

My Only Enemy

This stranger holding me from head to toe,
This deaf usurper I shall never know,
Who lives in household quiet in my unrest,
And of my troubles weaves his tranquil nest,
Who never smiles or frowns or bows his head,
And while I rage is insolent as the dead,
... and (is my) only enemy.

Edwin Muir (The Private Place)

The problem of trying to describe the indescribable in terms of the effect of spiritual intrusion is matched equally by the difficulties inherent in trying to answer the question – 'who' are the intruders, and where and how do *they* originate? Frankly, if I could answer that question with complete certainty, I would be the very first to do so since the question was first posed, since humanity had its first philosophical thought. Many individuals, organisations and theologies believe that they have answers, and, from within the answers, a perceived core of similarity emerges. All presuppose the survival after death of the 'soul' or 'spirit'. The quality of life and the manner of dying are credited with having an effect upon the 'destination' of the released spirit. Death in accident, trauma, suicide and battle are alleged to create a so-called 'earthbound' spirit. Such are believed to stay close to the location of their dying and to be unable to realise that they are, in fact, dead. Some, it is said, attach themselves to living people and become, in effect, an inadvertent intruder, still hopelessly lost.

Those who die at home or in hospital may, by the very nature of their previous life, be strongly attached to individuals, places or to particular activities, and may, in death, seek an appropriate place or person. Alternatively, the very act of dying may leave them so isolated that they attach to the nearest living person, whether adult or newborn infant. In time those in the latter two groups may realise that they are able to utilise the mind and faculties of their 'host', and that they can create thoughts, desires and emotions. It is quite uncanny and a revealing commentary on the generality of humans, that just as a new method of communication is invented, so it is swamped by individuals or groups intent upon perverting it. The invention of photography and cinema soon were followed by the pornographic picture and 'blue' movie. Printing gave an open channel for erotica. Citizens' Band radio was swamped rapidly by the intrusive obscenity and worse, while the Internet – yes the Internet.

The Internet provides an ideal analogy of the spiritual link into the human mind. As I have become more confident and fluent in my ability to access the Internet and e-mail, so much more comes to light than I had anticipated. With e-mail comes 'spam'. Many will have experienced having their mail in-box flooded with these unwanted intrusions. In my case, it appears that the Server that I use has had its lists of subscribers entered and circulated widely, (assuming that the Server itself has not sold the information). Now, every time that I open my in-box, I find that there are several entries from totally undesirable and definitely unwanted sources. Do I want to enlarge my penis? Almost daily there are offers of products guaranteed to accomplish this. Do I want to see college girls masturbating, or having lesbian encounters? Just enter. Do I want to get in touch with bored housewives, all apparently ravening for sex? Sign in for contacts. Do I want to watch live action of farm girls copulating with animals? Why, enter in. There is no area of indecency and depravity that is not available. And this is just on e-mail spam.

So it is, by analogy, the way in which the human mind that has been opened and somehow entered is flooded with 'spam' by the spiritual equivalent of the human providers of obscenity and pornography. If the offers by e-mail of access to what are euphemistically called 'pre-teens' are taken up, will this be the route that some follow towards the land of the paedophile? Temptation is strewn before the curious and vulnerable. Some, it is true, will have made an active search for web sites that offer access to their personal predilections. Others will be drawn in having been titillated by the images sent with the spam. Whatever the trigger, the die will be cast when the signing -in page has been completed with its all-important credit card information.

Major religions affirm that the 'stain of sin' is always present on the spiritual image of a person, and cannot even be washed away by confession and penance. Only time and one's ultimate death will reveal whether or not this is true. For the seeker after pornography and paedophilia, there is no going back once the 'Enter' button has been clicked. Indelibly there for the Cyber police to discover is the evidence of web sites accessed and paid for. The 'stain of web sin' cannot be washed away! Whereas it was always supposed to be GOD who saw all and meted out justice, now it is the Cyber police and the courts.

With the creation of the Internet, a new dominion of access into, and torment of the vulnerable mind was created and immediately colonised by the fomenters of spiritual evil. The solitary persons, believing that they are having surreptitious access to hitherto undreamed of images and contacts, were nevertheless subjected to an enveloping ambience of guilt and titillation - the one source urging in

the mind that the site should be opened, and the other heaping on an atmosphere of disquiet verging on shame and self-disgust. When, with the sudden revelation that all was not secret between the persons and the web site, and that high profile prosecutions were in train, one can imagine the panic at the thought of discovery, and simultaneously, the driving condemnation coming from the spiritual tormentors, taunting at the shame that was about to arrive. Certainly a number have been known to have committed suicide.

How many computers were abandoned or how many hard drives were changed, we shall never know, but still the stain of Cyber sin remained in credit card and phone details, and who knows what torment from unknown spiritual sources. Many, I am sure, were the excuses or reasons given for having had access to images of the young. The most blatant seems to have been 'for study purposes', or 'research for my new book'. The rest I'll leave to your imagination, though to come back to the human world and leaving briefly the Cyber spiritual, I suddenly recalled from the back of my memory an example of how the study of pornographic images changed the life progress of one student.

It is some time since I read *A Narrow Street* by Elliot Paul. Set in Paris in the 1930's, Paul relates an episode where a young habitué of the Street, a student, had virtually abandoned his work in mathematics and spent much time at 'Le Pannier Fleuri' – the local brothel. There he became absorbed in studying the volumes of photographs kept to titillate and stimulate the clients. In time the student became so enthralled at the numbers of permutations and combinations of men, women and animals engaged in copulation that he was inspired to return to his mathematic studies! Perhaps this might be a flavour of the 'reasons' given for 'studying' sites portraying paedophilia!

Yet another introduction of a means of communication that has been ingeniously infiltrated by 'spiritual evil' is that of 'signing' for the deaf and dumb. Although there has long been a hand language using signs to represent individual letters, the more recent signing strategy has introduced a greater fluency and speed. At first anecdotal, and subsequently authenticated, have been the instances when individuals who, having been completely deaf and dumb since birth, have been taught signing and have become 'verbally' fluent. Some have reported that their new 'world' has been intruded into by visual images of 'people' signing the usual unpleasant, obscene and disturbing propositions that have been experienced habitually as intrusions into the verbal minds of vocal people. As ever, I find it so hard to try to come to terms with the motives of the malevolent 'who' flood obscenely and disturbingly into the new channels of communication almost as soon as they are created. It is even more heart rending to

learn of individuals who, when thus disturbed, have abandoned their new skill, and gladly returned to their silent inner tranquillity.

As a side issue stemming from that, one might consider briefly the practices employed by those who deliberately choose a silent life. I refer to certain of the monastic orders of various religions, where to be in silence is the chosen mode of living. There has long been an awareness of the reality of adverse mental intrusion, and one method of blocking that has been the practice of mentally verbalising chosen prayers. The 'Jesus Prayer' is the one most frequently discussed:

"Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me."

