracked.*

*Overwhelmed by techno sounds
An ideal I thought I'd found
I just tried to fool myself
The darkest place was the best.*

*Like a blind man in the rain
My foolish success went away
I had no one else to blame
So I bend my knees and pray.*

*And a hope gave me a smile
In this new place called our God
A fear rebels on a house
That finally helped me stand*

Kim

PLACEMENT

I am presently in my second year of a course in Addiction Counselling originally developed by Clouds. It is now run by the Charity, Action on Addiction. The course is a higher education qualification awarded by the University of Bath but the degree is vocational which means that a lot of my training requires me to be in a work setting where I can learn the necessary skills. I wanted to work in a residential treatment centre that facilitated the 12 step model enabling me to gain experience as a specialised Addictions Counsellor. Prinsted has an excellent reputation for its success in treating clients who had already gained some initial primary treatment or who had proved to be clean and sober or abstinent from their addiction for a period of 2 weeks. The ongoing intensive treatment is offered for a period of 3-6 months.

I first met Brian and Caitlin a few months into my academic studies when I visited with a view to taking up my placement with them. I received a warm welcome and was shown around. I was aware that they had not taken any students before so the venture would be new for us all. I took up my placement in

April and although it has not been without its challenges, I have had a wonderful learning experience. I have gained a lot of knowledge with excellent guidance by all the staff and have been impressed by their professionalism. There is a lot of work involved and many core functions of an Addictions Counsellor which includes the screening of clients, orientation, assessment, intake, treatment planning, case management, crisis intervention, counselling, liaison and referral, client education, consultation, reporting and record keeping.

Each day is different with a varied structure. A typical day for me begins with a handover from the previous day by the support staff followed by a further handover made by two of the residents. I then take meditation and straight afterwards there is a morning meeting of any other business(AOB) This might follow with a group or a workshop/lecture which I will involve myself in. This is a perfect time to practice my skills in CBT, Motivational Interviewing or the person centred approach. Occasionally I will take a more observatory role and learn by listening.

Sometimes the residents will do voluntary work in the afternoon. This can mean a visit to the stables to help look after the horses or helping in a local charity shop. There is often a group session in the afternoon. I normally finish as the residents start either yoga or aerobics. I have been tempted to join them but normally by this time I am ready to go home and relax ready for the next day!

Paul



2 new winter residents!

Punctuating the Powerful - A Sparrows Journey

As I gather my thoughts, the sound of sparrows punctuates, a powerful dawn chorus. Pernicious thoughts that swallow feelings, incessant squabbling, as these gregarious sparrows flee the gaze of a hawk, my mind too is in terror .

Breeding in small colonies, collecting in large flocks, they find freedom. As I sit and listen, these thoughts pass as do my hearts desires.

My feelings dissolve, float delicately, bobbing on the surface. How this roof top chorus reflect the pandemonium of my desires. As permission to own my path is granted. How I will spread

my wings rings in my ears, speechless numbed by fear, my heart flutters.

I am bigger than my fear, as I too find strength my mind opens and heart soars. Joining my flock with this new found freedom and joy.

Sam

JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

Two years and four months ago, things were very different to the way they are now. Back then I was a broken man, both physically and mentally. Twelve years of constant drug abuse had worn down my essence, my passions, my persona, my hope and my will to live. I lived in complete fear of the world and the only way I could medicate myself to overcome the fear and function "normally" was by medicating myself with drugs. The problem is that the situation would never be sustainable because as time went by I would grow tolerant to them, so the dosage increased more and the consequences both to me and others also increased exponentially in those years of using. The point is two years and four months ago I had no other choice but to come into recovery otherwise I would die very soon afterwards. I was in such physical pain at the end of my using that one day I told my mother that I had a problem and that I needed help so she sent me over to London to a primary clinic called the Priory, where I would basically detox for 6 weeks. Those six weeks were absolute hell for me, I was in a terrible mental state, paranoia, psychosis, and panic was how I could describe the first 3 weeks. The first week I was so overwhelmed that I was unable to sleep one single minute, I was also so scared that I thought the only way out was to commit suicide which I attempted in my bedroom of the Priory but was luckily unsuccessful. After that the doctors gave me antipsychotic medication and antidepressants which helped me "survive" the rest of the time till I got sent to Prinsted. Although I went to countless recovery lectures and groups in the Priory I didn't really get any of it and my defences were so high up that I was completely unreceptive and no way in a position to reveal any of my real self, or be honest with myself and others, I think I was just there like I said to detox.

So 6 weeks later I went to Prinsted for an assessment and I remember my first contact was a big warm smiling figure that went by the name of Brian, I have to admit already in the first day

I found a big difference from the Priory to Prinsted, There was a certain warmth and care that I found very comforting in that first encounter with him.

I got accepted into Prinsted and I moved in a couple of days later. I have to admit it wasn't easy at the beginning to meet the residents, because of my fear towards people but Prinsted gave me the room and the time to become comfortable and very gently and subtly eased me into the recovery process. I spent 3 months saying I wanted to leave but something, maybe that warmth kept me in there and slowly I began to open up and reveal myself to my peers. I started to make good friends, I started to laugh and have fun, I started to learn discipline and responsibility, and I started to learn real values that would serve me for the rest of my life. I also began to learn about feelings and how they manifested themselves. I felt part of a family with Brian at the head being a wonderful father figure and Caitilin being a great mother figure and my peers being brothers and sisters in recovery. The love and care of the carers (Jenny, Trisha, and any others I may have not mentioned) who would take the time to listen to my obsessions and the wonderful advice from the therapists like Stuart and Clare have all been part of this amazing process that I have gone through. It has probably been the hardest thing I have done in my life, but it is well worth it.

Seven months flew by and I came to the end of secondary treatment. I had the choice to stay and go to Staith House which is a halfway house under the Prinsted umbrella or to go back to Spain and start life there. I decided to stay here, and I am very glad I did. Staith was a completely different kettle of fish, the warmth of Prinsted can still be subtly felt but it's more at a distance. You're left much more to your own devices in Staith and it's where you start becoming responsible for yourself without being spoon fed as you were in Prinsted. It's also a safe place where you start interacting with the real world and start encountering feelings that didn't come out in Prinsted because

the time span is too short and also due to the nature of activities you do in the "outside world" such as looking for work or interacting with people at work. Treatment is one thing, going outside is another and I find that Staith was the perfect link between treatment and the real world because I still felt very vulnerable after leaving secondary so the risk of me relapsing could have been much higher if I would have been somewhere else. I must say the process of job hunting in a recession was a very tough one and I couldn't have gone through it without Rob the therapist/house manager at Staith. There were many days that I would struggle and didn't want to do anything and Rob would persevere and help me through those hard times, In the end I found a job and I learnt how to value myself. The irony of it all is that after a year of being in Staith I didn't want to leave because I was so comfortable and so safe in that environment, so I do recommend Staith to everybody.

Finally I just want to say that I am so grateful to all the staff at Prinsted, Carole who organizes everything and without her it just wouldn't work so efficiently and of course Brian, Caitilin, Stuart, Clare, Sheryl, Colin, Jenny, Trish, and anyone else that I haven't mentioned. These people all together create miracles everyday and they have given people like me life and tools to get through it, Freedom, Hope and Love. Thank you Prinsted!

Yours sincerely
Igor

My Journey

*One step forwards, two steps back
Along a beaten and battered track
I started out with head held high
But all I did was question why.
The answers never seemed to come
But further and faster I would run
I'd trip and fall along the way
In one place too long I'd never stay
My night by now was closing in
Full circle me, I must begin.*

Cameron