



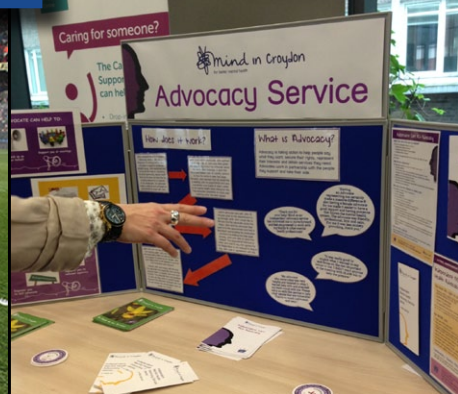
# 50

## Years

of

 **Mind in Croydon**  
for better mental health

# 1967-2017





Cover Photo's Clockwise from top left...

Active Minds Cycling Group

Normanton Group Home, circa 1985

Allotment Project, Active Minds

Mind in Croydon Shop, Addiscombe

Duke McKenzie, M.B.E., Boxercise Project

Mind in Croydon Shop, Selsdon, circa 1979

Advocacy Service presentation

Croydon Eagles Football Team, Active Minds

The Hub

Furniture Service, circa 1992

Counselling Service

Ronnie Corbett launches Positive Steps 2014

Pampisford Road, circa 1975

## Introduction

When Mind in Croydon began half a century ago, the way people with mental health issues were cared for was very different from the way it is now. Warlingham Park Hospital still housed people with mental health issues, now it's a housing estate. The Cane Hill Hospital site is now being redeveloped. Fifty years ago, the idea of care in the community was relatively new and came about partly because research into mental illness had resulted in availability of new more effective treatments. Attitudes to mental health issues were changing and Croydon was a forward looking borough in this respect where people were resettled much earlier than elsewhere. Nevertheless people have always needed three essentials: a home, a job or meaningful occupation, and friends. In 1967 the founding of our organisation was one of the ways in which this might be achieved.

Since those early days, we have shown that mental health problems do not have to stop you doing anything you want. Our projects have helped people achieve whatever they most wish for. This includes going on holiday to Cuba; gaining qualifications as fitness instructors; getting and holding down a job; making documentary films and training with a world class boxer. Our projects have won national awards and been held up as models of good practice on TV and radio. Mind in Croydon has helped thousands of people over 50 years to live the life they want. Achieving those aims is challenging, satisfying and rewarding. It has involved the contribution of a large number of very special people, this includes those we have been able to help as well as the staff and volunteers.

This is our story...

## Beginnings

For a dream to become a reality, it's always useful to find a champion. If you can find one with boundless patience and enough energy to be volunteering well into their nineties, you know you're in business. In 1965 at the age of 50 Norah Croft, who founded Mind in Croydon decided she was free of the responsibilities of a large family now that her five children were no longer at home. The organisation Norah started was to grow to become a major service provider in Croydon and she was to serve as a Board member until she retired. She was a lady who liked a challenge. Norah was wise, loved people, and was knowledgeable, being one of the first women to gain a degree in Social Studies. She was also the sort of person who by encouraging and cajoling could get people to work hard to deliver whatever she needed for her chosen cause.



*Norah Croft, M.B.E.*

Her husband Clifford, had been asked to help with setting up a Halfway House for people recovering from addiction to alcohol so Norah knew she would have an ally in any caring project she might undertake. She was encouraged to take part in a new course encouraging freedom of thought in mental health and a much more creative approach to the world of caring entitled Clinical Theology. This new knowledge led to her being officially appointed Honorary Secretary of the Croydon Association for Mental Health (CAMH) on 22nd February 1967. We were to be known as CAMH until 1978 when we changed our name to Mind in Croydon in line with the national organisation. Croydon was a leading borough in the field at that time and the first Community Psychiatric Nurse (in the world!) Lena Peat was appointed.

## EARLY FUND-RAISING

### The Nearly New Shop (1969)

It was the policy of NAMH, the National Association, to encourage new associations to begin by raising money, but this idea did not appeal to Norah. By her own admission, she had a totally unrealistic vision of bringing help and healing to the hundreds of people in Warlingham Park Hospital. Nevertheless perhaps one of Norah's greatest qualities was the ability to reflect on her original perception of things, listen to arguments and change her mind where necessary. Any charity is powerless without funds and the first task was to get cash in the bank. NAMH persuaded Norah to consider setting up a 'Nearly New Shop'. This had proved very successful in Cheltenham. Jo Leck appeared on the scene at that point and Clifford drove Jo and Norah to Cheltenham to see for themselves what could be achieved. Jo, who has also served as Vice Chair, is still on the Board of Mind in Croydon today and has helped on many occasions with the recruitment of our excellent shop staff and volunteers as well as advising us with the shops which bring in much needed funds. Her extensive experience is always valued.

## 26 Pampisford Road

Having decided to go ahead, they set about looking for suitable premises. It was Norah's daughter-in-law Margot, who spotted the house at 26 Pampisford Road. It is that building from where this 50th anniversary of Mind in Croydon is being written. Norah would never forget the stench that met them as they entered. The house had been empty for two years and, four inches of droppings had been left by the pigeons nesting in the attic. Norah could hardly wait to get out of the place, thinking it out of the question to take it on. However, Peggy Pater, our first Chairman had other ideas and on emerging she said, much to Norah's astonishment, 'I think there was something friendly about the place.' She was not wrong as thousands of counselling, welfare benefits and advocacy clients in the decades to come would acknowledge.

Norah came round to the idea and they negotiated its rental. This was one of many times Norah was known to reject an idea one day, only to come in the next day saying, 'I've been thinking...' and then carry it forward to a resounding success. Clifford offered an interest-free loan of £500 to get the roof patched up and to buy decorating materials. He was convinced he'd be repaid within 6 months after opening the shop, and was proved right.

Norah recruited an army of volunteers from churches, schools, youth clubs, and a professional builder. The Health Inspector insisted that they remove all traces of the birds. This involved removing lath and plaster ceilings and walls and carting the debris down three flights of stairs. They tried to construct a rudimentary chute out of the window which proved disastrous. An unsafe parapet at the back of the building was demolished, and the rubble used to make the slope down the side of the house to what is now the car-park. Jo Leck who eventually became Deputy Chairman and is still volunteering in our 50th year as a member of Mind's Board of Trustees had been very active. The shop was the lynchpin of our fund-raising at the beginning and Jo was a key part of it. Jo has been such a stalwart of Mind in Croydon it is difficult to know what we would have done without her. She helped set up the shop for trading, and arrangements were made for the shop, on the ground and first floors, to be officially opened by the Mayor in April 1969.

Jo Leck became even more vital at this stage working on the running of the shop and organising the newly recruited volunteer staff. The system was based on people bringing in unwanted nearly new clothes and when they were sold they received two thirds of the proceeds.

The shop was a great success from the first day when it took £40. In the first year it netted £2,500 after the debt to Clifford was paid off.



*26 Pampisford Road*

The Nearly New Shop was the foundation stone on which everything else was built. The money it raised was not the only advantage. The project put us on the map and brought CAMH into the public eye. It presented Mental Health in an acceptable form that was of benefit to the community as well as our cause and it was a bridge between CAMH and the public. We owe a great debt to all the volunteers, without whom it would not have been possible. Some of those original helpers stayed with us for decades, such as Cheryl Dipper and Edna Franklin who, even after the shop later closed to make way for office space stayed on to become valuable office volunteers.



*The opening ceremony  
Norah, the Mayor and Mayoress, Peggy Pater  
and Jo Leck with other volunteers*

## THE POP-IN (1970)

We opened a small club which we called the Pop-In, in the basement of the shop. We had four helpers and three members on the first evening but gradually as word got round, more people turned up and, and after a year, we had 25 people crowding into one small room. A light supper was served for 5p. Despite the reservations of some (though not all) hospital staff who were far from happy about entrusting their patients to our care, it soon became clear this was what was needed.

## THE FAIRFIELD CLUB (1971)

The Pop-In was bursting out of its premises and we opened a larger club. The house in Fairfield Road, Croydon, which would accommodate larger numbers was another challenge. Again semi-derelict and owned by the council, we put it in order and it opened in 1971.

The club was staffed by two students who lived in rather squalid conditions on the top floor. They were given board and lodging and pocket money and ran the club with the aid of a rota of about 50 volunteers. Norah said it was a wonder she had any friends left! The Club gradually developed its own character as members made their needs known. The homely atmosphere was enormously important to them as many of them had lacked a caring home life.