- and shortened versions, even to the simple repetition of the name 'Jesus'. Others in the Christian tradition frequently use the rosary as a means of praying and maintaining inner tranquillity. Buddhists favour their own repetition of:

"ôm mani padme hum" – Hail to the jewel in the lotus

- while many techniques of meditation and routes to inner tranquillity use their own 'mantras' or chosen words or phrases. There is much to be learned from well established meditation practices that can be used to still the minds of individuals who are plagued by 'intruders', too much for me to include, and only capable of being referred to in passing. Always bearing in mind the constant caution that I repeat and repeat, and find in my frequent quotation from Dr. Elmer Green, when he warns of the hasty descent into the deeper realms of the mind, and the dangers of there encountering 'indigenous beings'.

An isolated life that does not revolve around the twin practices of prayer and meditation is that enjoyed by the dedicated computer addict or avid player of computer and play-station games. The computer screen and the play station become the bounds of the world of these individuals and the divisions between reality and fantasy become blurred or non-existent. Within the realms of fantasy that the screens project, and away from the balancing human contact, the mind can lose its powers of discernment and become fruitful soil for the intruders to establish themselves and flourish.

Returning to the condition of someone who dies in explosion, fire and panic, in all of the time that I have been subjected to voices and intrusions, I have experienced - or been duped into believing it - the access of friends and shipmates who died when our ship was mined. Trapped, asphyxiated, fragmented, incinerated, literally within feet of me - where, I wonder did their spirits go, and in what state were they? Cleaning some items in my workshop, I disturbed some dry and finely powdered rust, and as it floated as an orange-brown cloud in a shaft of sunlight, I saw a hint of the flame-lit

cloud of cordite smoke that filled my eyes as I regained consciousness after the explosion. I could not have had a more potent reminder – potent even though it happened nearly sixty years ago.

Geordie – a frequent companion - 'broke his duck' in a brothel in Nice. Not my personal predilection, but, in the first year after the war, a good place to sell perfumed toilet soap and supplement our meagre pay. I left him to his particular choice – a young and attractive woman – and his one and only experience. 'Beaucoup de soleil' she had said as she looked at him. From time to time, using suitable mental cues, for example 'Beaucoup de soleil', my mind is directed to those times and to him. Maybe 'Scrumpy', the Leading Cook, who produced all of our regular daily roasts, and sometimes made bread in the galley where he sweated and sweated in the mid-summer Mediterranean heat. I remember him particularly in a stone hut on Mount Troodos in Cyprus – somewhere cool for a change – where we had been taken for a few days leave. He had dragged in some green branches and tried to burn them in a pot-bellied barrack room stove and talked into the night in his Cornish voice while we choked on the smoke. It requires only one key word to bring him vividly to mind. Is he there 'in person'? I have no way of knowing, but there is some sort of 'presence', and it only takes the insertion of one word – 'rabbiting' – into my mind for it to manifest. I could go on – to Dennis and 'Straker', who with me sailed the ship's sailing dinghy at Haifa and Famagusta; Lofty, who bought his sister a vivid pair of pyjamas from a bumboat man in Grand Harbour, Valetta; the Chief Telegraphist, with whom I sometimes 'walked' in the dog-watches – thirty paces up to the torpedo tubes, turn and thirty paces back to the after deckhouse, turn... He was a 'regular', due for discharge at the end of this particular commission, and already full of plans for his impending retirement. They all have their verbal or visual triggers.

It never ceases to amaze me how, even in a comparatively short time, but in the close confines and enclosed community of a small ship such as a destroyer, individuals and personalities can be indelibly imprinted in one's memory, and how easily they can be brought to mind. It never ceases to amaze me how, by a single word injected – and I mean 'injected' – into my mind, these and others can be brought to such vivid memory. It does not have to be an actual word. From the world of the 'twitchers' – the birdwatchers – comes the word 'jizz'. The jizz of a bird – the essentials of shape, flight, call and colour that are imprinted on the mind of the experienced birdwatcher – is all that is required to alert the watcher to the presence of the bird. *People* have jizzes, and the 'flash' across one's mind of the jizz, as of a bird momentarily seen, can bring the person totally into mental view, together with many well remembered details. On numerous occasions when this has happened I am left wondering whether the person was

actually present in spirit, or whether the memory has been used to develop another mind-trawl, aimed at uncovering yet more information about each of us.

Have no doubt; *all* of one's five senses can be activated in the creation of the essence of a person, location or event. The jizz of someone can be created in minute and exquisite detail, even to the quirks of speech and accent. Likewise, all of one's emotions can be stimulated and used to console, recall or provoke. When, at the outset of my own experiences, and I went through a major spiritual awakening, I was subjected to a rigorously searching catechism in my mind, and emerged feeling as if I had been skinned, so vulnerable and exposed had I become. I had not questioned the right of this particular numinous presence to probe and expose every facet of my life as it was then, and in years past. I was reminded of these events recently when I watched a television programme about the experiences of individuals who had been declared clinically dead, and yet were resuscitated. No mention was made of anything 'spiritual', but the programme achieved its aim, which was to explore the continued function of the mind while the brain was effectively dead and not functioning.

Several of those who had had the near death events, described what has become a common feature of these experiences, namely the encounters with the spirits of deceased family and friends and the mind-to-mind communication with them. Especially did they comment on their encounter with a 'luminous presence', and the way in which every aspect of the life that they had lived was scrutinised, not with judgement and possible reprimand, but with open minded love and understanding. Following their return and ultimate recovery, all reported a significant change in their way of life and a total loss of fear of ultimate death. I did not have a near death event when I had my own spiritual catechism, but the *result* has been similar in my own understanding of life and death, and in the purpose of my own remaining life.

The continuation of memory through and beyond the actual process of dying is a concept that can lead to much speculation and controversy. Someone whom I know very well had three brothers - twins, A and B, and the third, C. One summer when the twins were about ten years old, all three were swimming in a creek near the local small docks. Suddenly, a sluice was opened to fill one of the locks, and C was sucked down. A went to the rescue of his brother, ensured his safety, but drowned himself. When B was in his early twenties, he emigrated, eventually married and had children. One of the children subsequently drowned in a swimming pool in circumstances for which there was no explanation. Another, a boy, as he was growing, would ask about "My other mother, the one with red hair". The mother of the

three brothers, A, B and C, and my friend had striking red hair – no one else.

Reading that, some will accept 'reincarnation', others, 'transmigration of souls'. Unfortunately, there is never consensus about exactly what such terms mean. For myself, I, as usual, adopt the simplest explanation, such as that A, in spirit, attached himself to B, his twin, and subsequently to one or other of B's children. I have not the slightest concept of how such would happen in practice, but it is an explanation subscribed to by many and from numerous different philosophies. Any 'spiritual' explanation flies in the face of those who, with dogged determination, are resolved to 'rationalise', and who will proffer alternatives that, when fully analysed, are much more far-fetched than the simple spiritual concept.

