

# Kairos Newsletter

Spring 2014

Realising potential in challenging medical conditions.

*Once upon a time at the  
Advent Party...*



*There were two puppeteers telling the story  
of The Queen Bee...*



*And the lyres played the ants and the ducks  
and the Queen Bee herself...*



## Why Kairos?

Since it began 3 years ago, Kairos has been addressing the needs and questions of patients suffering chronic pain and the after-effects of trauma. It has been following the example of Blackthorn Trust in Maidstone ([www.blackthorn.org.uk](http://www.blackthorn.org.uk)) which knows the importance of actively engaging the patient in the process of getting better. This means that concepts of health and illness need adjusting to work with the patient more as a colleague addressing the presenting problems together in a team. The approach is called 'anthroposophic', a word which refers to the inherent, but often unrealised, wisdom and talent of the human being. The concepts are complicated because they must take account of individual spirit and soul qualities as well as the well-known physical and psychological ones. In the case of pain and trauma this means giving special consideration to the specific relationship of the individual to his or her own body. The body is considered not as a machine but rather a living instrument. When one is well, this relationship is harmonious, pain free and functions perfectly. However, it can be physiologically, not just psychologically, disturbed by any significant shock, particularly when one is growing in childhood. The person then commonly reports being disassociated from or 'not together' with their body. Rhythms, like sleep and breathing, are disturbed and the confidence that a healthily functioning body provides is lost, as though the horse one is riding takes up a nervous or slothful life of its own and cannot respond to the instructions and needs of its rider.

The therapies that Kairos has chosen address this relationship. The key to the process is warmth. Warmth is very versatile. We know it allows us to engage with one another amicably and to our advantage. But it also provides the metabolic basis in the body by which the individual connects with and plays a part in directing operations there, unconsciously of course.

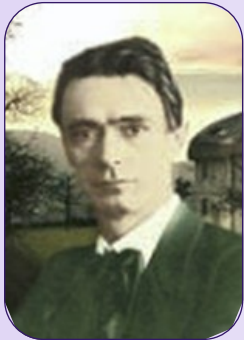
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*('Advent Party' continued from p1)*



*But two little children stole the show by leading  
in all the carols!*



**Rudolf Steiner** was born in Austria in 1861. In childhood he began to realise that he had abilities in seeing beyond the

everyday. These abilities were of the order of great musicians like Beethoven or Mozart, who acknowledged that they were 'channels' or instruments for their great compositions and were not just thinking them up. Steiner's training as a physicist and translator of Goethe's work gave him incentive to try to explain spiritual mechanisms working in as varied and complex forces from beyond the earth. His books and lectures are not easy to fathom because he is describing something which often goes, and necessarily must go, beyond our ordinary thinking. However, he systematically

details how we can develop our ordinary thinking with the sort of inner exercises that Nelson Mandela will have employed. The concepts Steiner brought to medicine concern the relationships of spirit, soul and body that are mentioned above. Since he died in 1925, they have been developed in the practice, for example, of eurythmy therapy and rhythmical massage. These concepts shed new light on the physiological mechanisms which natural science still struggles to explain. How, for example, does blood return from the feet to the heart? So many litres being lifted in seconds up 4-5 feet against the force of gravity and with no pumping mechanism in sight! At Kairos, we are trying to develop and implement Steiner's concepts for the practical advantage of our patients, and the eventual furtherance of conventional medical knowledge upon which we all depend.

DMcG

*('Why Kairos?' continued from p1)*

The other key to anthroposophic understanding was recently brought to the attention of us all when celebrating the life of Nelson Mandela. Here was a man who was imprisoned and tortured, as a result of his political views rather than a chronic illness. However, what he did during his imprisonment was similar to what can happen in illness.

On Robben Island he took up a systematic path of personal development using the restraints of prison life to uncover and exercise extraordinary talent. Even in the short time we have been working with patients at Kairos we have seen amazing turnarounds of fortune when patients are able, with the help of therapies, to take up the challenges posed by the ghastliness of their predicament.

David McGavin



**UNIVERSITY  
of  
GREENWICH**

A three year 'ethnographic' evaluation will be led by Prof Pat Schofield and Dr Rachel Docking of Greenwich University's School of Health and Social Care. Funding will be sought from the National Institute for Health Research's Patient Benefit Fund which will require 3 of our patients to join the planning team.