Friday was reserved for 12 in-patients to visit from 1pm to 2pm for lunch. Leslie Virgo, the Chaplain, and Sister Thomas were largely instrumental in persuading the hospital, which was very custodial at that time, to allow this. At first the patients used to arrive in a crocodile with a nurse at the front and back, until we protested and after that they were allowed to make their own way down from Warlingham without escort.

Margot Croft, Norah's daughter-in-law, had been interested and very helpful from the start as Norah had taken on a huge and growing undertaking. Margot became very involved helping



with all the paperwork. The Pop-in continued but on Sundays only and was much appreciated because it was small and intimate. The cost of entrance was raised to 10p which included supper; no wonder it was popular. As time went by, however, the Fairfield Club increasing in both hours and membership, we could no longer sustain both and the Pop-in was closed down in 1982.

## OTHER CAMH ACTIVITIES

We undertook a number of publicity campaigns and gave talks to groups in Croydon with a view to educating the public about Mental Health issues. In 1974 while the club was still in Fairfield Road, the BBC made a documentary entitled 'Mental Health: Who Cares?' in which the Fairfield Club featured prominently. We showed this to numerous audiences during the next 10 years.

### The newspaper collection

In 1974 a Newspaper Collection was started which raised a lot of money. We had the use of a garage free of rent, in Pampisford Road, which held about 10 tons and which was filled twice a year. The price per ton varied but averaged about £12 a ton, so about £250 per annum was raised, a considerable amount at that time.



*The newspaper collection*

## THE FAIRFIELD CLUB MOVES TO ALTRE ROAD (1975)

We spent four years in Fairfield Road during which time much development took place, but our time was limited because of plans to demolish the building for road widening. Enough had been raised from the shop for Clifford to find alternative premises in Altre Road which was purchased for £30,000. It needed a lot of repairs at a cost of £30,000, so once again an interest free loan was arranged by Clifford and it was agreed that this would be paid off at £5,000 a year from the shop takings. The place looked very good when it was opened in June 1975.



*Fairfield House*

Dinner was cooked on the premises by a band of volunteers including Norah's daughter Lorna, and members used to stroll into the kitchen for a chat or to help chop up vegetables. The club was run by a young married couple who lived on the premises. Members helped with washing up. It was like a large family home and helpers sat with members for meals and they were able to get to know one another. There was a snooker room, a TV room upstairs, an activity room for arts and crafts and a garden. Peggy Nord (later to be Peggy Spencer) joined us about 1980 and did a great job managing the stores as well as

giving lasting friendship to many members. As more paid staff were taken on at the club, she moved to the newly formed Furniture Service to become assistant to Hazel Lettis who had just been appointed as its manager. Use of the bathroom, with a clean towel, for 10p was another facility. In 1982 Mike and Barbara Hart became wardens of the club and ran it for a number of years extremely successfully with the help of a volunteer, Barbara Mitchell. Another mainstay of the Fairfield then, and now, has been Luege Minchella. Luege has been there 'man and boy', working hard on a regular basis as well as contributing his services for years as a Member of our Executive Committee. Without such dedicated people, we could not thrive.

During the 1990s, big changes were made in the domestic arrangements in order to conform with regulations on Food Hygiene and Health and Safety. Changes were resisted initially with the concern that the "family atmosphere" would be lost in the modernising programme. But we gradually came to realise that this was the coming of age of the Fairfield Club and our members had become integrated members of society and no longer needed parental care as in a family. Fairfield has been progressing ever since.

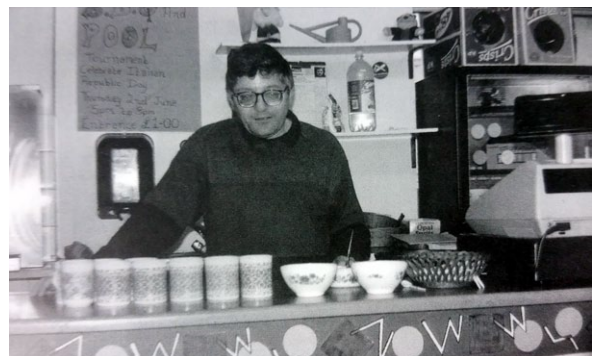
Part of its growing up was that Norah gradually withdrew from Fairfield apart from trying to keep the garden under control. Fairfield holidays at that time became a regular feature of the life of the Club. When Norah's son, Tony Croft was President of Purley Rotary Club, he worked hard during his year of office to raise money for Mind in Croydon. This enabled us to buy a minibus which gave immense pleasure over the years with Tony and Margot taking members on holiday to places such as York and to Bath in 1997.

## **The Minibus**

Though the minibus and the caravan on the coast which we once owned are both long gone, Fairfield trips continued to take place but going further afield. Members have gone to Spain, the Mediterranean and later under new Manager, Jacqui Dyce, who has brought in many innovative ideas, as far as Cuba and Jamaica. In so many ways Mind in Croydon has responded to clients' requests to expand their horizons.

Tony Croft was, since the early days and over many years, not just a valued voice of reason working in the background to support both Norah and Margot but acted as our honorary legal advisor, an essential requirement for an expanding charity.

He stepped in to fill the breach on a number of occasions, as Treasurer, when Ron Silver resigned suddenly, as general factotum at Normanton Group Home, gap-filler whenever there was a gap and, as an invaluable colleague of Noreen, our previous Counselling Service Manager when interviewing would be counsellors. His expertise as a RELATE counsellor proved a great asset. In addition, we appreciated his role in giving support to Margot by taking on a large part of running their home so that she was able to give ever increasing time to Mind in Croydon.



*Luege at the Coffee Bar in Fairfield House*



## **Gli Amici della Musica**

Norah's younger daughter Mary sang with her guitar in the wards at Warlingham Park Hospital when she was about 16 and later in the club on Christmas Day. And to raise money for Mind, she put on concerts with Gli Amici della Musica, in the Chapel at Warlingham Park and at Redleaf the home of Tony and Margot.



*Gli Amici della Musica*



*Melfort Road Group Home*

## **MELFORT ROAD GROUP HOME (1976)**

In 1976 we opened our first Group Home in Thornton Heath run by Ken Bromley a new recruit to our volunteer force. When the home was closed, he moved to become housing manager of our new home in Normanton Road. In 1988, because of various difficulties which arose between us and the Housing Association, about keeping the building in a state of repair, we were forced to move the residents to alternative accommodation and close down the project.

## **THE FURNITURE SERVICE (1976)**

From 1975 onwards we were helping to settle Fairfield Club members into flats which had been allotted to them by Croydon Council.

The furniture service grew fast as the supply of flats increased and it was not long before we had filled three garages with supplies.



*Furniture Service A team from Crossfields*

## **Hazel Lettis with Peggy Nord**



*Hazel and Nigel Melfi  
in the Blanket store*

In 1987 Hazel Lettis was appointed as part time worker to manage this service. From the start she was like dynamite and tore into the work with Peggy Nord as her assistant. We had the offer of storage facilities at the Co-operative Funeral Service premises for a very low rent and we moved in amongst the coffins. Later Croydon Council offered us the extensive space in the garage underneath Pampisford Road. It had been an air raid shelter for medical supplies in the war.

With the closure of Warlingham Park in 1998, the movement of people out of hospital into the community increased considerably from 1990 onwards and, as a result, the housing department was obliged to house people. There was more call than ever for our

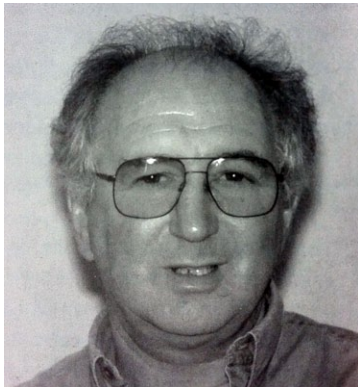
Furniture Service and we were given a three year contract from Social Services. On average we furnished five flats a week, supplying all basic items from beds and bedding to saucepans and teaspoons and the service became a vital part of the Community Care programme.