There is a genre of radio and television programmes frequently presented in Britain where the inexplicable experiences of individuals or groups are examined. The greater part of the programme is devoted to interviews with the people involved, and with reconstructions of actual events. In the majority of cases, the explanation that would be accepted by many is that, in some unfathomable way, there has been 'spiritual' involvement. However, part of the programme is inevitably given over to a psychiatrist or psychologist, whose rôle, again inevitably, is to offer a 'rational', 'scientific' explanation of the phenomena, and to pooh-pooh the concept that, not even in the remotest way, could there have been *anything* of a spiritual nature involved.

Without going into the details of any of the programmes that I have seen, one salient fact emerges, namely that these specialists in one or other form of mind medicine, claim a *universal* expertise in all matters scientific and practical. Thus in one programme the psychiatrist became an instant expert in house fires and the potential for the creation of an explosion of such precision that it could propel a child through a window without it suffering any harm. In another, the psychologist had never driven a tractor, yet knew exactly how a runaway tractor would behave as it trundled down a slope, positive that it would be deviated randomly by grass tussocks, sufficient to avoid running over groups of picnickers, and to pass safely by. These are but trite and inconsequential examples, but they serve to illustrate the wider and exceedingly dangerous premise – namely that a specialist in one particular and narrow field of medicine can be accepted without question as being an expert in a whole range of unrelated specialities.

A gross example of such 'global' expertise has just been exposed in the High Court, and in the media. The case concerned a woman who had been given two life sentences for the murder of two of her infants. The most telling evidence against her came from a renowned paediatrician, who kept repeating that the odds against two

cot deaths occurring in one family were 73,000,000:1. As well as his claims of knowledge as a statistician, this man also, by virtue of his comments, claimed expertise as a toxicologist, in a branch of human psychology and in an area of law. He was not trained in any of these specialities; yet, by weight of his demeanour and presence, he was able to influence a jury against the power of all the other evidence. In another era, before the abolition of the death penalty, it is possible that the woman would have been hanged before the evidence that saved her came to light. Fortunately, the woman was released on appeal.

With increasing frequency over the last several years we have seen instances of individuals who, having been wrongly convicted of murder, have been released after spending as long as twenty-five years in prison. Again, had they lived in earlier times, they would undoubtedly have been hanged many years ago. By a combination of deceit, inadequate defence or the superior forensic skills of the prosecution team that can overwhelm a jury, many innocent individuals have gone to the gallows. Every prosecutor in years gone by wanted to be a Sir Bernard Spillsbury, by whom every jury seems to have been mesmerised, and whose aim in life appeared to be to obtain a conviction, irrespective of the *justice* of the prosecution case.

Another renowned prosecutor, and later judge, was Christmas Humphries, one of the leaders of the expansion of Buddhism in Britain. I once heard a broadcast interview in which he described his life in the law courts. He explained at length that he chose to be a prosecutor rather than defence lawyer, because he did not want to use his skills to obtain the acquittal of someone who was palpably guilty. However, through the interview, there came an almost arrogant certainty in his ability as a prosecutor. There was no apparent recognition of the fact that his forensic skills may have resulted in the innocent being hanged. I recorded the broadcast – *My Brother in the Dock* – principally because I wanted to hear in his own words how he came to espouse Buddhism. I listened to my tape a number of times, and each time I became more aware of his 'self-certainty', almost to the point of disliking the man.

Some time after I began to hear voices, and could distinguish the various 'levels' from which my communications appeared to come, and by the use of certain key words from the tape, I began to comprehend that I was being led to an understanding of a significant concept that I had never ever addressed in my thoughts. I was not 'told' in the sense that I received 'verbalisation' in my mind, but rather I was presented with a totality – a full and instant appreciation of what was being conveyed – the real meaning of which is this:

Acknowledging, as one must at some time, that the 'essence' of a person continues after the death of the physical body, one must also acknowledge that memory, character and intent survive intact and are absorbed into a general spiritual state from which it can continue to function intelligently. In the context within which I am writing, the continuity of function assumes a living human mind that is capable of being influenced. Without a broad acceptance of this, what is to me, fact, much of what I am writing will disappear into the minds of a certain category of reader in a similar manner to a river vanishing into the sands of a desert, and be totally lost. Which would be most unfortunate, for *continuously* I experience the practical expression of what I am, with acknowledged difficulty, trying to share.

Having, in their new found state of being, acquired a full realisation of the effects of their actions while in life, many are shocked to realise the extent to which their personal arrogance, professional tunnel vision and other self-inflationary traits have had a damaging effect upon the lives of those for whom it should have been their professional responsibility to care. In the case of the legal prosecutor and judge that I am citing, there may come a recognition that in his blind pursuit of the goal of obtaining a conviction, he may have done so in ignorance of the fact that evidence may have been fabricated, that vital evidence may have been withheld from the defence, or that a defendant may have been 'stitched up' by the police, and that he may have contributed himself to the execution of an innocent person, or to the long-term incarceration of others.

The effect of this clarity of 'vision', my insight tells me, is a strong desire to educate, inform and reform through the minds and responses of receptive individuals. Even though reparation for the wrongs inflicted upon individuals may not be achieved, - for how could one compensate someone whose life had been drastically shortened in a most terrible way - by helping to change a climate of thought and somehow being instrumental in inspiring reformers, judicial arrogance and culpability may be lessened.

In other fields, notably medicine, and most particularly mental health, there dawns the awful realisation that much harm has been done to 'innocent' healthy minds, sometimes resulting in the premature 'death' of these minds or in long periods of incarceration of their owners. With awakened comprehension and understanding of the involvement of intruding spirits into the minds of vulnerable individuals, comes the strongest desire to disseminate this awareness and to minimise the further harm that inevitably will be visited on the defenceless minds through the continuation of many of the current practices. I have come to a firm conclusion that I am one of the 'receptive individuals' who finds himself in this particular unsought and, at times, completely unacceptable rôle.

There have been numerous times over the last twenty years when I have concluded that I am on an 'assault course with live ammunition'. In all battlefield training, members of the armed forces are subjected to situations where the bullets flying overhead are as lethal as those that will be encountered in genuine conflict. When I joined the Navy and was issued with a service gasmask, we were all given the ultimate demonstration of the efficacy of the mask. In groups we were confined in a small chamber that, we were told, was then filled with tear gas. After some time, during which we were able to breathe freely in our masks, we had to remove them. Anyone who had had any doubts about the actual presence of the gas was soon disillusioned as the disabling tears flooded our eyes.

