



REPORT TO THE ALCOHOL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATION FOUNDATION

- **Review of Therapeutic Community Associations' governance structure and service delivery in Europe and the United Kingdom**
- **Attendance at the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities Conference in Slovenia.**

Prepared by

**Janice Jones
Executive Officer**

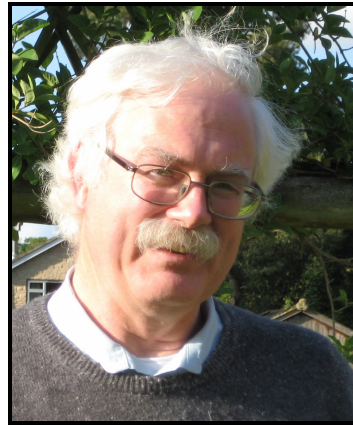
Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association

THE ASSOCIATION OF THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES (UK)

My first meeting was with Craig Fees, the Secretary of the Association of Therapeutic Communities (ATC) and the Director of the Therapeutic Community Archive Office. He operates out of the Planned Environment Therapy Trust office in the Barnes Conference Centre, Toddington UK.



Therapeutic Community Archive Facility



Craig Fees, Secretary ATC

The ATC has been operating since the 1960s as a supportive organisation for professionals who work in Therapeutic Communities. It acts as a focus for information, debate, training and support for its 53 member agencies and 21 individual members. ATC member agencies provide Therapeutic Community programs for a variety of client groups including; drug and alcohol recovery, personality disorders, child protection, homelessness, mental health and sexual abuse perpetrators.

ATC produces a quarterly peer-reviewed international journal which includes papers on practical, theoretical and research topics from Britain, Europe, North America and Australia.

It also hosts twice yearly a 3 day Living and Learning Workshop to give staff working in therapeutic settings the opportunity to find out what the experience of being a member of a therapeutic community is like.

An international residential conference is convened in Windsor every year and is an opportunity for academic papers to be presented and discussed. The Annual General Meeting of the Association is also held at this event.

The ATC works in concert with the Charterhouse Group which is the support network for Therapeutic Communities working in the child protection field and Community of Communities who develop standards and monitor the accreditation of Therapeutic Communities in the UK and Europe.

THE PLANNED ENVIRONMENT THERAPY TRUST ARCHIVE.

Craig also manages the archive office of the trust. This unique information resource on Therapeutic Communities was established in 1989 to archive a collection of papers, documents and other materials relevant to the field of therapeutic communities and set up a specialist research library open to students, researchers and the general public.

The archive holds over 200 separate archive collections, 7,000 books and an oral history of over 1,400 items. All of this is contained in a specially built environmentally controlled storage unit.

RADIO TC INTERNATIONAL

The Association of Therapeutic Communities in collaboration with the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities facilitates a web-based radio program which includes interviews with well known luminaries from the Therapeutic Community sector as well as interviews with managers, staff, and researchers from the field.

COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES

Incorporated in the Royal College of Psychiatrists Centre for quality improvement, Community of Communities facilitates an annual cycle of self and peer reviews which promote improvement in quality Therapeutic Community practice.

In collaboration with the Charterhouse Group, the European Federation of Therapeutic Communities, the Association of Therapeutic Communities and the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association the Community of Communities has developed standards specifically for Addiction Therapeutic Communities.

These standards are reviewed as part of the annual cycle which enables Therapeutic Communities to demonstrate and improve the quality of their work through a standards-based review process.

During my stay in the UK I visited three Therapeutic Communities;

MAIN HOUSE

Operated by the Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Trust, Main House is a personality disorder service providing assessment and treatment for men and women aged 18 upwards with long standing and severe emotional, behavioural and/or interpersonal difficulties.

Main House comprises 23 residents, 14 clinical and 7 administrative/operational staff providing 24 hour coverage. It is a 12 month program operated under a democratic model with a "slight hierarchical platform". This means that in the day to day running of the community there is a hierarchical element (levels of responsibility) but the overall operation is run in a democratic fashion.

Resident's progress is regularly reviewed with their care team and after 9 months the residents attend a "Moving On" group that helps them plan for life after Main House. This Group continues as a support network for those who have left the program

GLEBE HOUSE

Situated in a small village near Cambridge, Glebe House offers a Therapeutic Community providing a relapse prevention program to young men who manifest behaviours that cause significant concern and/or have perpetrated sexual abuse.