## ENTER MARGOT CROFT (1978)

With the increasing activities it had become impossible for Norah to manage alone, and having tried unsuccessfully to recruit suitable voluntary help, it was decided that we must have a part-time paid Administrator. The job was advertised and Margot, who had been Norah's unpaid assistant for six years, applied. Norah disassociated herself from the appointment as she was Norah's daughter-in-law, so it was left to others to do the interviews. Several people applied but none of them had anything like the qualifications and experience that Margot had, so she got the job. Amongst her other duties, Margot was expected to raise funds for her own salary.



*Margot Croft*



*John Nurse*

As time went on it became evident that the services we were providing were of value to the Statutory Services and we were soon establishing good working relationships with them. Peggy Pater was succeeded by Brian Pavitt who served ably from 1988 to 1996 during a time of great expansion of the charity. John Nurse then arrived as Chairman. His understanding of the sector from being Community Mental Health Manager at Warlingham Park Hospital was very useful to us in our early days.

## THE SELSDON SHOP AND GROUP HOME (1979)

Margot, mindful of the need to raise her own salary embarked on organising the opening of a second shop. She spotted some premises comprising a shop with a maisonette on two floors above it. We planned to use the latter for a group home for five people.

The combined forces of Jo Leck, Margot and Elsie Edwards who had volunteered in the Purley Shop for 8 years, and was a mainstay for the next 17 years as well as a valuable member of the Executive Committee resulted in a successful and profitable project. The Selsdon shop which is now run by Mind Retail, provides much needed extra funds for Mind in Croydon, and we are greatly indebted to all the volunteers who have served there over the years.

We opened our new shop in 1979 and plans for the Group Home went ahead. Five residents were installed, and we were promised full support from the hospital should any trouble arise. But in the event this was often not forthcoming and running this project caused us much worry. In 1996 we had problems which became too difficult to overcome. It was finally closed and now provides funds as a let to private tenants.

## THE COUNSELLING SERVICE (1980)



*Some of the Original Counsellors  
Austin Carol Noreen Marisse*

From very early on, it was recognized that our clients would need to be given time and a listening ear. We did our best to be available to fulfil these needs and, if necessary to seek more qualified help in the form of a psychiatric nurse or social worker. Esther Rantzen's programme "That's Life" on the subject of Minor Tranquillisers, in which National Mind was mentioned, brought a flood of phone calls to our office. This resulted in us setting up a Tranquilliser Support Group where could help each other by exchanging experiences. We passed over the running

of this group to 'Drug Concern Croydon' when it was set up though Norah remained on the management committee for six years.

Meanwhile, Mind in Croydon was doing its best to provide some sort of counselling service. In 1984 the Helpline, now the Infoline was officially set up with just three volunteer counsellors and the loan of a Community Psychiatric Nurse, for one morning a week. Even this did not meet the ever-expanding need.

In 1992 the decision was made to appoint a Co-ordinator of Counselling and Noreen Griffiths, who was our CPN at the time, was appointed. At this time we were being approached by people who were training to be counsellors and who needed placements. Thus we were in a position to recruit good volunteer counsellors. The project gradually became established as a highly organised and professional service. The service is now fully staffed and operates with 32 volunteer counsellors of high calibre who receive regular supervision. Once again, more space was needed and extensive works on the Pampisford Road building provided space for this growing service.



*Norah off to the palace for a garden party with Fairfield members in 1981, for the Year of the Disabled*

## NORAH CROFT MBE

It was in 1982 Norah was awarded an MBE. She chose Tony and her daughter Lorna to accompany her since they had given a lot of time and effort on a voluntary basis in the setting up of Mind in Croydon. Tony drove her in her little Metro car through the gates of the Palace where it was subjected to a close police examination for bombs. She received her honour from the Queen who asked her briefly about her work for Mind. She then treated all her children and their spouses to lunch. She often said that this was an award which she received on behalf of all the many people involved in Mind in Croydon's work and above all the service users who were the reason for it all.



## **NORMANTON GROUP HOME (1985)**

In 1985 we opened another group home in Normanton Road, South Croydon as a joint venture with South London Family Housing Association. This project was properly funded and supported from the start and was for many years a great success. A succession of tenants did well, many moving on to live independently. Eventually however, it became apparent that with the quantity of legislation which must be complied with in the running of group homes, it was more viable for the charity to put its energies into developing other services.

## **ENTERPRISE HOUSE (1986)**

In 1985 Social Services asked us to open a Creative Day Centre to cater for the needs of the younger people in the community with mental health problems. We found suitable premises in Upper Norwood and Mike and Barbara Hart took over the setting up of the project and we found replacement leaders for the Fairfield Club.



*Enterprise House Workroom*

## **Enterprise House Shop**



*Enterprise House Shop*

Enterprise House comprised a small shop, an office, a dining room and kitchen and various other rooms for craft, relaxation etc. There were also extensive cellars where clothes were sorted for selling in the shop. Later, a tea-room was added where light refreshments were served to the public. The whole project developed well with a regular membership of 30 people who attended for up to two years, before being ready to move on to other voluntary work or a paid job. Janette Frost was recruited as Manager and the project flourished under her creative leadership. This included a removals service following

the purchase of a new van and the employment of Dennis Bagshaw, who for many years along with his colleague Martin Frost worked successfully, as Driver/Maintenance Workers.

## **A GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN CROYDON**

As early as 1974 we produced a folder entitled "Mental Health in the Croydon Area" in which we gave basic information about the community services. As time went on there were more and more facilities provided for people recovering from mental illness and in the 1980s we became increasingly aware of the need for a better way of providing information. After much research and consultation with all the Statutory and Voluntary agencies involved, a comprehensive guide was produced and launched in 1989. It had a green cover and was illustrated with appropriate cartoons.

These guides were widely distributed to all Statutory and Voluntary services and Libraries and were also available to individuals. One of the ways Mind in Croydon has flourished and

prospered into its 50th year is to change and adapt. One of the biggest changes we have seen is computerisation and although providing challenges for all small voluntary sector organisations it has provided opportunities. The Guide is now exclusively produced online so that people can download the pages they need or simply consult it online. This method of producing the Guide has allowed us to update it immediately rather than it becoming out of date as soon as it is printed, a great advantage.

## ANDREW WILSON

The Reverend Andrew Wilson, Warlingham Hospital and Community Mental Health Chaplain, appointed in 1989 and still in contact with the Charity today, was one of the many active and useful contributors to our success. He was particularly supportive to the Croydon Mental Health Users' Group as well as serving on our Executive Committee for a number of years.

## Margot Croft becomes Director and Richard Pacitti joins



*Richard Pacitti*

By 1990 Margot's work load had become excessive, and it was decided to appoint an assistant for her.

She became Director, with Richard Pacitti as her deputy. He had a degree in law which was a useful addition to our resources. Richard took over the day to day finances and assumed the role of fund-raiser applying successfully for a number of large grants for our various projects.

Another of his initiatives was an Advocacy Service which aimed to support people who were having difficulty in getting a fair hearing in matters of the law. Richard's persistence in promoting this much needed help led eventually to the setting up, in 1994, of the Croydon Advocacy Service. After being operated by a legal firm, the Advocacy Service in future years was to be run by Mind in Croydon as it still is today. It was at this time that Richard started training courses for police officers, on dealing with offenders who had mental health problems and over the years we have given talks and training to many private sector and public sector organisations such as the Home Office and other big employers in Croydon.

## THE WELFARE BENEFITS ADVICE SERVICE (1991)

Another development was the setting up of a service to deal with the difficulties faced by clients in obtaining their benefits. Liz Wilkinson was appointed to lead this and the service has benefitted from extremely knowledgeable Managers and staff. Rory



*The Welfare Benefits Group*

O'Kelly (now retired) and Mary Frost-Gaskin who was one of the original advisers working with Liz developed the service. It started dealing with complicated claims, and appeals and tribunals, enabling clients to obtain their entitlements. In 1995 Mind was becoming more and more concerned by anecdotal evidence that people with mental health problems were not getting all the benefits they were entitled to. Initially, we asked Social Services to do an audit of all their clients, but due to lack of resources, they were unable to do so. Mind therefore, decided to use its own reserves to offer a welfare benefits audit to all the people attending a resource centre in Croydon. This study (which was later published and circulated all over Europe and USA) showed that more than 50% of people seen were not getting the benefits they were entitled to. On the strength of this study, we were able to get 3 year funding for a far bigger project to offer a welfare benefits audit to a greater group of people in the borough.