In a similar manner, I am constantly subjected to the experiences and ploys that I have recorded and am describing. Often, when I have yet again fallen for a ploy that I should have seen coming a mile off, or when, gullibly, I have been taken in by a new strategy, and when, thereby, I have gained more experience and understanding, I receive in my mind a quiet, but unmistakable and imperative request to 'write it down, write it down'. Mostly I have done so, and you are reading the results. There are other times when I have been so pissed off at having had my day disrupted as I have gone through a real time experience, that I let my feelings be known through violent imprecations within my mind, and curse the intruders in the forceful language of the lower deck. Many will have seen on television the gruelling jungle, desert and arctic training endured by service personnel. The heat and cold are real, likewise the leeches and thorns. The sleep deprivation cannot be simulated but has to be experienced to be understood; the forced marches with heavy packs have to be endured, and then kit and weapons have to be cleaned before sleep is allowed. And all of the time, the urging, goading instructors will have been hated and cursed.

No amount of classroom theory, rôle playing or simulation can prepare anyone for the actual environment. No exercises with paint-ball guns can act as a substitute for the close proximity of lethal ammunition. Awareness and instinctive reaction can only be achieved through a recognition of the presence and modes of attack employed by an enemy. Recent conflicts such as the Falklands campaign and the Gulf Wars revealed a plethora of armchair commentators and strategists. Every TV and radio channel, and every newspaper had its interviewers, reporters, analysts and strategic experts. Apart from a few notable exceptions, all were inexperienced in any field of combat. But most seemed to have mastered the jargon, acquired a flak jacket and intrepidly gone to war.

But war is not a game or something that can be interpreted by the onlooker and commentator. It is very real, but the true reality

is only experienced by those whom it is affecting directly. Likewise, the 'war' that is going on in the mind and life of someone who is invaded by spiritual intrusion is only capable of being understood fully by those who are in the conflict. Just as some of those who are directly affected and may be victims of the international conflicts are rendered speechless, 'shell-shocked' or incoherent by their experiences, so those directly affected by their own battle in the mind, may similarly have great difficulty in communicating the reality of their own inner conflicts.

Inevitably I return, as I shall always return, to the paradox that is thrown up by the situation of the voice hearer, the person who is dubbed 'schizophrenic'. In expressing it I want to do so without intentionally causing offence to all of the medical professionals who sincerely believe that they understand the actual inner mind of someone whom they are putting in this particular category. Expressed simply, the paradox is this, namely that with a few rare exceptions, the professionals have not experienced any aspect of the phenomena that the voice hearers are trying to describe. It should be obvious by now that even though I am drawing upon the experiences of more than twenty years, and though I have all of my communicating skills, nevertheless, the problems that I have in conveying the reality of it all are immense. It is no wonder, then, that when faced with the variety of bizarre experiences described by the hearers, the professionals themselves arrive at such a variety of interpretations. 'It's the two sides of the brain talking to each other'; 'It's the product of the bicameral mind'; 'They are illusions'; 'They are delusions'. Words such as 'schizoid', 'schizophreniform' and the like pepper the dialogue and writings of the commentators.

With a wide variety of definitions and explanations crossing and re-crossing the Atlantic and Pacific oceans; with the legacies of Freud and Jung and their successors holding minds and closing minds over the years, wouldn't it be wonderful if suddenly there came the 'Eureka' answer that all desire? In another field I saw recently a superb example of such an answer to a universally posed question. For as long as it has been recognised that humans evolved from apes that began to walk upright, the mechanism and the reason for the upright stance have been endlessly analysed and debated. 'Savannahs developed and the apes had to leave the trees, and eventually stood upright'; 'Without the shade of the trees, the apes exposed less of their body surface to the sun by standing upright' – ignoring the extension of this 'logic' that would have all equatorial animals standing on two legs; 'Lifting the head higher above the ground would bring it into a breezier, and hence, cooler region, and benefit the brain'; - and many more attempts at explanation, each attracting its core of adherents. The 'Eureka' moment that produced illumination came to those who

were filming in Africa for the recent BBC 'Life of Mammals' series. Apes were being filmed in a swampy area, and suddenly *there* was a female carrying its young and wading upright and waist deep through the water *exactly* as would a human in similar circumstances. Paleontological and geological analysis of the era when upright walking is judged to have begun, confirmed that extensive swampy areas and lagoons formed in the territory of the apes, and that wading and hence walking, would become the norm. The sight of that female ape wading is one of the most potent that I have ever seen on television.

How I hope that from within the volume of my writing there will be that which will cause some in psychiatry to echo 'Eureka'!

That it is going to take a huge leap of faith I have no doubt, faith that is going to insist that everyone is treated wholly as an individual, and not, as apparently in the Swedish study of cannabis use among conscripts, 50,000 human clones. I have group photographs taken at various stages of my naval career, and I defy anyone to find a much more diverse collection of *individuals* drawn from the Britain of the time.

INSERT PICTURE 'CREW' OFF FLOPPY DISC

Here is a portion of the ships company from a photograph taken in Malta several weeks after our ship had been mined, and shortly before we made our way to Britain, crossing France by train. Just study them as a group and then as individuals. Approximately twenty-five, a mixture of 'regulars' and 'hostilities only' ratings who are equivalent to just one two-thousandth of the Swedish study. What image is conjured up for you at the thought of '50,000 conscripts'? Do you think of 50,000 Swedish look-alikes, all dressed in field grey, all called Sven, or Jan, or Per, or Bjorn? I can look at my group and see Cornish, Welsh, Devonian, Irish, and Scots. Not the full range of 'British', for we were a West Country ship, and such were normally crewed from those regions. There are two who, as orphans of seafarers, had been brought up in the *Arethusa* tradition of caring for such boys, and who had been enlisted as boy-seamen at an early age; then two others who had been to top public schools. I can see some who didn't 'draw', were 'temperance' – i.e. they didn't draw their daily tot of rum, whereas the majority would be 'grog' and would 'draw'. Until the daily tot was discontinued in about 1970, the 'grog' ratings had an extra currency with which to reward favours. "Come around at tot time" was the invitation to receive payment – 'sippers', 'gulpers', 'half a tot' were the normal level of repayment. For a 'full tot', one could probably get someone murdered! I see some for whom a 'run ashore' meant time spent 'down the Gut', if in Valetta, and in the many bars. For others it could mean time spent at "Aggie's" – the Missions to Seamen founded by Aggie Weston. And then there is one man

whom I never saw go ashore, but who spent his free time making pegged rugs from discarded naval uniform clothes,

There are men in the photograph who had soon acquired the naval jargon, or had it ingrained after more than fifteen years at sea, for whom 'avast' and 'belay' still had everyday meaning, and who knew what to do with soojie-moojie, baggywrinkle, and a pusser's dip. Men who were in a sense cloned by their surnames – if you were Walker, you were 'Hookey'; if Williams, 'Bungey'; if Martin, 'Pincher'; if Miller, 'Dusty'. Rhodes was 'Lonesome', and Carpenter became 'Chippy', while Wright was 'Shiner', Green answered to 'Jimmy' and Grey, 'Dolly' and every Wilson became 'Tug'. Like every other Welshman, I was Taff, while every Cornishman was Jan. I can see able-seamen and gunnery ratings, torpedo men, stokers and 'bunting tossers' or signalmen. You can identify yourself the ones who would be 'Lofty', and which, 'Shortarse'.