## Spotlight on Eurythmy

**Eurythmy Therapy** enables the patient to engage and take better hold of organic processes. The therapy is based on the idea that the human body is formed through processes evolving over time. It also keeps renewing itself, some cells much quicker than others, but none of our substance stays the same. Our *form*, however, does. The shape of a finger remains even when the cells making it up continue to die and regenerate

Eurythmy gestures relate to the specific organic activities which orchestrate this renewal of cells whilst maintaining the correct form. Where the body has suffered trauma of some kind there is a tendency for things to go a bit off course – as seen when comparing scar tissue with normal skin, it is harder, less flexible. By repeating



specific exercises one supports the body's regenerative activity and come closer to the optimal form and function. In consultation with the physician, the therapist creates a program of exercises to encourage the necessary organic changes. The therapist teaches the eurythmy exercises which over time are intensified and repeated by the patient on a regular basis. This supports the body in transforming its function and grow towards health.

As we get older the regenerative powers grow weaker. We may not be able to rectify deformations on an outer level, but just as the virtuoso pianist can make a wonky piano sound a lot better than can a beginner, so also the adult can become more accomplished at 'playing' the instrument of their body and accommodate the less ideal 'bits'.

Active engagement and the capacity to improve function by one's own efforts have a liberating effect. Further benefit will be achieved through regular practising at home.

Ingrid Hermansen

## Liz's Story

I was my husband, Ivor's, carer for 13 years. He suffered from MS until he died at our home in November 2010. It meant me doing a lot of heavy lifting. Two weeks after he died, my body just completely packed up -



with pains in my neck, shoulders and back. They said it was chronic pain syndrome. It wouldn't get better and I had a lot of depression. When I came to Kairos the new exercises with Ingrid were gentler on the body and the pain got a lot better but if I forgot myself it would flare up again. So I learned a lot more how to manage the pain. When I went with Dr McGavin to my appeal at the Tribunal, they really listened to me. I needed that extra time so I could get myself sorted out and we told them about the farm. It was a way forward. I like animals. I've got 4 rats and I feed my fox every evening. He likes his cake! I went on the first visit to Woodlands Farm with Dr McGavin. I could imagine myself working with animals and decided to sign up as a volunteer. Then Kairos had an outing to the lambing day. I just wanted to get involved with it all. At first it was a bit daunting because the animals were bigger farm ones. But I just clicked into it. I got closer and closer to the sheep. I go every Saturday and Sunday now and I know how to spot different illnesses. I need to try to get them up and moving about to make sure they are okay. I looked after one particular sheep, my Number One, until she died. I watched her being put to sleep. It was difficult, but that was a learning process as well.

I did the computer course that the work-plan lady arranged for me and I passed, so I'm going to do part 2 now. I am doing the lambing training at the farm so I can help with lambing. I want to study sheep husbandry at Hadlow College, and Woodlands have told me I can do the practical part there because they know me. And now there's virtually no pain at all, but last weekend I badly sprained my wrist filling 20 bags of manure!

# Vanbrugh Community Garden.....

...was planned, set up and all raised beds planted...



...within 3 months through the bright thinking and willing and skilled labour of our patients, their families and also many a volunteer.



The ribbon was cut to the cheers of a big crowd of visitors on a fine summer's evening by former Vanbrugh GP, Dr Christina Challacombe.



## Meet the Team *(clockwise from top left)*

**David McGavin** is a specialist GP in pain management. He co-founded and still works at Blackthorn Trust. He oversees the medical therapeutic work.

**Ingrid Hermansen**, eurythmy therapist, worked for many years in a GP practice in Scotland run on similar lines to Blackthorn. She has a background as a curative/special needs educator. Ingrid manages the project on a day to day basis and runs the choir and study group.

**Anna van Zelderen** has 30 years experience as a therapist, is qualified in physiotherapy, rhythmical massage and pilates rehabilitation. She has worked in many different settings in the UK and abroad.

**Mariela Echeverria** is a trained Steiner School teacher, special needs educator and a complementary therapy practitioner in end of life care. She has a diverse background in craft and now runs the craft group at Kairos.