Keeping up with the ever changing legislation in this field is a challenging task for Mary and her extremely able and knowledgeable Welfare Benefits Advisers, Adrian Clark, Michel Thizy and Tom Goddard. The service continues to help many hundreds of people a year who are often desperate to find someone who will help them through the benefits maze to raise their incomes substantially.

## THE CROYDON MENTAL HEALTH USERS GROUP (1993)



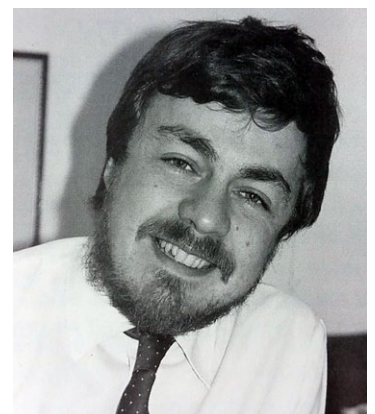
*The User Group*

When Richard Pacitti joined in 1990, he was given the task of enabling users of the Mental Health Services to form their own support group. This began as a forum which users were encouraged to attend and where they could question members of the Services and hear their comments. Thus Users were beginning to have a voice in decision-making. This forum gave rise to the establishment of the Croydon Mental Health Users' Group in 1993. Under Richard's guidance they established themselves as an organisation

which earned widespread respect and was held up as a model of good practice. Legally and financially they were a part of Mind in Croydon. Since then, we are pleased that they morphed into an entirely independent charity, 'Hear Us' though we still have much opportunity to informally partner with them as they rent space in one of our newer buildings, Orchard House in South Croydon.

## ENTER JOHN PESTELL AND PETER BECKETT

In 1993 we welcomed Chartered Accountant John Pestell who had volunteered to be our Treasurer. Another Accountant, Peter Beckett who began as our Chairman in 2000, retiring in 2017 gave a huge amount of support to the organisation during a time of growth. John ably stepped into this role when Peter retired. Our finances are



*John Pestell*



managed very competently with the help of Richard Pacitti, and Mike Owen who for many years acted as a contractor but finally agreed, thankfully, to come on board as an excellent Finance Officer. He looks after income as well as expenditure with the eyes of a hawk. Tens of thousands of monetary transactions are performed each year, and income streams have become ever more complicated. Mike has kept track of all these tirelessly over many years and is to be hugely congratulated for each year receiving a positive report from our auditors. Our accounts have been very safe in his hands. We have also, with the increase in our size and activities learnt to contract out services such as IT and minor repairs to ensure that costs are kept to a minimum whilst all our essential services are kept running.

Tribute must be paid to those who have gone before us and been instrumental in the first 30 years of our formation and development. Full write ups on the role these important people have played appear in, 'The Norah Croft Story, 30 Years With Mind in Croydon', by Norah Croft which is available on our website.

## LOOKING BACK ON 30 YEARS

Norah was an unstoppable force. With her extraordinary energy and will, she made Mind in Croydon come into existence. She nurtured it from its beginnings into a busy and active charity helping many thousands of people. But though her active day to day participation slowed down as she allowed others to take over, she continued as a Trustee and our President well into her nineties. Finally, reluctantly we agreed to let her retire so she could pursue her university of the third age activities such as leading a conversational French group. We were so sorry to see her go. Norah was generous, kind, hard-working and wise. In her own words, 'working for Mind has been a wonderful experience and privilege. I shall be forever grateful for the friendships with all those who have been involved.' In fact, it was all of us who were lucky enough to know this inspirational lady who were the really privileged ones.

## THE NEXT 20 YEARS

### Floods, Burglaries and Other challenges

1996 was a year of change for Mind in Croydon, and in order to respond to the increasing pace of these changes we undertook a 'Strategic Review' of our organisation. This focussed our attention on the need to consolidate our services, reduce our dependence on statutory funding and secure long-term funding for our projects.

The Local Authority had been prioritising expenditure in the face of huge and under-funded increases in demand on its services. This put intense pressure on our services and we found ourselves filling gaps in mainstream provision, particularly in the Counselling Service and Fairfield House, and in addition we had to carry out extensive repairs to the Mind office building which was in a bad state of repair. All this meant that we had to stretch our resources to the limit.

1997 was a difficult year, with a flood at the Mind office and burglaries at both day care projects, this caused much stress, financial loss and work was disrupted. Anxieties about future funding were a constant backdrop to our work. We did end the year with a surplus but this was due to a serious staff shortage. We maintained most of our services but at a cost to remaining staff who worked many extra hours. We also depended on a number of regular volunteers doing unfamiliar tasks to cover the office at short notice.

At this point we appointed Cara Scott as full time office manager, which took the strain off Margot Croft and Norah who was still fully involved on a daily basis. The flexibility displayed by everyone during this difficult period became one of our organisation's major strengths.

In spite of the difficulties, we had some notable achievements. A third edition of our 'Guide to Mental Health' was launched in September and had a wide distribution. Mind staff gave much assistance in the production of the video about self-injury, "Visible Memories". Joint finance grants made possible the establishments of a Welfare Benefits Outreach project and an innovative Crisis Response Counselling project. Our services received appreciative feedback from their users, for many of whom they provided the major part of their care.

## **Mind becomes a Charitable Company limited by guarantee**

Floods and burglaries behind us, 1998 was a better year and saw some significant achievements in Mind in Croydon. Government Health Minister Paul Boateng attended the launch of a training pack to accompany the video 'Finding the Edge', produced by the Mental Health Users Group which was overseen by Richard Pacitti.

A new Mental Health Strategy for Croydon was an achievement in which all mental health agencies including Mind in Croydon, shared. The value of the work done by Mind was acknowledged and substantial funding was made available for a Community Outreach team based at Fairfield.

Because of the success of our services and the restrictions of 'Statutory services' there was a danger of our services becoming overwhelmed and put at risk. Boundaries had to be set.

Lack of core funding was a source of anxiety. This and use of premises led to a review of Mind's administration. There was a major constitutional change when Mind took the decision to become a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. This provided a more appropriate structure for what had become a substantial charitable business.

In 1999 Rory O'Kelly was appointed to the Welfare Benefits Service and the following year Pamela Johnson and Ann Hughes joined the Information Service. Both would prove to be key to the welcoming and positive reception team at Pampisford Road. Internet cafes were set up at Enterprise House and Fairfield House.

Due to the reduction in demand for places, it was decided to give up the management of the Normanton Road Group home, and it was handed over to be used for homeless families. Also

in view of falling sales, the cost of paying for a manageress to run it and competition from six other charity shops in Purley, the decision was made to close the Pampisford Road shop. It was also decided that the User Group should become an independent body.

## **A new Chief Executive is appointed (2000)**

In December 2000 Margot Croft retired. Margot had worked tirelessly for Mind in Croydon for so many years it was difficult to imagine the organisation without her. Always calm and organised, Margot went way beyond the requirements of her role as Chief Executive giving up her own free time on many occasions. A massive intellect gave Margot the ability to understand and operate successfully in the labyrinthine world of mental health and social services provision. This didn't distance her from people however. She managed to find the time and energy to look after everyone, caring equally for staff, clients and volunteers. A highly respected figure who worked incredibly hard, it was apparent Margot would be much missed. Her legacy was to provide an enviably solid foundation commanding the sort of respect required to build an organisation which had grown from small but fruitful beginnings.



*Richard Pacitti*

Richard Pacitti who had been with Mind since 1990 became Chief Executive. He had brought with him not just fundraising abilities and a degree in Law, but had also demonstrated an understanding of inter-personal and organisational complexities. One of his original references noted that he would be an 'excellent ambassador' for Mind and that has been borne out many times over the years. One of Richard's first roles was to begin to implement the business plan that Mind had drawn up the previous year. This entailed developing three key areas of work. The first was the recruitment and retention of staff. The level of funding we received was such that we struggled to afford the kind of salaries that people deserve for this valuable work. We either had to raise more money or reduce the level of service we provided. We knew that our services were highly valued by the people that used them. There were indications that the Health Authority was willing to start to resource our activities more realistically in the future. The second area of work was Fundraising. We received no core grant and implementation of our Business Plan required an extra £85,000 per annum. This funding was vital in enabling us to strengthen Mind's infrastructure and the improvement in the support and development of staff. This had to be seen as the responsibility of everyone in the agency. We set up a fundraising committee and this brought income from a range of new sources. The third area of work concerned the involvement of people who use our services. We had already made much progress in this area but we needed to develop new ways to ensure that people who used our services felt they were involved in how our services are designed and run. We worked also on a project to develop service users as trainers.