Multiply such a group by 2,000, and then try to imagine a study that would give meaning to the consequences of one particular activity such as smoking cannabis, a study that was continued over ten or fifteen years, and from which conclusions are being drawn about 'schizophrenia'. And then look back at the accounts of my own personal and actual experiences, and the results of my observations and records covering well over twenty years. I look at myself in the full photograph of the ship's company, and reflect that I, also, was very much an individual. One of a small number of electronic specialists, I lived in a seamen's mess, because in a small ship there wasn't enough room in an artificers' mess. My upbringing had defined and pre-conditioned much of my behaviour and choice of activity. I didn't smoke or drink, and at the time, and from my background, 'teenage sex' was mostly in our imagination, so I didn't frequent the brothels or accept the invitations of the scugnizzi – the children in Naples – who offered the delights of their sisters, each one of whom was invariably a 'virgin – only sixteen'.

Was it peer pressure that influenced the young who had no firm roots? I can see two in the photo and remember their return to our mess from a run ashore, having had their first sexual encounter in a Maltese brothel under the 'tutelage' of some of the older members of the mess. Was it peer pressure that induced some of the Swedish conscripts to smoke cannabis? And did their succumbing reveal an indecisive and easily influenced personality? And are such the targets of the 'intelligent' spiritual intrusion into the mind of the vulnerable? Some individuals get caught up in the excitement of a group enthusiasm and go with the flow, in spite of initial self-cautions. I recollect being told of the experiences of some of the vacation students who used to spend time at my Works. Living in a hostel, a few had light-heartedly begun to have sessions with an ouija board and drew others in. Soon, there was persistent 'contact', apparently from a

young woman who 'told' a distressing tale of having been killed in an accident. The contact was so 'real' that the sessions became compulsive and all assembled immediately after their evening meal. There was a wealth of circumstantial detail including the woman's address, or 'an address'. They were never to find out. With the Easter break coming up, it was planned to pay a visit, *but* - they were told most strongly that if they attempted to do so, one of their number, Dave, would die. Consternation. The sessions stopped forthwith, and Dave acquired a hunted expression and acute nervousness that remained with him for several months. (Refreshing my mind about the incident from someone who lived in the same hostel at the time and was an associate of the other students, I was happy to learn that Dave had survived, had been seen recently, and was married and a parent three times over.)

When I began to use my pendulum and alphabet chart, I had had no cautions in my life that would have warned me about the practice that I was engaged in. I had proceeded with a blind curiosity and ultimate near obsession along a route and into activities for which nothing in my earlier life had prepared me. There *are* 'life maps' for those who care to find them and follow their directions. Most of these have been surveyed and drawn by the World religions. I had had an intelligent and caring upbringing in a home that adhered to Christian values, although not in the more focused traditions that encourage one to make frequent checks on how one measures up to the core values of the faith. Some would class the indoctrination and 'blind' adherence to the rules governing behaviour as a form of brain washing. Yet there are situations in life where the absolute and immediate observance of the rules is essential, *vital*, for the safety *and peace of mind* of the individual and indeed of large groups, where irresponsibility and disregard of the rules can lead to disaster.

From before the days of James Cook and William Bligh - indeed before Ptolemy - seafarers have surveyed their routes and coasts, anchorages and channels. They have logged tides and currents, and the pilots and sailing masters of old had their own treasured and jealously guarded 'rutter' - the sum total of all of their own experiences and observations and accumulated pilotage wisdom. In time the surveys and observations were gradually compiled into the renowned Admiralty charts. Many were the voyages of exploration and discovery, often undertaken in ships that by today's standards were mere cockleshells. Many were the perils encountered, and wonders seen. All were faithfully logged, and in time the facts and realities were analysed and added to the sum of the information shown on the official charts.

With the growth of knowledge and the increased use of the routes and seaways, rules of navigation were devised that would

prevent or minimise collision, and an instinctive standard of behaviour evolved that bound together the genuine mariners in ways that tried to ensure mutual support when at sea. Nevertheless, collisions and strandings can and do occur, and Boards of Inquiry meet and apportion blame. In very many cases the cause of the disaster comes down to someone disregarding the rules. Likewise standards of upkeep and crewing of ships are flaunted, and result in tankers being stranded and huge slicks of oil polluting the seas and shores. *Anyone* venturing to sea should be aware of all that is necessary for their own safety – and equally importantly the safety and well-being of others.

But now anyone can get afloat in an increasingly wide variety of ways, ways that in themselves are fun, but which can be used without there being any need, seemingly, to have any knowledge of the inherent dangers to self or others. Thus jet skis used in crowded waters kill bathers, as do power boats towing water skiers. Individuals can hazard themselves and others in an almost cretinous disregard of common sense, let alone sea lore and law. Thus very recently one read of a man who set off for an island five miles off shore on a water cycle with a total of five children either on the cycle or towed on an inflatable ring. All had to be rescued by helicopter. Other acts resulting from stupidity or lack of observation of the 'rules' can hazard the lives of lifeboat men and other mariners as they attempt rescue.

The life maps to which I referred became embodied in the wide variety of world religions, but whereas the original guidance and precepts were aimed at the physical and spiritual well-being of tribes and individuals, in time they became ritual practices in themselves, and to a large extent, lost their meaning in their original context. Thus the circumcision of males would at first sight seem to be a bizarre requirement in the 'rules' of two major world religions. However, recent observation and analysis of the transmission of AIDS in Africa reveals that circumcised men are considerably less likely to become infected during sexual transmission. The embargo on the eating of pork may appear to constitute an unreasonable dietary restriction, yet knowledge of the parasites that can exist in pork in hot countries makes an obvious case for the interdict. The understanding that led to both practices came from the prescience of the Divine, and there is much prescience in the advice for living a healthy 'mental' life that has come from Divine and other spiritual sources.

I wouldn't get very far if I was to advocate a religious revival within the field of mental health, and yet I am repeating at every stage that the intrusions into the mind of a mentally ill person derive from spiritual sources, and hence an understanding of the recommendations that pervade the texts of virtually all religions with respect to the interaction with the life of the spirit is as germane now as when the texts were written.

These recommendations that then became the 'life rules' of the religions are the equivalent of mariners' rules of conduct, and flouting them brings unwelcome consequences. But as with many who venture onto the water, so also is there total ignorance of any advice, procedures or cautions. Additionally the active exercise of the core values of a religion that added to the intrinsic safety of the spiritual life of individuals has often become little more than a mindless adherence to what are effectively superstitions. I well remember one friend proclaiming that he liked to go to church at Easter and Harvest Festival and always ate fish on Good Friday, and who carried a Cornish Piskie in his waistcoat pocket – although I must not detract from the fact that his life was one of honesty and probity in all that he did.