This service offers residents a 52 week program followed by a 2 to 3 year follow up support network situated in their carefully managed exit houses.

The age range of these young men is 15 to 19 years, they attend 3 daily community meetings to reflect on recent events enabling them to give and receive feedback and to explore the dynamics of the group as individuals and as a whole. One resident confided in me that this was the best part of the day because he could give feedback to "adults" who would listen to him and take him seriously. This, he said, had never happened to him in the past.

Residents take part in a comprehensive education program including literacy, numeracy, expressive arts, motor maintenance (they have a fully equipped mechanical workshop) horticulture and landscaping plus an extensive sport and leisure regime.

Glebe House is staffed by 8 clinical practitioners and 15 therapists, including forensic psychotherapists, plus administrative, maintenance and support staff. It is supported by the Quaker Community and many local residents volunteer their time at the community.

THE LEY COMMUNITY

The Ley Community was first established in Oxford in 1971 by two local psychiatrists, Dr Bertram Mandelbrote and Dr Peter Agulnik, who at that time were working with drug and alcohol dependent people in treatment at Littlemore Hospital. In 1969, Dr Agulnik had visited Phoenix House in New York and had been impressed by the impact of the Phoenix self-help programme with the emphasis on ex-addicts in treatment helping each other with their recovery.

The Ley Community now employs 25 staff working with a Community of up to 64 residents. Half the staff have themselves been through a drug rehabilitation programme, and their personal experience and ability to overcome their addiction and lead full and fulfilling lives without the need to misuse substances has a powerful impact on current residents.

This was impressed upon me a few times during my time with the residents. Many of them stated that being with people who had gone through the process was an inspiration that helped them through the very tough times.

The residents were very interested to know if there were Therapeutic Communities in Australia and how they worked. They also asked if they could become pen pals with residents from Therapeutic Communities "down under".

OUTCOMES

Visits to the abovementioned organisations produced the following outcomes:

- An understanding of the broad range of services using the Therapeutic Community model as a treatment process for various issues.
- As an association the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association compares well with the Association of Therapeutic Communities in its governance and management practices. The UK association's services to members are well established having been in operation for many years. Some of these initiatives (mentioned below) will be offered to ATCA members in the near future.
- ATCA has negotiated with ATC to host a 3 day Living and Learning Workshop as an adjunct to ATCA's annual conference. This is being done with a view to ATCA taking ownership of this workshop process and providing it as a service to its members and a future fund raiser for the Association..
- Radio TC International now has an interview with the Executive Officer of ATCA discussing Therapeutic Communities in Australia included in its program. www.tc-of.org.uk
- Community of Communities will present their standards and workshop the peer review process at ATCA's annual conference in November.
- A Pen Pall Program is in the process of being established with the Ley Community and Therapeutic Communities in Australia and New Zealand with the ATCA playing a lead role in this.
- Discussion has taken place with the Community of Communities regarding their membership data base and its applicability to ATCA's needs.
- **A belated outcome and as somewhat of an accolade, I received the following comments from Craig Fees; “Your visit here is having good repercussions. What you're achieving with ATCA is feeding into discussions about the future direction of ATC.”**

THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES

The EFTC has been in operation for 29 years. Its membership is spread over 15 countries and represents more than 40 treatment centres.

The Federation operates out of a “virtual” office”. It has no paid staff and is managed by the Executive Committee comprising seven members from six European countries.

I was invited to attend their Annual General Meeting and was impressed to see so many countries represented. The membership of the AERF is the same as the ATCA’s and its geographical spread is similar too. The difference is the mix of nationalities, their different languages and diverse cultures which all make for an interesting meeting.

These differences strengthen the Federation by bringing to it a diversity of service structures, ideas and cultural norms that, whilst challenging, develop creativity and collaboration across borders.