## **2001 – A Year of Innovation and Development**

At this time we launched the most comprehensive 'Guide to Mental Health Services' yet, now not just in book form, but on the internet. The increase in IT has been a major development for us as for other organisations. We have used it to improve our information service as well as encouraging online donations.

Extra funding at this time enabled the completion and publication of an important Welfare Benefits Research Project which we had begun in 1997 and later published in the International Journal of Social Psychiatry. In summary the findings showed that only a third of the people seen were getting their full entitlement while the other two thirds were entitled to extra benefits. This helped us secure extra funding for the Welfare Benefits Advice Service, enabling closer working with Health and Social Services. Participation in the 'Talking Therapies' review, at this time, resulted in more resources for our Counselling Service thus enabling us to reduce our waiting list. The 'ArtHouse' Project based at Fairfield helped us to achieve our constant goal of user involvement as it was developed by members of the club, with the aim of producing a video and CD of music, visual art and poetry condensed into a user/survivor information pack.

The newly founded fundraising committee gave structure to the process, this brought in income from a range of new sources: more people making regular donations, extra income from the 'Drugs Action' team and Vodafone, and someone running the Marathon for us. This trend of people making huge personal efforts to help raise funds for Mind has continued right into our 50th year when Keeley Alvarado, a key member of our counselling administration staff has achieved the magnificent achievement of raising over £2,500.

The single most significant change of 2001/2 was that, after many months of negotiation, the Croydon Health Authority approved our bid for Consolidation Funding. The extra £160,000 a year meant that our strategic plan could be further implemented and developed. In September of this year, Peter Beckett took over from John Nurse as our chairman. His experience in the world of business proved immensely valuable to us. Also, John Canning was appointed as Director of Client Services. This was a key post in our organisation, and our new structure was much more effective at enabling us to implement much of our strategic plan. This year we had to cope with



*Peter Beckett*

changes in the structures of statutory agencies and we now played an active role in the Mental Health Partnership and were involved with the transition from Health Authority to Primary Care Trust. It was our concern that these structural changes made a real difference to the people who used services locally. This year's developments included us tendering successfully for the provision of mental health advocacy services. This service now run by Hannah Besely with advocates Nichola Harris and Angie Phillips is renowned for the team's high level of expertise, their tenacity in seeing a piece of work through to completion and their understanding of the labyrinthine workings of the Mental Health Act and now the Care Act. They have become a key part of ensuring the rights of individuals with mental health problems in Croydon and they

are highly respected by other professionals both at the Bethlem Royal Hospital which they visit weekly, and in the community. This is patient and painstaking work often with extremely vulnerable individuals and we are lucky to have such skilled and compassionate people helping clients.

## Films, videos and DVDS

2001/2 also saw the successful launch of our new film 'Pillar to Post' on the subject of Dual Diagnosis which was recommended by the Department of Health and resulted in good sales, helping to boost funds. Our film about self-injury, 'Visible Memories,' was featured in the 'Basement Project' and was used in a Channel 5 discussion programme on the subject of self-harm. Richard who has always been the driving force behind the films spoke about, 'Visible Memories,' film at the National Mind Conference this year. Our development work on the next film, on spirituality and mental health, 'Hard to Believe', made us think about training opportunities in the area of mental health. An important development in training was our work with Hear Us in supporting the growth and development of Mental Health Advisors. In later years, production of these films developed, allowing us to produce a DVD version of our film on self-injury and leading to a distribution deal for USA and Canada. This early activity led to us many years later receiving funding from the City Parochial Foundation towards a film on the subject of sexuality and mental health, 'Unspoken'. The films not only allow us to explore subjects which can have an element of taboo around them, but are also an asset when our staff go out to give talks on a range of mental health issues to a variety of audiences



## Partnership Working (2002)

Another area we developed further around 2002 was the partnership working between us and the staff of other voluntary and statutory agencies. For example Asha Tait's work as a Community Psychiatric Nurse who used to come in one morning a week to do assessments within our Counselling Service, our Furniture Service's relationship with the Lennard Road homelessness team and the "surgery" work that Welfare benefits staff undertook within the local mental health resource centres. We provided placements for a number of social work and nursing students and many of our volunteer counsellors had training placements with us, and we liaised with a number of colleges and universities. Richard sat as a member of the local Mental Health Partnership Group, which is responsible for developing all local mental health services. We were also represented on local groups concerning mental health day care, advocacy and training. We attended a number of meetings including the local Community Care Forum and the group working to develop the local Compact, which is a way of improving working relationships between voluntary organisations and the Health Authority and the Council.

We were also developing our influence outside the borough, working with other local Mind Associations and National Mind. Since 2002 Richard had been working with a group developing

guidelines on self-harm for the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE). This group was facilitated by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and had a broad range of experience and expertise, from Toxicology to the Samaritans. When the guidelines were finished they provided evidence-based advice to a wide audience including A&E departments and the Ambulance Service. Richard joined the Mental Health and Spirituality Forum hosted by the national health promotion charity Mentality. We met people from a range of faith communities and developed a relationship with the National Institute for Mental Health about how our film about Spirituality and Mental Health could be promoted and distributed.

It was also in 2002 that we took on Jacqui Dyce as a Welfare Benefits Manager. She was later to become Manager of Fairfield and along with her Deputy there, Arlene Foster, has embraced every challenge thrown at her (and there have been many!) and always triumphed with Arlene's steadfast help. At the top of their agenda has unfailingly been the good of clients and responding to their needs. Fairfield under Jacqui's leadership and an expert team has gone from strength to strength, growing in both the number of clients it serves as well as the different ways in which it serves them.

### **Valuing Diversity (2003)**

In 2003 we focussed on Valuing Diversity, which is one of the themes that enable us to meet our charitable objectives. We work in a geographical area, which exhibits considerable diversity, and we tried to reflect this in the way we responded to the needs of a diverse population. Tony Horton was appointed as our Equal Opportunities Officer, his role being to consult with management, staff and service users in order to improve equal opportunities within Mind in Croydon. This is a role he has carried through with dedication, and commitment. By monitoring information about people using our services, we obtained a picture of the age, gender and level of disability of the people to whom we offer support. Analysis of these data showed that take up of our services by different groups was very good.

We received £5,000 from Mind's LMA fund for a project for members at the Fairfield who had children, and in 2004, the Parenting Group was born. This was later expanded with a grant from the Parenting Fund. The initial grant helped us to purchase items to make the Fairfield safe and appealing for babies and toddlers such as play mats, a small bouncy castle and other outside games to make use of the lovely garden at Fairfield. In particular we hoped that this would attract younger members to the club as this group was under-represented.

In 2008, this work led to us being highly commended in the Charity Awards, a national award supported by the Charities Aid Foundation and The Times, for our work with parents.

Another way at this time that we encouraged diversity was to have members of staff who could speak different languages and volunteer counsellors who could speak French, German, Norwegian, Gaelic, Urdu and Punjabi. We have always striven to have a diverse staff and volunteer team to cater for as many people as possible.



## Quality (2004)

This year Mind in Croydon achieved Quality Management in Mind. This provided a clear set of standards against which all local Mind associations could measure their performance and improve all aspects of their work. As well as being part of the consultation process to produce this quality mark, we worked hard to achieve it and continue to this day to hold level 3 (the highest level possible) of "Quality Management in Mind" and therefore have also achieved "Charity Commission endorsement". John Canning our Director of Client Services who brought valuable experience from the NHS, was instrumental in spearheading this and other projects through. We also started the work necessary to achieve the Investors in People quality mark. This applied not only to our front line services but also to our policies, procedures and infrastructure. Another way that we ensured quality was by listening to and involving our clients. Service users take an active part in the day to day running of what we do and are represented at every level: by being Trustees and Board members, by being involved in recruitment of staff and by going on to become paid members of our work force.

Also this year we developed the area of our work dealing with helping people into employment, be that paid or voluntary or to help them access training. Sue Coleman had for some time been doing excellent work helping clients volunteering at Enterprise House in Crystal Palace, and running a Friday Job Club. Our Furniture Service was also based here. At this time, the Mind at Work project aimed at people at work whose jobs were at risk because of mental health issues was also piloted. As the volume of our work increased we had to consider increasing the space available for our services and office work and we purchased Orchard House in South Croydon to enable us to expand and develop our work around employment and social inclusion. Later on we were to employee Abbi Greene and thereafter, Caprisha Hansford who along with Peter Phillips completed this knowledgeable team all of whom had the compassion, patience and understanding to help people into the challenging world of work.

