

**TCF Social Weekend
at Willersley Castle
nr Matlock,
Derbyshire
Friday 12 to
Sunday 14 May 2006**

Midlands TCF are organising a TCF weekend. We still have some places available. This is an opportunity to share a weekend's company, with time to 'get together' as well as a chance to look around the area and enjoy some private time. The castle has its own swimming pool, sports centre and TV lounge. A meeting room will be available to our group. We are offered some en suite rooms, either double or twin, and some non en suite. No extra charge is made for single occupancy. Willersley Castle is non-smoking and non alcohol but there's nothing to stop a drink together in one of the many locals!

Cost: Friday dinner to Sunday Lunch, all meals and morning coffee included, £115 per person en suite accommodation; £100 non en suite.

Places are limited so we shall accept bookings on a first come first served basis. We need a deposit of £40 to secure a place, balance to be paid by 31 January, 2006.

Contact:
Jan and Mike Alcock, tel. 0114 2890371;
e-mail, mike.chessman@btopenworld.com
address, Mike Alcock, Millcross Lane,
Barlow, Dronfield, S18 7TA.

BBC Radio Appeal

The Countess Mountbatten will be making an appeal on behalf of TCF on BBC Radio 4 on Sunday, 11th December at 07.55 and 21.26, which will be repeated on Thursday, 15 December at 15.27.

We still have some stickers to publicise this appeal and these can be attached to envelopes (particularly those carrying Christmas Cards!).

If you would like a supply please contact Julia at the office. Tell all your friends, associates and colleagues!



Countess Mountbatten recording her appeal

Postal Library Service

The Compassionate Friends Postal Library Service offers advice, information, and support to bereaved parents and their families. The library is also available to professionals and those caring for the bereaved.

The library contains more than 1200 titles on all aspects of bereavement, including loss issues and research, aimed at both the bereaved of all ages, and those providing bereavement support. Many of the titles cover specialised topics and are not easily available elsewhere. If requested, advice can be given on suitable books to meet each individual need. The library also contains audio and video tapes, and CDs.

A Library Catalogue (price £2.50) is available from the library (address below), or the national office. Some sections of the library catalogue on specific subjects, e.g. suicide, murder, childhood bereavement, can be supplied for a reduced price. Alternatively we can provide a free copy of the 2002 catalogue by email. In addition we aim to have the full library catalogue available on our website: www.tcf.org.uk in the not too distant future.

While the TCF Library is an essential part of the support we give to bereaved families and professionals, running it is expensive. We, therefore charge a membership fee, (plus postage costs). However, library membership is free of charge to those who subscribe to the TCF Supporting Membership Scheme. Please read our Library Guidelines for further details.

Memorial Book Scheme

We are constantly updating, and expanding the library with new titles and literature. Many parents, families and friends like to donate a book to the library in memory of the person who died. The library has a small list of books awaiting donation, and a wish list of books that we would like to obtain. The list of books can be supplied on request. Once a selection has been made a memorial bookplate will be sent for completion, and later insertion into the donated book. A small photograph may also be inserted.

Editor's Note: We are hoping to dedicate the Spring Issue of TCF News to local events, charity raising, and individual news items so please send us copy of any text you would like us to consider. Or maybe you have something you would like to say in a letter? One important consideration, if you are taking photographs that you might wish us to include, is to appreciate that it is better to submit digital photos as these are much easier, quicker and cheaper to include in the copy we send to press, but don't let this exclude any good photo you have that is not digital.

Leaflets

Work has just begun on reviewing four leaflets. The writing team is always glad to receive comments as to what has been left out, what irritates the reader etc.?

The leaflets are:

1. Grieving Couples
2. When a child in your school is bereaved
3. Death abroad
4. Helping Bereaved parents

Please send your comments to David Lloyd-Hughes, 5 Hollins Gardens, Far Headingley, Leeds LS16 5N1.
Email david@lloyd-hughes.fsbusiness.co.uk

The new sibling leaflet writing team would also like to hear from anyone who has personal experience of being bereaved of a sibling as an adult. Please contact Jenna Harrison, sibbscontact@tcf.org.uk

TCF News is published by The Compassionate Friends (TCF), a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales, number 4029535. It is a registered charity, number 1082335. TCF gratefully acknowledges all contributions.

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

53 North Street, Bristol BS3 1EN. Tel: 08451 20 37 85. Fax: 08451 20 37 86 www.tcf.org.uk

TCF News

Issue No 46 Winter 2005

The Compassionate Friends



Connecting the World with Hope

A report on the 2005 World Gathering on Bereavement combined with the TCF 4th International Gathering, Vancouver, 18th to 21st August 2005

Vancouver is a lovely city with a magnificent harbour that stretches wide towards high mountains in the north and Alaska beyond. The setting for the World Gathering on Bereavement combined with the Fourth International Gathering of TCF could not have been better, with the sun shining on us throughout each day, lighting up the boats, sea planes, restaurants, parks, joggers, shoppers, workers, docks and high rise apartment blocks that lined the shores. The opening



Part of the British contingent being subtle about their nationality! (Joe Lawley, Peter Austin & Jim Pringle at the bow of the cruiser)

ceremony was very impressive with a parade of all the national flags, escorted by Mounties, and we were moved by a native American Indian who sang and played a welcome song on his drum.