## One day I hope to sing in tune!

In June 2012 I had to give up work due to ill health. The situation I found myself in left me at a very low ebb, suffering from chronic joint pain and depression, with thoughts that my life was at an end, not venturing outside and losing interest in any daily activity. My doctor referred me to the Kairos Project for pain management and soon after I met with Dr McGavin who explained the process to me. At the time I thought that I had nothing to lose, so I gave it a try!

Through massage and eurythmy, I have come to feel at peace with myself and realise that life is not all about depression and pain, as my body is starting to work as a whole and not so disjointed as before. I have even taken up some hobbies and enjoy glass painting and baking cakes.

I joined the Kairos Choir in October last year. I

cannot sing, but that doesn't matter. The singing helps to lift my spirits and is improving my core strength by using the breathing techniques practiced in class. We also play a musical instrument called a lyre, this helps with listening skills and one day I hope to sing in tune!!! I have made a lot of new friends and feel that I am not alone. The class is very relaxed and great fun.

At the Kairos Christmas event I played the lyre along with the other choir members for the Felting Class Puppet Show. I also sang a carol with the choir in front of all the visitors. I felt very proud of my achievements.

Dr McGavin, Anna and Ingrid have made me feel very welcome. I always look forward to my visits. I would like to say a big thank you as I do not know what I would have done without the support and help of the Kairos Project.

Cathy Roberts

## Kairos Community Choir

**The Choir is open to all**, especially beginners who would like to give singing a try. We sing mainly folk-style songs and improvise with easy to learn Bordun-lyres. Rehearsal: Wednesdays from 12 – 1pm. For further details contact Ingrid on 07712 810108.



## Thanks...

Kairos is very grateful to all its patients who, once they feel a bit better, with a bit of spare energy and maybe a new friend, have made such vital contributions in lifting our little project to new possibilities. A sense of belonging and increasing empowerment is becoming evident so that the patient role can begin to be left behind. A big breakthrough came when, in November 2013, a band of five patients met with Greenwich NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to present Kairos' achievements. The doctors, nurses and administrators planning Greenwich's new musculo-skeletal services were so inspired and impressed that Kairos suddenly found itself included in the CCG's portfolio; and as a result we have been invited to submit a bid for an NHS commission in 2014!

Our grateful thanks to: all staff and especially Chris Benford at Vanbrugh Group Practice, Milena Petrova and friends at Blackthorn Trust, Michelle Baker of Hadley Mace Greenwich Square and their subcontractors Atlantic, Vital Energy, CDL and OCT ink, Dr Christina Challacombe, Eleanor Darley, Simon Fielding, Pat Gallagher of Gallagher Civil Engineering, Jeff Moore, Helen Day-Barnes, Alistair Campbell & Rajini Ganendran of Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Growing Greenwich, Carol Stagg, Harry Holmes and Kevin Godby of Feel Good

Greenwich, Greenwich Community Development Agency, Greenwich Parks & Open Spaces, Rob Mills and his musicians, Antje Moor, Carol Moreton & friends at Morden College, Nick Shinn & Trustees of SeeChange, Andrew Stuck and many more who have given us their time, advice and donations.



### Who is eligible for referral?

Any patient who suffers persistent pain and is resident within the catchment area of Greenwich CCG. The cause of the pain should have been fully investigated and proven unresponsive to conventional analgesics and treatments.

**Referral** can then be made by the GP to the VFM Pain Management Clinic (address as below).

## Funding Kairos

Kairos has received 3 years of private funding in order to test its initial viability. As the third year is now coming to an end, we feel our case is strong enough to apply for charitable status.

There is no charge for Kairos' treatment. In order that all those in need of therapies and medicines may receive them, we invite anyone who is in a position to contribute to our costs to do so or who may have personal connection to a grant-making organisation to let us know. Donations may be made with Gift Aid at this stage in Kairos' favour through Hermes Trust charity no 281749.

It is intended that during 2014, Kairos will join the Vanbrugh Primary Care Pain Clinic in a joint bid to Greenwich NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as part of their newly designed pain management services. This will reduce the burden of cost considerably and thereafter all donations and sponsorship will help the project grow and develop.

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