## Furniture Service (2005)

The Furniture Service run by Pam Dickens, ably assisted by drivers, Dennis Bagshaw and Martin Frost, had been doing a steady job in providing furniture to those given flats by the council. The service was doing so well that we purchased a new van with a tail lift enabling safer working practices. In 2005, we performed a total of 197 deliveries. This provided an excellent and environmentally friendly service by taking in donated goods and making use of them by giving them to clients at no cost. For many people we provided all the equipment needed to start a home including cooking and eating utensils, crockery and every sort of furnishing, even carpet. By this time, the service was looking to diversify. Having a strong interest in soft furnishings, not least because of the amount of cushions and curtains being donated, Pam



*Dennis Bagshaw and Martin Frost*

decided to expand into the making and alteration of curtains and, in new premises at Orchard House, set up a workshop where clients could train. Soon, Orchard House had a room with a beautiful cutting and measuring table and some lovely swags and tails, as good as any in John Lewis were being produced and displayed.

## **Sports and Healthy Lifestyles Group, Sailing and Boxercise (2005/6)**

This year saw the piloting of a successful Healthy Lifestyles Group for people in New Addington. We had long been interested in the benefits of active lifestyles activities. We had been undertaking sailing trips for a while, when in 2004, Adrian Clark, one of our welfare benefits advisers inspired clients to go sailing on a 33ft yacht in one of the busiest waterways in the world, the Solent. Not only did Adrian help people to find their sea legs but got them all mucking in, cooking wonderful meals and looking after each other. Adrian has always been involved in cycling, caving, canoeing and any number of other sports, and with his enthusiasm and expertise encouraged staff members and volunteers to push their own boundaries along with clients. These trips provided many people with the experience of a lifetime and as Ann Soppitt, one of our members who has been with us the longest said at the time, 'we can't wait for the next one.' There have been many other trips including on a 57ft ketch and often with people living happily on sailing boats together for several days. This includes a 5-day trip to France. Many of those going have gained Competent Crew certificates – an internationally recognised qualification – and all have thoroughly the experience and found new strengths in themselves through our sailing project.



*The Sailing Group in 2007*



*Duke McKenzie's Boxercise*

Sporting activities again came to the fore in 2007 which saw the introduction of "Boxercise". Mind in Croydon teamed up with the three times world champion boxer, Duke McKenzie, to run a project using boxing training techniques to improve physical and mental well-being. The idea was developed by one of our welfare benefits advisers, Michel Thizy, and could not have happened if it had not been for his input and that of Consultant Psychiatrist, Dr Deji Ayonrinde, who undertook health screenings of participants, took part in the project himself and promoted it to his colleagues. The programme, funded by Croydon Primary Care Trust, operated under the auspices of Mind over ten-week periods at Duke McKenzie's boxing academy. A structured programme of boxing training and circuit work aimed to improve health and fitness, and to increase confidence, enabling people to adopt a healthier lifestyle. The results of the programme proved impressive with most participants losing weight and committing to adopting a healthier lifestyle. The project was instrumental in helping National Mind achieve funding for the 'Time to Change' initiative, which included funding for our Active Minds Service from Comic Relief. This high profile service has featured on national television,

including The One Show and Match of the Day. Our Active Minds project run by Dora Crook ably assisted by Matthew O’Gorman and Peter Rogers has expanded with a busy programme of varied activities which have included football (including women’s football), golf, cycling, and tennis. This incredibly dedicated team is renowned for the way it inspires, cajoles and supports people to get involved and look after themselves. The team has branched into many areas helping people with hugely difficult lifestyle changes as smoking cessation. The work they do is so important it was recognised in 2016 by being part of the launch of the Heads Together campaign. At the launch, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry had a go at sparring with Duke McKenzie to raise awareness of the importance of talking about mental health.

### **Advocacy Service expands (2006)**

Our Advocacy Service which began in 2002 had for some time been hampered by shortage of resources and was managed by Rory O’Kelly with the help of an experienced advocate, Andy Forey. During 2006 however, with a successful bid to the King’s Fund for a Parenting Advocate, Nichola Harris was appointed. She proved to be tenacious in fighting for the rights of parents with a mental health problem. In many cases, these mothers and fathers were constantly examined by various professionals in relation to their parenting abilities but had few people to stand up for them and ensure they could make their voices heard. This funding was a considerable boost to the service which first worked with clients to identify options and choose their own objectives and then helped them to put these forward to others and to achieve them.

This year proved to be very challenging due to the fact that three of our long standing staff left including Noreen Griffiths, who had been head of the Counselling Service for many years. They had all made an invaluable contribution to the success of the service. Also a number of our volunteer counsellors moved on into paid work as counsellors. Despite these changes we were still able to provide a full counselling service due to the teamwork and commitment of everyone in the service. Special thanks were due to Kath, Asha, and Diane who worked extremely hard to maintain a high quality counselling service. The service was soon fully staffed again and looking forward to a year of positive expansion. Janet Hughes was appointed to head the Counselling Service in place of Noreen, and Ritu Awal also joined the service

Our Helpline and Information Service was significantly improved with our web version of the guide to Mental Services with an online database and an alphabetical quick search option.

This year also saw us win a CSIP (Care Services Improvement Partnership) Positive Practice Award. These awards celebrate excellence in health & social care.

### **Mind in Croydon Allotment (2007)**

As we entered the year 2007 a project was facilitated by the insurance company Direct Line in Croydon who chose to support us following an idea developed by Mark Armstrong. This was to acquire an allotment in South Croydon. At first there were rumblings of dissent from some



allotmenters who doubted our abilities to maintain the plot. It took some work to persuade the management committee that we could sustain a well kept and productive piece of land. They clearly wondered if a mental health charity would be reliable. We were in the end given a hugely overgrown site which had been covered in fruit trees and sadly neglected. Not daunted, we love a challenge! Staff of Direct Line worked alongside Mark, our other staff and members of Fairfield and Enterprise to prepare the ground. At one point, it was so wet, one of the trucks we had used to haul out the roots of an unproductive tree got thoroughly stuck in the mud. Nevertheless we got the ground cleared for spring planting and ours is now regarded as one of the best allotments by the other allotment holders, taking a hand to help water their plots and priding ourselves on being good neighbours. In 2008 we had a mystery crop failure. One of our volunteers investigated to find that manure spread on the plot was contaminated with a type of weedkiller used to kill thistles. Consumed (and having no effect) by the horses, it is still present and active in their manure. No harm was done and that year and we were still growing over 50 types of fruit and veg including the exotic Tomatillos, like a tomato and most commonly used to make salsa. Our invaluable volunteer Chris has co-ordinated planting and growing with his enthusiastic team of volunteers for many years.



*The Allotment in South Croydon*

## **Fairfield House Lottery Grant (2007)**

We were lucky enough to secure a £230,000 Lottery grant to expand and refurbish Fairfield House so that the building could have fully accessible toilet facilities and improved access for disabled people. This was a major achievement particularly as in that year only 17% of applications received funding. It was also a major headache for staff and members. This was because, Jacqui Dyce the Manager and Arlene Foster (later to become Deputy Manager) decamped lock, stock and barrel to temporary accommodation at the Friend's Meeting House and Lantern Hall. The Fairfield is a complex and busy enough undertaking at the best of times, but it was a great achievement by all concerned that they managed not to have any break in service while the works were being done. Their reward was a bright, brand new building which had none of that old institutional look about it. The Club reopened in November 2007, the ribbon being cut by long term supporter and local resident Ronnie Corbett. We were now able to offer conference and meeting space at Fairfield to bring much needed funds to the project.

## **Documentary Film Group (2008/9)**

In 2008/9 the Documentary Film Group running from Fairfield were extremely active learning the technical skills to edit and produce their own films. Perhaps the perfect example of user involvement, a grant from Film London gave members the sophisticated equipment required to produce top quality films. Members now had the opportunity to write, direct, film and present

their own content which they uploaded to Mind in Croydon's channel on YouTube. As Terry, a driving force in the group said, "it has been unbelievable, how do you compare this to our old games of ludo snakes & ladders and other board games in our entertainment cupboard." Now our members were able directly to share their thoughts and words with the world.