Highlights included a popular river cruise, during which we laughed and joked for some of the time, shared anecdotes and sad stories, described our lost sons and daughters, and appreciated the music and songs, from a folk band. Everybody seemed to feel a strong bond that broke through national barriers. The evening finished with a poignant ceremony in which a number of delegates threw flowers into the waters of the harbour in memory of their lost children.

Our dear Dutch friends, Betsy and Jan, remembering their daughter Marieke as they are about to cast flowers on the waters of Vancouver Harbour



'Holiday Package Under Cover'

A television programme with this title, aimed in part at exposing risk taking holidays, was shown on television in the summer. It provided some thought provoking material and commentary. We are investigating the possibility of keeping a video in the TCF library.

One of the stories it tells is of Sarah Jones' death while white water rafting in Peru. A fellow rafter, who also fell into the raging rapids at the same time as Sarah but who was rescued, said on the programme that he was simply asked before participating whether he could swim. That was enough for the adventure company to allow him and all the others to take part in what is a highly dangerous sport, requiring strength, agility and above all much experience on the part of those going on to a raft in dangerous waters.

Obviously, adventure companies must make money to exist but we need to ask whether there should not be criteria other than a desire to participate, that are subject to

strict controls governed by national and world authorities. A few members of TCF wish to investigate the possibility of producing a TCF leaflet on the subject of risk taking holidays, with one of the aims being to supply it to Holiday and Tour companies round the world. This is in line with a growing awareness among some members of TCF that we might be ideally situated to help prevent some of the deaths that occur so needlessly among young people. Are there other areas where TCF could take on a proactive or advisory role?

We welcome any thoughts you might have on this subject. Please contact the editor: tel: 01284 728608; email: mick.wilson11@tiscali.co.uk

continued over...

Connecting the World with Hope
continued



We were inspired by some excellent plenary speeches from American experts in the field of bereavement, none more entertaining than that given by Darcie D.Sims at the Thursday banquet when she held the audience in rapt attention by recounting anecdotes about her family's journey through bereavement. Darcie's ability to move from sadness to laughter and back again was awesome in its effect on the audience, as was her very strong 'gospel preacher' style that conveyed her wit so effectively. Most of the audience was moved to tears of appreciation by Darcie's final reminder that our children have lived and that the memory of their lives will always be with us, and that this should be uppermost in our minds, rather than that final loss of their lives. She thoroughly deserved the standing ovation she received at the end of her virtuoso speech.

We were also galvanized by Bob Baugher's plenary on the workings of the brain during grief. He talked about his recent experiences as a Fulbright scholar on a tour of parts of Africa and gave us an African word that will stay with us for a long time: it is 'Umbutu', which roughly translated means 'I am because of you.' We also shared in his anger at some of the cliché responses we have to suffer like, 'It was his time' or 'She's an angel now', or 'Now it's time to move on' etc.!



Another popular event was the well organised 'Walk to Remember', when delegates, clad in TCF tee shirts, walked in a rather straggling line, led by an impressive piper, through the parklands round the harbour. This made quite an impact on the Vancouver residents and visitors. Joe Lawley managed to get the piper to himself and got him to play 'Scotland the Brave' while Joe sang along. Later, Joe got left a bit behind and when he sat down on a seat in the hotel's front lawn he was approached by a Vancouver resident who asked him what TCF was all about, and when he told her she burst into tears. It transpired that she was not only a bereaved parent herself but so was her friend and she would tell her about TCF. Opinion among the British delegates concerning the workshops remains divided, some finding them too remote and lacking in the depth of shared feelings found in gatherings run by TCF itself. These TCF delegates would have liked the sharing sessions to have had more prominence rather than being somewhat demoted to the later



hours of each evening. Others, although recognising that some of workshops were rather too professional for their tastes did nevertheless find these sessions interesting. One British delegate pointed out that it was good for us to understand and talk with bereaved professionals and support services as well as other bereaved parents. This delegate found the workshops were so diversified that she felt there were learning experiences for almost everyone. Such sessions as grief behind what once was the Iron Curtain, Tibetan singing, bowls for relaxation, pet therapy, memorials and tributes, violent deaths, military deaths, death of a child with special needs, bereaved grandparents plus many others gave us all a

better understanding of the impact of loss on the family as a whole.