In effect, there *are* no 'rules of the road' that guarantee sound mental health and with which youngsters are indoctrinated as they develop. There is advice galore and there are products aplenty relating to tooth care or the cleanliness and sterility of one's toilet – but a clean and sound mind? No way. Likewise, the commercial break on virtually every TV channel will offer a superb range of 'designer' spectacle frames, and many choices of 'buy one, get one free' – the addition of a pair of 'shades', or sunspecs as I still call them (but that ain't cool!) Does anyone in this madly competitive commercial exploitation of people's eyes draw attention to the fact that it is possible to prevent much of the deterioration that usually happens? Does anyone refer to the book by Meir Schneider from which I quoted earlier – *My Life and Vision* – in which he described how, doggedly, and mostly by his own efforts, he changed his life from that of someone treated as being blind, to someone with sound vision? Not a mention. Yet contained within the book are descriptions of how, by diligent practice, virtually anyone can reclaim the clear vision that their eyes are meant to have. But of course, there is no commercial value in self-help, and self-help does require significant personal dedication.

Turn on any kids TV programme, and inevitably you will see youngsters wearing braces on their teeth. The result – admirable for the resulting smiles and long term survival of the teeth, but what about the body and mind that lurk behind the teeth? To maintain tooth perfection, dentists are recommending to children that they should avoid sugary soft drinks, and stick to the so-called 'diet' variety. But virtually without exception, the diet drinks are sweetened with Aspartame, and, as any sweep on the web will tell you, Aspartame has a whole range of very serious, and undesirable side effects. One result of the dental advice could then be a perfect smile fronting a mind that is being corrupted by the very product that has been recommended as preserving the smile. Headaches, migraines, dizziness, seizures, depression, fatigue, anxiety attacks, slurred speech – these are just a few of the more than ninety adverse reactions listed in a 1994 US Department of Health and Human Services report.

May dentists continue to insist on filling teeth with a mercury amalgam – which any sweep of the Web will tell you is credited with creating a wide range of undesirable reactions in people, many that grossly and adversely affect the mind and nervous system. In almost every strategy aimed at preserving and improving the physical and mental health of individuals, there is some commercial or vested interest holding back progress or corrupting the strategy for purely financial gain or market domination. Aspartame doesn't exist for the benefit of its consumers, but for that of its parent company and its shareholders – and while it is used in sugar substitutes by those who try to lose weight, listed among the side effects are 'weight gain' and a craving for carbohydrates! As for the continuation of the use of mercury amalgam in the face of mounting evidence against it, I am at a loss to explain or understand.

What, one wonders, is the purpose of supplying substances that can create "hypothermia, drowsiness, apathy, nightmares, depression, convulsions, impotence, menstrual problems"? Yet these are just a few of the commonly reported side effects of some of the range of drugs that are prescribed for people described as 'psychotic', 'schizophrenic'.

If one accepts any of my propositions and all of my experience, it will be realised that no drug ever concocted will cure schizophrenia; no substance will eradicate the voices from the mind or the subtle or blatant imperatives that can flood all of the senses. All of the products that are labelled 'anti-psychotic' will only have the effect of subduing the senses of the individual and rendering it virtually impossible for the intruders to intrude. But do you call that a cure? Exchanging a situation that is capable of being controlled and rendered acceptable, for one in which life can be made intolerable by the very substances that are supposed to *make* it tolerable – is that a 'cure'?

Someone of my acquaintance had a 'psychotic' episode when he was seventeen. He is now in his late forties. *He has never known an adult life free from anti-psychotic drugs.* Yet he knows, yes, knows, that what he experiences is of spiritual origin. But even with that knowledge, he cannot face life without what has become a vital prop, and so, increasingly zombified, he has finally left his supportive wife, and taken up residence in a flat where he now 'lives' in his internal mental world that has become more real than the real world.

When will there emerge a movement that is coherent and well founded that will remove much of the care of the mentally disturbed from the dominance of the drug industry and the present almost incestuous world of conventional psychiatry? There was much hope when it was created that the SANE organisation would fill such a rôle, but sadly one learns that it receives substantial funds from drug

manufacturers. Early in its existence I wrote to SANE a circumspect letter in which I offered to share my experiences of voice hearing, for I was impressed by the writing and dedication of Marjorie Wallace its founder. I received a reply from an information officer that thanked me for my offer relating to 'my mental illness', and saying that I would be 'put on file'. In my original letter I had made no mention of 'mental illness', yet here I was being categorised by someone who seemingly had no experience of the people and conditions that the foundation was meant to address. This unfortunately is what one may experience from individuals who staff some of the organisations dedicated to helping the 'mentally ill'. It is the use of 'they' when referring to the latter – 'they' seem to be at arms length, not disparagingly, but somehow virtually held at a distance, as if full frontal contact will result in some form of cross contamination. It is, I am sure, not deliberate, but it can be perceived by such as myself, and even though I may be speaking about my own experiences and not remotely suggesting that I am mentally ill.

There must be immense problems for the dedicated worker in the mental health field – of how to provide support and compassion without becoming so involved as to become fully one with 'them'. One would not ask, or even remotely suggest, that carers should become as integrated as did Father Damien in the book *Molokai*. Set in a leper colony on an island in the South Seas, the priest tended the spiritual and some of the medical needs of the lepers. His dedication was such that he saw in the wounds and sores of each man and woman the wounds and blood of the suffering Christ. Returning from a brief period away from the island, Father Damien celebrated his first Mass, and when, as he would in the liturgy, he addressed the congregation, he said "We..." – his visit away had confirmed that he, himself, was now a leper, and he was happy that at last he could be truly at one with, and understand fully the people in his spiritual care.

No: that is not in the least appropriate. Nevertheless, the whole of the caring strategy whether exercised by a perceptive individual, or a group dedicated to the care of the mentally disturbed, must be derived from a *human and spiritual* understanding of the causes of the turmoil, and not from a 'chemical' or 'electrical' model of what is believed to be happening within the minds of those who are distressed. All of the present understanding of the workings of the human mind comes from 'without' – it comes via observation of the chemical and electrical functions, with only a minor component deriving verbally from the mouth of the human specimen being examined. But just as the Chinese declare that the observer becomes part of the action, so the processes and equipment used in the study might equally influence the results of the study.