In 2008 we welcomed Annie Grimwade who during her six years with us set up memorable events: the yearly Positive Steps charity walk around Lloyd Park and Mind Rocks a charity music event in 2011 both of which brought together clients, professionals and staff in the common purpose of raising money and celebrating personal achievements.

It was in this year that against stiff competition from much larger bodies including statutory ones, we were finalists at the NHS London Regional Health & Social Care Awards 2009 at BAFTA in London. This award was followed up with us being a National Winner for our "portfolio of innovation" highlighting our many innovative projects which go a long way to challenging stereotypes.

## **Men's Group (2009)**

This was the year our Social Networking Service was launched at Fairfield. It was also the year the Men's Group were invited to the Palace of Westminster to meet MP Vince Cable. They were also featured as part of Radio 4's You and Yours programme talking about the importance of the group and why it was vital to them to have a men only space in which they could share issues of concern. Talking of men, Fairfield members met the world's fastest man, Usain Bolt when he visited the Club together with other Jamaican Olympic athletes. This included the relay team's Michael Fraters, who happens to be Arlene Foster's nephew. This was also the year that our counselling service piloted an anxiety management group. This led, with the arrival in 2010 of a new Counselling Service Manager, Jan Stanton to the setting up of an Anger Control Training Group. These groups supplement our one to one counselling service and help us demonstrate one of our greatest strengths, that is, to react to need. The latest incarnation of this ability to morph into whatever is needed has been evidenced by our launching, in our 50th year our Hoarding Prevention Project. This could not have been done without the superb counselling team lead by Jan, who has been ably supported by administrators Keeley Alvarado, Jenny Athanasiadis and Alex Wyld and counsellors Ritu Awal, Louise Kyffin, Phil Packman and Zubaida Lohiya. All of these outstanding staff have responded to requests for new and innovative groups with a will. They have created and given presentations galore, collated veritable mountains of stats, recruited and supported endless numbers of volunteer counsellors and through it all have stayed calm, collected and welcoming to all the many clients who phone or pass through our doors seeking recovery. Many volunteer counsellors to whom we are also indebted have said this is the best of organisations to have a placement.

## Norah Croft MBE becomes President (2010)

In 2010 and still active as a Board member at 95 years old, Norah decided it was time to enjoy a well earned rest and stand down from the Board. She was awarded the presidency of Mind in Croydon in appreciation of all the wonderful work she contributed to our charity. She is remembered for her hard work, consistency, compassion, powers of persuasion and huge wisdom.

## Enterprise Shop Changes (2011)

In 2011, as part of our ongoing strategy to become more self-sufficient in funding ourselves, we decided that Enterprise should no longer be a vocational rehabilitation centre with a shop attached. Instead, it became a purely retail outlet specifically to raise funds for our projects. For those wishing to get back into work, our Employment Support Service headed by Peter Phillips with Abbie Greene and Sue Coleman were already doing a fabulous job obtaining people placements at companies such as Marks and Spencer and Direct Line. We have never looked back on this natural evolution of the charity, as the Enterprise Shop is in the vibrant shopping district of Crystal Palace and raises significant funding. Since then, this strategy has been expanded with a major, and we mean major, refit. One of our strengths and very real foundations is how many of our properties we own and part of the strategy was to maximise their efficiency. The whole building has been gutted carrying out essential repairs and remodelling. When it reopens in 2018, it will provide rental income from a luxuriously fitted two-bedroomed flat above the shop and a much larger retail space. This year also saw the return of previous staff member, Emma Turner who some could say is a glutton for punishment as she took on the role of Business Development and Service Delivery Manager. Her specific remit is as overall manager of services as well as increasing income and there's nothing she likes more than spending hours over a good old tender process. Or, come to that, a good old quality process as this was the year the counselling service worked hard to gain accreditation with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the Advocacy team gained the Quality Performance Mark (QPM). Emma can be seen regularly visiting all projects and is thoroughly adept at looking after everybody. Her caring nature, energy, and in-depth knowledge of all our services is much appreciated and is instrumental in gluing together an ever growing organisation.



*The Enterprise Shop*

## Mindmatch and another visit to Parliament (2012)

In a long history, Mind in Croydon has often been invited to advise on mental health issues and our Chief Executive, Richard Pacitti was asked to be part of a group answering the questions posed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Mental Health, a cross party group of Peers and MPs. This was part of proposed NHS reforms. Developing such relationships and being 'out there' is one of the ways in which our charity remains strong and influential. Another is providing excellent services whatever way they are commissioned and this was the year we



responded to the personalisation programme by providing the Mindmatch service. A service largely directed by clients who have been given their own budgets and ask for one to one support which is given from our Fairfield location. Also, in response to huge need amongst carers, we welcomed Angela Christinis who with her extensive knowledge as a trained social worker was later to run our busy Carers' Service at Fairfield. In 2012 we said goodbye to Rory O'Kelly who retired as Manager of our Welfare Benefits Advice and Advocacy services. Ready to champion the rights of our clients Rory's knowledge and wise judgement in complex cases was always welcome. Mary Frost-Gaskin stepped effortlessly into his shoes and with her eye for detail and tenacity in seeing a job through, she has lead the service on to even more success. This includes a much requested form filling service operated with calm and meticulous efficiency by Tom Goddard and the achievement of the AQS quality mark to reflect the excellence Mary and her team all bring to their roles as well as their compassion and immense expertise.

## Day Care Survey (2013/14)

This was the year we undertook a survey of peoples' experiences of day care services resulting in the issue in 2014 of our report, 'Somewhere to Go, Something to Do.' The launch event for this was attended by two Croydon MPs and in response to the survey, Mind launched the 'Hub' at Fairfield. As well as Jacqui and Arlene, David Beall, Veniece Sardison, Valerie Williams and James Mann complete the present team at Fairfield with Helena Sutherland working on Mindmatch. The team's calm, cheerful, knowledgeable and understanding dealings with clients are much appreciated. They run interesting groups and encourage clients in all their endeavours so that we are always over-subscribed. They also help many clients in their own homes and outside in the community. The Hub is operational on Saturdays when many other services are closed, this is an opportunity for clients to share a meal with others and obtain practical help and advice. This year saw other changes, when the Welfare Benefit team moved from Purley to South Croydon. Physical health was also on our minds during this year when we continued Positive Steps, our charity walk through Lloyds Park and where the footballers who are part of our Active Minds project saw considerable successes on the pitch.



*Somewhere to go, Something to do*

Another significant advantage was gained this year with the appointment of Cat Ayres in our Purley offices. Cat answers infoline calls with care and attention as well as welcoming visitors. Cat has also brought considerable IT skills to the organisation as well as an eye for design. Both clients and staff benefit from her ability to turn scribbled notes and boring text into eyecatching leaflets, easy to digest annual reports and magnificent presentations. She is instrumental in ensuring that our social networking sites spread the news about our services and that our website is perfectly maintained, and constantly up to date.

2013 was also the year we launched a new shop in Addiscombe. Peter Phillips was instrumental in organising the refit of what used to be a lighting shop and had to be completely refurbished.

This is no easy task, dealing with builders and being under time restraints. It is now one of the major arms of our fund-raising activities run by the tireless and ever cheerful Anne Parrish and her army of volunteers who are renowned on their busy high street for having a constant stream of excellent stock and the most wonderful window displays to celebrate every occasion. Their Christmas displays are legendary. Running a charity shop is an incredibly difficult thing to do. You never know what stock is coming in, mountains of things have to be sorted and you have to have a good eye for what sells and what will just be taking up valuable space. It is tiring, physical work, but Anne who is always ready with a smile and a welcome, works miracles both to raise funds for Mind in Croydon and promote its work. The funds they raise help us to carry out innovative projects for which we cannot get funding elsewhere. In many cases however, once we have proved their worth, are taken up by other funders.