Other positives to come out of the international gathering were that we got the TCF International Council established with Margaret Pringle elected as Chairperson; a new group of Newsletter Editors has been formed round the globe, which will be corresponding with each other under the guidance of Jane Ono; we all appreciated the music and singing of the minstrels Paul Alexander and Alan Pederesen, and were amazed at the power and beauty of Judy Collins' voice as she sang without accompaniment; and, as Joe



Lawley reminded us, we got to meet all our friends from the far flung corners of the world. That in itself is a magnificent achievement. Renacer, our sister group in Argentina, has kindly offered to host the 5th International Gathering in September 2009. This event will take place in Buenos Aires during the 40th Anniversary Year of the Founding of TCF.

Margaret Pringle

In 1983 - 2 years after her eldest son David died in a road accident - Margaret Pringle volunteered to do some publicity for a new TCF group starting in the Teesside area. Twenty two years later, she is still a volunteer, working tirelessly for our Charity.

By January 1984 she was and still is, the local County Contact. She has also been a Regional Co-ordinator for the North, first Chairperson of the Pastoral Committee and a member of the National Committee for many years.

Following her work with the organising committee for the 1st International Gathering held in the UK in August 1994, Margaret was elected as our International Liaison Officer and is currently a co-opted member of the National Board of Trustees. She has corresponded on a regular basis with TCF contacts and groups around the world and attended Conferences in USA and Australia, where the 3rd International Gathering was held.

Margaret and her husband Jim - another hard-working member of TCF - were among the UK delegates who attended the recent 4th International Gathering in Vancouver, Canada. At an initial meeting there of international representatives it was decided to form a TCF International Council and Margaret was elected Chairperson because of her wealth of knowledge and experience in dealing with groups overseas. The International Council will try to assist new groups in other countries, offering advice, leaflets and information to ensure that all groups operate in a similar way. It is also envisaged that a directory of Heritage Sites will be available so members travelling abroad will be able to look up these places of interest.

As noted above, Argentina has offered to host the 5th International Gathering in Buenos Aires in September 2009 and Margaret and Jim hope to be there. She will be wearing a butterfly as usual - in memory of David and because she firmly believes that our children are now all beautiful free spirits, no longer bound to the earth but living on in a third dimension, like the butterfly after it emerges from the chrysalis.

TCF members belong to a unique world-wide family - united in grief but sharing a special bond of friendship. Sadly, there is a need for TCF to continue to expand but it is good to know that the hand of friendship can reach out to bereaved parents around the world, regardless of any geographical or racial boundaries.



Putting faces to hard working committee members

Here's a photograph of the National Committee at a recent meeting held in London. In the front row, turning round, are:

Jenna Harrison, (Sibling Rep.), James Antrobus (Policies & Procedures), John Baldock (Vice Chair & Network & Resources); in the back row, from left to right are: Jim Pringle (IT), Margaret Pringle (International Officer), Marian Venn (Events), Audrie Norris (PR), Nora Riordan (Company Secretary), Diana Youdale (Chair), and Jillian Tallon (Trustee without portfolio).

Charibands



'Loved today, yesterday and forever more'
Remember a loved one with these black silicone wristbands. Only £1.50 each, available from the national office.

Why not give one or sell to your friends and families. Quantity discounts are available, 25 are £34 (equivalent to £1.36 each), 50 are £55 (equivalent to £1.10 each).

Diana Youdale is producing her own leaflet to send round to all her friends, associates and others. You might like to consider doing something similar. Here's the text she has written.

CHARIBANDS

'As most of you are aware my beautiful 15 year old daughter, Caroline, who was also my only child, was killed thirteen years ago. Losing a child is classed as every loving parent's worst nightmare and a life sentence. I was fortunate in that I had a loving supportive family, and close friends, but even they didn't always know how to help me in those early dark days.

But then I was put in touch with a national charity called The Compassionate Friends (TCF) who provide advice and support to bereaved parents and their families, by others who are similarly bereaved. The charity has also supported my mother both as a bereaved grandparent and then as a parent after one of her beloved sons, Patrick, died. Ironically it then became my sisters turn when her premature baby daughter, Hannah, died at the age of 11 weeks.

In time with the right amount of support you become stronger, and find that you can reinvest into life, and smile again. Many of us who are helped by TCF then go on to provide support to other newly bereaved families, and I am now a trustee, and the National Chairman.

Unfortunately, like most charities we struggle to obtain funds to keep the services going.

Therefore we were unable to finance the initial layout for our own charity wristbands, which have been so popular elsewhere.

However, Charibands, have designed a black wristband (some of us oldies may remember the black armband which people often wore as a sign of bereavement), and printed on the wristbands are the words 'loved today, yesterday, and forever more'. All national bereavement charities have been asked if they would like to participate and thereby earn a percentage of the profit made on each sale, which is higher if we sell the bands ourselves, although they are being placed in many florists, funeral parlours, etc I therefore invite you to support TCF, and other bereavement charities, by purchasing a wristband in memory of someone you love.

Cost £1.50 each - No pressure involved, although I will be issuing free cakes on Monday & Wednesday to those who have purchased a wristband. Those without a wristband will need to purchase the cakes at £1.50 each!!!

With many thanks for taking the trouble of reading this, and hopefully your support.'