You may recall from earlier in my writing that I described my participation in 1981 in a course run by Bruce Macmanaway in the village of Mickleton in the Midlands. Included in the sessions was one in which we were shown what is called the 'Mind Mirror'. This device was created by Dr Maxwell Cade, and is designed to detect and display the assorted brain waves that emerge from the human skull. Electrodes are attached around the circumference of the head, and connected to a unit that has an array composed of lines of LCDs, with a separate display line allocated to each wave – alpha, delta, etc. I have related elsewhere that Bruce's technique involved identifying nerves in the spine that may have become 'trapped'. Earlier, he had determined that I had three such, at T2, 4 & 6, and, as part of the demonstration, he had me wired up in order that everyone would be able to view any changes that took place in my brainwave pattern as he performed his manipulations. Having been fitted with the electrodes, I sat while Bruce and the laboratory staff described what was being shown in the display on a unit connected to another man.

In the tranquil state in which I was meant to be, I should have shown a high level of alpha waves. But no: I was becoming zombified, and my display showed almost total delta – the brain pattern of deep sleep. Thus, although my eyes were open, and I was aware that discussion was going on, it was all lost to me, and I continued in this trance-like state until I was called to have my back manipulated. I lay prone on the floor and the display was held aloft so that course members would be able to see what, if any, changes occurred in my wave pattern. Bruce's manipulations were remarkably simple, involving firm hand pressure along my spine. Then, disconnected from my display, I returned to my seat, still slightly zombie-like, and gradually emerged into full consciousness. By this time, the whole session had moved on, and I wasn't able to get a coherent description of what, if any, changes had taken place on the Mind Mirror.

However, I was given plenty of sound advice, which was, basically, that I should drink copious quantities of water to eliminate as quickly as possible any toxins that may have been released from a bodily system whose functions had been restored after having been 'distorted' for a lengthy period. The advice was indeed sound, for within a day I began to experience what I likened to the onset of flu without the temperature. While these symptoms passed within two days, the overall effect of the manipulation lasted for many years – possibly even until now - over thirty years. For a long time, almost as long as I could remember, I had been subject to two types of 'anxiety' dream. In the one I was always chased by a large Hereford bull, while in the other I invariably found myself on a high and insecure place – either a building with a crumbling parapet, or a cliff edge that was

equally crumbly. Happily, the bull never caught me, although it was pretty close on occasions, and I never fell from the building or cliff.

Following the manipulation both dreams have never occurred again, and also a minor stomach complaint disappeared. I suspect that my back had suffered stress from my rugby playing days, or had been affected by the 'whiplash' that I experienced when I was in the explosion at sea, and that T6, in particular, had been inadvertently stimulated as I lay in bed, and my dreams had then been woven around the resultant nerve reactions. I shall never know, for those dreams have long since gone. But I do know that the whole sequence has become germane to my analysis of my own reaction to electrical phenomena and the reaction, I suspect, of many individuals who have not had the opportunities for self-analysis or examination that I have had.

There are many occasions when television programmes show studies and research that are aimed at exploring the function of the brain and mind, and where individuals are shown having numerous electrodes attached to their heads, and, on occasions, being slid into 'tunnels' within which a variety of brain scans can be made. I know from my experience with the Mind Mirror of Dr. Cade that the presence of the electrodes would grossly alter the electrical function of my brain, sufficiently to invalidate the readings coming via the electrodes. From an early age, I have been acutely aware that I could sense physically any solid object that was placed a short distance from my forehead and so I also know from this and other of my reactions that I would find the position within the tunnel to be intolerable. I quoted earlier from *The Ion Effect* in which Fred Soyka declared that an estimated forty percent of individuals have a great or extreme sensitivity to electrical phenomena. I have also written from time to time of my own acute sensitivity, which in its turn explained how I reacted and responded in a wide range of circumstances.

Even if the relative sensitivities of individuals were acknowledged, I imagine that it would be most unlikely that measuring techniques could be devised that would be able to define them. Then again, it is difficult to envisage a medical regime that can abandon its 'one size fits all' drug therapies, and that can acknowledge the unique individuality and varied sensitivities of a wide range of people. Not in this exact context, but acknowledging the uniqueness and individuality of someone, I once found myself giving 'sanctuary' to a young woman who just had to escape from the problems that she was experiencing in the town where she lived. I won't even begin to describe her life situation – to do so would take a book of equal length to my own.

'Jane' began a process of recovery in this tranquil and stress free environment. At the time, an ideal place for the continuation of her life change – for that is what it was becoming – seemed to be in one of the Camphill Communities. For those who

don't know of them, they are small, mostly rural communities that are usually based in large houses surrounded by their own grounds. Following the teachings and values of Rudolph Steiner, the establishments house an appropriate number of people with special needs – some being for adults, others for young adults and others for children. These 'special people', as they are termed, are matched in number by dedicated carers, while in the centres specifically for children, the latter live in individual houses as part of the families of carers, who also have a teaching role within the enclosed community.

Jane and I visited three Communities in Scotland, where we also had an interview with the medical director. The latter judged that Jane would be classed in their terminology as a 'special person', and that one or other of the various communities would be suitable for her – but, and a big 'but', – finance. Residents were normally referred by local authorities that then paid the quite considerable fees, and there was no way in which the particular Authority where Jane lived would stump up. Fortunately, she had by then found her spiritual and 'life-style' needs in Buddhism, and eventually left to live in an establishment not far from here. Eventually, her life became ordered, and she is now contentedly married. Phew!

It is amazing how in writing the last three paragraphs that a complete three-year chunk of my life has come back into view, and essentially exemplifies what I am trying to convey. Jane was fully aware that she had problems but was absolutely determined that she would have nothing to do with 'psychiatry'. Practically, I arranged for allergy tests that showed sensitivity to a number of urban and domestic cleaning pollutants; provided her with a sound and plentiful diet; created lots of laughter; brought her into contact with sensitive and caring people – and, biggest hurdle, sorted her benefit entitlement. Friends thought that I was crazy to spend so much time helping someone who was deemed 'odd', but, as I used to tell them, once one understood the extent and origin of her problems, there was no way in which I could have consigned her back to the environment that had created some of them.

Looking back, it can come as a surprise to realise how much I learned from having Jane live here. If I even *begin* to recount it all I shall find myself deep within my second book – Life with Jane. I shall just touch upon one sequence and then move on – it is worth looking at because of what it reveals. Jane had a remarkably short memory span – it wasn't always so, for she had doggedly worked to be able to pass two A-levels. She had reached a state in which she could only read and understand by means of constant re-reading and repetition. She could not remember the beginning of an instruction by the time one had got to the end, and she could not face the prospect of work because of the problems that this would create. If she went

into a strange building, say, to go to the loo, she couldn't remember how to find her way out.

Working through a very helpful GP friend, Jane was referred to a Clinical Psychologist (CP), and, now that I am recollecting that time, it is quite amazing how the memory I have of this woman matches so closely that of LW from the early part of my writing. In one important particular, as I have written, LW in his interview found out virtually nothing of note about my life, and only looked at those bits that probably fitted the mental algorithm that he seemed to be working to – I am referring to a copy of CP's final report on Jane as I write. At the time that this was happening I was trying to get Jane enrolled in the County agricultural college, for she had wanted to qualify in horticulture, and the college staff were initially very supportive, in spite of her difficulties. Aware that there might be problems with exams, I tried to speak to CP to ask her to anticipate this and help us to arrange things with the college. She would not even consider the proposition, and 'dismissed' me out of hand.