## Richard Pacitti chalks up 25 years at Mind (2015/16)



*25th Year Celebrations*

This year saw Mind's Chief Executive, Richard Pacitti, celebrate his 25th year with the charity. He has seen many changes, not least being our income rising from £300k to £1.5 million. Financial security was one of the goals he has worked towards and owning more of our own properties, six in total, has given us a level of independence that many other charities don't have. This however does not come without a cost and 2016 saw the start of a major re-fit of the Enterprise Shop and the creation of a flat above. It is hoped this will maximise our unrestricted funds. This year also saw Mind in Croydon chosen as the Mayor's charity by Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice who used the year to promote the issue of mental health. Minding Money, ably operated by Laila Joarder was a new project started this year and funded by

Comic Relief to help clients develop their money management skills including managing their finances online. Minding Money came under our Welfare Benefits Service which was also in this year awarded the prestigious Advice Quality Standard with the team praised as, 'experts in their subject area.' As well as this new service, Mind in Croydon also took on the Friends in Need project, providing opportunities for its members to undertake activities such as 'Animal Therapy' at Vauxhall City Farm and selling their craft items at local fairs. This service is run by Sarah Strong who has helped so many clients to socialise, attending films and enjoying making craft items.

## Hoarding (2017)

Mind in Croydon has always innovated and sought to bring new approaches to helping people with their mental health. Our latest project is a Hoarding service to help the many people who have issues with de-cluttering. This exciting initiative has sparked a lot of interest, featuring on a BBC news slot and



attracting the attention of housing associations and other providers. Participants are provided with counselling to identify why they collect items and what it would be like to consider letting things go. We also introduce clients to De-Clutter Buddies to provide one to one support if they feel that would be helpful.

## **The Board of Mind in Croydon**

We have been so lucky with our Board members over the years. We have mentioned Peter Beckett, Luege Minchella, Tony Horton, Jo Leck and John Pestell. We also currently have the expertise of David Martin-Clark whose legal understanding is much appreciated as is his knowledge of counselling. Aleck Thomson whose connections with other Minds helps us in partnership working and Tariq Salim whose understanding of the world of business helps us to be more business-like in our long term strategies. Our most recent Board member, Ben Ellis who has connections with charities other than Mind is bringing fresh knowledge to us.

## **ABSENT FRIENDS**

So, that brings us up to date after 50 years of operation. We have been lucky enough to have had so many wonderful people associated with us over the years. It is with huge sadness that we had to say goodbye to the following people who passed away either while they were actively contributing as members of staff, volunteers or supporters of our charity, or shortly after they left us. They will be missed but will go on in happy memories of many good times spent with them:

Maurice Blaevoet

John Canning

Ronnie Corbett

Norah Croft

Edna Franklin

Martin Frost

Ann Hughes

Barbara Mitchell

Jean Wallace

Liz Wilkinson



## Where will we go in the future?

Mind in Croydon has never shied away from the difficult and complex issues. If clients need something we'll work towards it and pull out all the stops if we can make it happen. The thing that is most clear however in compiling this summary of our 50 years in operation is that users of our service primarily need safe places to go where they can be themselves and take part in the sort of socialising and activities that all human beings need. Also that they need enough income to keep going, help and advice when needed and meaningful activities. We pride ourselves on continuity of service, but also on innovating and trying new things in response to what our clients tell us. Providing such services is a pleasure and knowing that people really benefit from us being there for them is a two way street we are very happy to travel. We look forward to our next 50 years.

One of our strengths has been our good relationships with the Statutory bodies, namely Health and Social Services. This dates from our early beginnings when many professional workers were among our founder members. We have fostered these relationships and our aim has always been to work in partnership with them in supporting people. We consider our role as a voluntary organisation to be complementary to theirs as statutory workers. Mind in Croydon has always been fortunate in attracting the long term dedication of committed people, as trustees, as staff and as volunteers. This is one of our greatest strengths, and a direct result of it is that there is a noticeable atmosphere of warmth and caring in all our premises and projects which is appreciated by all concerned.

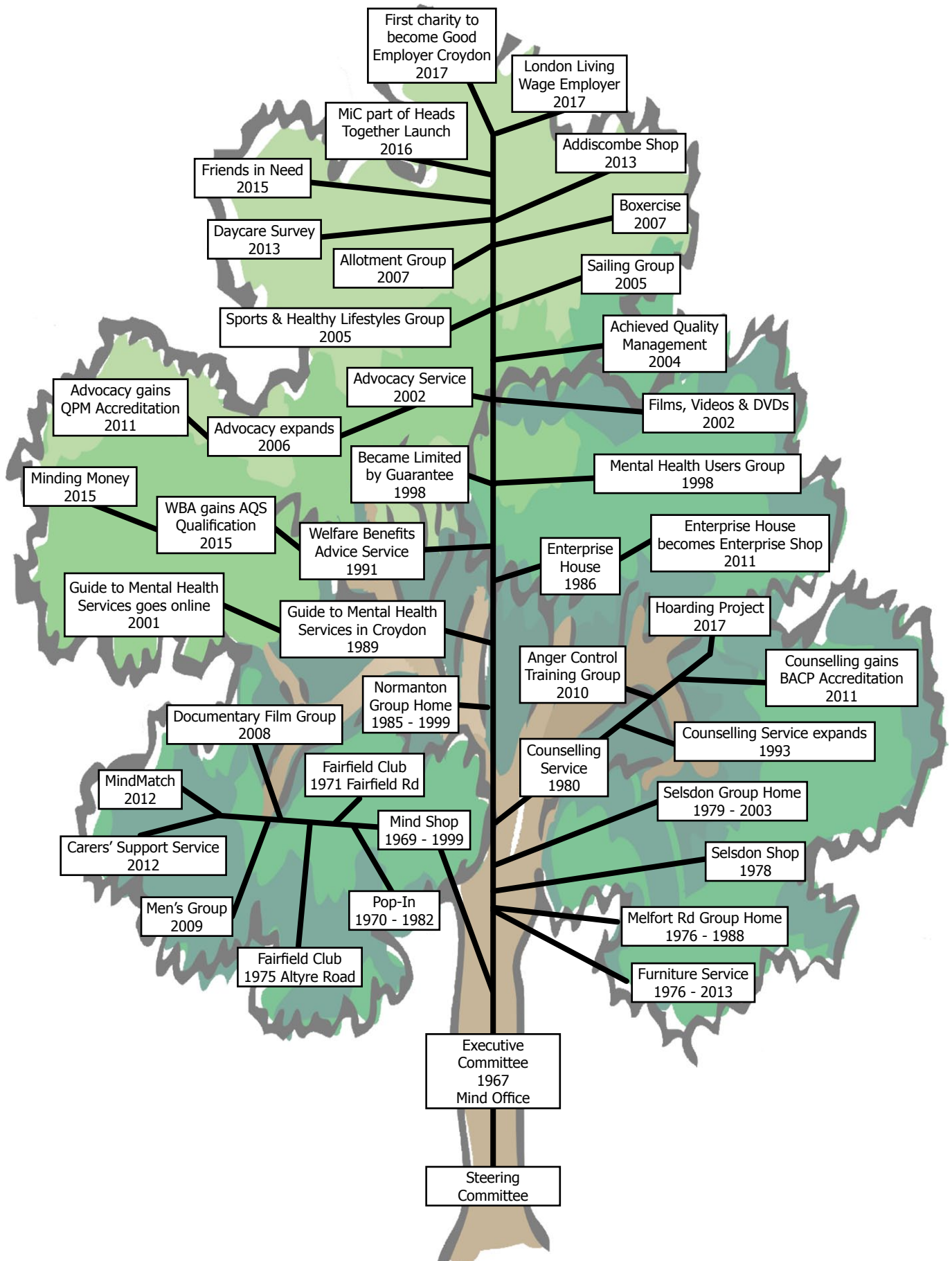
Apologies if anyone has been missed out, so many people over the decades have been associated with Mind and played such a huge part in our achievements. If anyone hasn't been specifically mentioned, it's not because their contribution was any less or not recognised. Our clients have helped so much in our success. That our service users keep coming back to us, that they tell everyone they meet how much they appreciate being part of Mind, that they continue to thrive and be active members of their community, that they volunteer and help each other is one of the main pillars of Mind in Croydon's success. To all the thousands of people who have been instrumental in keeping a great charity operating thank you, all of you for giving so freely of your time, and helping to keep Mind in Croydon the great organisation it is.

## In conclusion, a word from our Chairperson

**"I am honoured to have become Chairperson in the charity's 50th year. I thank all those past and present who have made the charity what it is today. I hope that with the increased openness about mental health as illustrated by the young Royals that I can help the charity start its next half century with a secure foundation."**

*John Pestell, Chairman*

## Tree of Development



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**time to change**

let's end mental health discrimination



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April 2015 - March 2018



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**Maudsley Charity**  
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