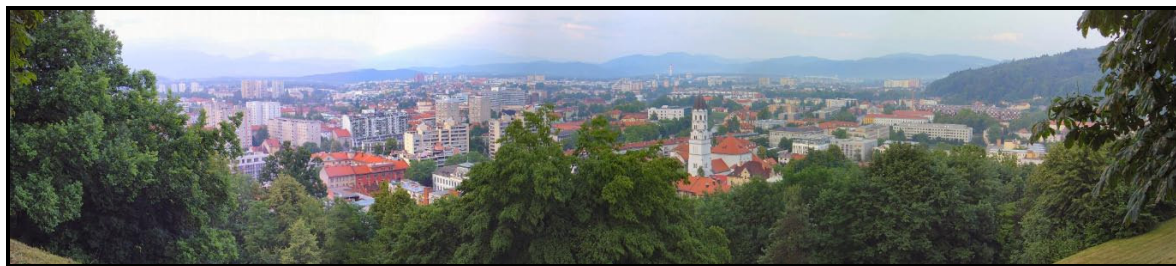
I was privileged to be invited by the Secretary of the EFTC Dirk Vandeveld (right), to a meeting with the Mayor of Skofia Loka Mr. Igor Draksler (left), who had recently visited Sydney. We discussed the trials of establishing a TC in the local community and the positive change in community attitudes since the opening of Projekt Človek, a Therapeutic Community in his village not far from Ljubljana.

It would appear that NIMBY is a worldwide phenomenon only to be dispelled by experience.

OUTCOMES:

- The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association has now established a professional working relationship with the EFTC and many of its members. This facilitates the sharing of ideas and resources across not only regions but various communities and cultures.
- The European Federation of Therapeutic Communities provides access to a list-serve of all its members and conference attendees. This list contains access to a comprehensive range of research and journals associated with Therapeutic Communities and addiction. ATCA now subscribes to this list and can provide up to date and international access to its members.

THE EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE – LJUBLJANA SLOVENIA



The European Federation of Therapeutic Communities and drug rehabilitation programs of Slovenia welcomed delegates to the 11th EFTC European Conference on Rehabilitation and Drug Policy. The Conference was hosted by Društvo “Projekt Človek” (Association Project Man) and supported by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia.

The overarching theme of the Conference was that of working together with clients, carers, service providers and governments to ensure a network of treatment services which work for the needs of the client. Within this network the Therapeutic Community movement plays an effective and creative part.

The Conference followed four significant themes;

Therapeutic Communities – Working with the Criminal Justice System

Worldwide drug misuse is more often seen as a criminal justice problem than a public health issue. Fortunately there is a move toward establishing more Therapeutic Communities in prisons as accreditation processes and longitudinal studies of the model become available.

Therapeutic Communities – Not Just Addiction

There is now a growing recognition that in addition to their problems with abuse, many users also have a mental health or personality disorder while others will have long standing learning difficulties. Modifying TCs to manage the needs of this special client group whilst maintaining the integrity of the model was seen as the challenge. An edifying presentation by Stan & Jo Anne Sacks from NDRI, the Centre for the Integration of Research & Practice, demonstrated the capacity for Therapeutic Communities to do just that and to do it well.

Therapeutic Communities – Families & Communities

An ever-increasing need for families to be included in the recovery process has lead many Therapeutic Communities to develop creative and exciting ways to involve the families, local people and organisations in their work. Others have built links and services to minority communities or make significant contributions to the social fabric of the wider community. Many presentations explored ways of harnessing the energy of the Therapeutic Community to give and receive support to not only families but the wider community.

Therapeutic Communities – Contributors to Change

The world of addiction treatment is changing beyond recognition. Increasingly, planners and policy makers are looking to establish integrated (though often still competitive) networks of services working in partnership to provide drug users with greater choice and a seamless treatment plan. Many different experiences and perspectives were presented to demonstrate the effectiveness (and sometimes the downfall) of such partnerships.

SERVICE VISIT

The co-host of the Conference Društvo “Projekt Človek” (Association Project Man) invited all the delegates from the conference to visit their Therapeutic Community in Skofia Loka, 30 minutes drive from the city of Ljubljana. This was an exciting event as the local community, parents of the residents and the residents themselves had all contributed to the preparation of a fantastic meal served in a marquee in the grounds of the TC.

We were welcomed by the Mayor of Skofia Loka and the Manager, staff and residents who had prepared a musical greeting for us. The TC is set in a valley surrounded by pine covered mountains.



A sumptuous feast prepared by the residents, their families and people from the local village.



The newly completed accommodation for final stage residents.

OUTCOMES:

- Attending the EFTC conference provided the opportunity to network with a diverse range of like minded people dedicated to the TC model of Community as Therapy.
- Access to researchers, practitioners and policy makers from such a diverse range of cultures, as well as the visit to “Projekt Človek”, was a boon to my professional development as Executive Officer of the ATCA and therefore my task developing the ATCA as a relevant and progressive membership association.

I would like to thank the Alcohol, Education and Rehabilitation Foundation for providing the funding for this venture and availing me of such an extraordinary experience.