If she had listened and given me time, what would she have found out that she didn't find out? She would have found out that Jane's father had been sixty-six when she was born, and that her mother, who died when Jane was twelve, had formerly been a Carmelite nun. Jane had no domestic skills – I remember teaching her how to peel an onion – and although she wanted to grow and use herbs, as her mother had done in the convent, she had to be shown how to wheel a barrow and handle a digging spade. At this time she was twenty-one. She was always desperate for fresh air, and spent much of the day walking, and if there was rain, she would walk up and down in a conservatory for at least an hour before bedtime. (One of the difficulties that she had experienced in her home town was that she presented an odd figure as she jogged the roads in areas where she felt that she could breathe and was cat-called and harassed wherever she went.)

Often as she walked these quiet by-roads Jane tried to study and memorise properties of medicinal herbs, for she had to read and re-read to get any fact stuck in her memory. She asked CP whether she might be dyslexic. "Definitely not", came the reply, "you would get your bs and ds mixed up, and anyway it would have been found by now". Acting on an impulse one evening, I covered one of Jane's eyes, and immediately she could read and understand perfectly, and sat with a great grin on her face as she began to read *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. We got a lot of help from the local dyslexic association, and, acting on a further impulse, I spoke to my own optician, who, it turned out, had a dyslexic son, and who was actively working with the people who were studying photoscopic vision. Jane had perfect natural vision, and when she was supplied with Irlen lenses of appropriate hue, her life changed completely. The stresses of her life had caused her to

develop double vision, and once she relaxed and her vision was eased, she was able to advance. Nothing was easy, and tempted though I am, I'll not continue with her story.

As with LW, I have to speculate on how it is that someone who was so out of sympathy with the 'humanity' and individuality of the persons who, after all, CP was supposed to be *helping* – how is it that such obviously unsuitable people can be allowed to practice? Again, paralleling the report that LW wrote about me, the one on Jane was *condemnatory**, as if she herself was responsible for her own difficulties, just as his had been about me. There is no point in speculating about how either had entered their professions – maybe that is at the core, namely that these are professions where individuals may be concerned with personal status and promotion and all that that entails, not the *vocation* that the care and 'mending' of disturbed minds should be.

*Extract from report: Having described Jane as manipulative, CP goes on "I could imagine that she will develop more and more symptoms enabling her to keep up the helpless, passive life-style, inviting such an abundance of help from well-meaning friends. Undoubtedly, after some time her friends will feel uncomfortable and manipulated, and she will then experience once more that they will turn away from her.# Undoubtedly these experiences will make her very sad and vulnerable.

...at this point I must admit defeat, and discharge her." Then after referring in the report to a rehabilitation centre that I had pressed for her to attend "...I sincerely hope that she will make better use of her time there".

As I wrote earlier, Jane improved steadily, and after a few hiccups she married and has since travelled through Europe with her husband on his work, and spent holidays in Sri Lanka and Lhasa in Tibet, where her great joy was to visit the Potala Palace, the 'Mecca' of her Buddhism. I am not relating all of this to demonstrate 'what a good boy, am I', but to bring home, and give emphasis to, my constant, constant plea for everyone who enters any form of mental health care to be seen as an individual. If Jane had got fed into the 'system', as some wanted at the outset, and if she had been fed the standard cocktail of drugs, she would undoubtedly have had all of her talents and will o' the wisp personality destroyed.

Contrary to CP's prediction at #, Jane's friends stayed and have multiplied in number significantly, but what is more, she was the catalyst for a big increase in the number of my friends, some of whom have turned out to have had a noteworthy influence in my subsequent life, and no small influence on the writing of this book.

There is not much more to say, for writing about Jane and CP has virtually said it. There *has* to be a better way than 'standard' psychiatry and psychology. Practiced from an office or a hospital ward, how possibly can *anyone* find the reality that composes the individual who has been sent for analysis and treatment? The Camphill type community, if not set in country houses, but employed as a model to be adapted to other locations. The Retreat Hospital in York where the 'reactivation' of the Quaker spirituality is producing wide ranging results. Plus much that can come from the mutual help, mutual support of dynamic groups and extended communities. Perhaps there is something to be learned from the Ugly Club. The *what?* The **Ugly** club. (Which is far, far distant from the so-called 'Mad Pride' concept that some are trying to model on the 'Gay Pride' marches and events.)

I heard of The Ugly Club on the radio this morning. It is an Italian conception (I thought all Italians were beautiful!), and unites ugly people in an organisation of mutual 'support' and appreciation. So successful has it become in its human achievements and camaraderie that people considered good looking are asking to join! I'll leave you with this from the Internet:

June 10, 2001 -- Telesforo Iacobelli is a man with a mission and a strange one at that. For the past 30 years he has championed the cause of the ugly in society. Not normally ranked among the dispossessed in any organized sense, Iacobelli contests the ugly represent a maligned and often misunderstood group. He says he knows of what he speaks: not only is he the president of the Club dei Brutti, or Ugly Club, he counts himself among its charter members.

"I'm ugly and I don't regret it", chimes the bold founder. "It's absurd that people must feel marginalised in society by an aesthetic that is based solely on beauty". Part philosopher, part humorist, Iacobelli pokes fun at our vain culture by presenting the 'No Bel' prize and takes a swipe at American TV soap operas in a campaign called 'Brut-iful' (the name in Italy for *The Young and The Restless* is 'Beautiful').

Clearly, he has tapped a rich vein with his outspoken beliefs and his unusual antics. Today the club boasts an international presence with more than 20,000 card carrying members. In a country that embraces the ideal of the *bella figura*, or making the right impression, there is some irony that the Club dei Brutti should have Italy as its base. Indeed, as a major force in fashion, design and aesthetics, Italy may have met its match in the tireless efforts waged by Iacobelli to dismiss and dispel the "cult of beauty".

Truth be told, the man is not one of nature's homelier compositions. His defect, as he sees it, is in having a small nose in a country where

broad and long snouts are praised. His own example points to one of the key tenets of the club: namely, ugliness can be as much a factor of how we see ourselves as it is how others see us. "Advertising and popular culture are exclusionary and if you don't fit the mold they promote, you can be made to feel less than you are. That's not right".

The club has brought the topic out of the closet and attracts academics, doctors and sociologists to discuss the plight of the ugly in society. "Beauty is just one aspect in a person's make-up that can affect how they get along in society," says professor Gianni Camattari of the Centro di Psicologia integrata of Milan. "Ugliness, in itself, is not an obstacle to having an active social life or even sex life; the real obstacle is the deep conviction of being ugly, which can be overcome."