

Never too busy



Caring in The Hamptons

The Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care 1974-
2014

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1974-2014

John Green

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Preface

In 2001 the town of Richmond-upon-Thames had Britain's highest per capita average income. The site of an ancient royal palace, surrounded by wooded parks, enjoying a scenic riverside location and with a bustling shopping centre and social life, it seemed the very model of an affluent community.

Therefore it might be surprising that this borough, only 22 square miles in area, should find itself in need of an organisation such as the Voluntary Care Group. With the multitude of local charities and of resources from government and the local authority, what place could there be for a support group relying almost exclusively on the work of volunteers?

The answer lies in the detail of this broad canvas. While it is true that the borough has some areas of considerable affluence, other districts are relatively disadvantaged and pockets of deprivation do occur. Even today, two areas of Hampton are ranked as the most deprived in the borough and, of Hampton's population, 8% are in lone parent families and 7% are pensioners. These two groups are especially likely to be low income households with a limited circle of friendships.

Lack of income or social contact leads to isolation. If you are lucky, you will have a network of relatives and acquaintances who will not only provide continuing day-to-day friendship but who will also help out in an emergency or be available for routine tasks such as baby-sitting. If you are not so fortunate, you may be one of those numerous groups of people who find such everyday tasks as shopping or collecting a prescription beyond their financial means or physical abilities. Included are those who have mobility problems, one-parent families with no extended family support, newcomers to an area where they have not had time to build contacts and those suffering from some form of emotional disorder. Such groups often acquire yet more problems as a result of their isolation – a pensioner unable to shop regularly may have a poor diet and thereby becomes vulnerable to illness, a young mother unable to meet others becomes seriously depressed.

Alleviating social isolation is not just a question of making yet another demand on funds from government or borough agencies. For once, the solution does not have to involve money; sometimes it is just a matter of good neighbourliness. This is where the Hampton and Hampton Hill Voluntary Care Group (VCG) has found its niche. Its complete remit is listed on page 57 but essentially its goal is one of making the link between those who need assistance and those, mainly volunteers, who are willing to give it.

In writing this short history of the VCG, I have been struck not only by the immediacy of the need - a prescription needs to be collected today not next month, a lonely mother or widower needs a chat today not two weeks hence - but also by the extraordinarily rich and diverse volunteer resource that our community is able to draw upon. Some of the VCG volunteers are well-placed both physically and financially but many others are in much the same condition as those they assist except that they have the advantage of a car, or a supportive partner, or a wide circle of friends. All that is needed is an ability to match the needs of one group with the willingness to provide of another. This is the job that the VCG has assumed in the Hamptons for the last 35 years and this is the story of how that role was assumed in one community.

Note on abbreviations – to avoid constant repetition of the phrases “Hampton & Hampton Hill Community Care Group” and “Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care Group”, the terms CCG and VCG have been used as appropriate. Both names were superseded in 2011 by a new title of “Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care” and a new abbreviation of H&HHVC”.

Rising to the challenge

In the early nineteen-seventies Hampton and Hampton Hill formed a typical “leafy London suburb” where the general impression was of a good to high standard of living. In a population of 24,000, two-thirds owned their own houses, unemployment levels were well below the level for the rest of London and the population density was only one third for that of London as a whole.

However, beneath the apparent affluence there were potential sources of actual and future concern. While the opportunities for employment in the area were limited, the transport infrastructure for those seeking jobs outside the area was poor. For those remaining in the borough during the day there was no community centre or publicly-funded place to meet.

Shopping facilities were not evenly distributed. In some areas there were no shops at all, certainly no supermarkets. Local authority services were provided out of the centres of Richmond and Twickenham, only a few miles away but to which there were no direct train services. Some specialist services, such as mental hospitals, were ten miles away and could not be reached directly by public transport. The three secondary schools in the area were situated next to each other, making them quite remote for some parents in the area. Nursery education was limited so mothers could not go out to work.

All these factors were giving rise to increasing social isolation, especially amongst women and the retired. Being at home all day, with poor public transport limiting opportunities to get out, perhaps with young children to care for, maybe even an elderly relative to look after, meant that many women had little opportunity to get out and meet friends or even attend local groups. Nationally about 12% of new mothers experience depression thereby increasing their isolation and this figure most likely also applied to Hampton.

Older men were affected as well, especially the recently-bereaved. Elderly people often identify social inclusion as important to their quality of life and independence. They want to have good relationships with family and friends, to have a role, to feel useful and to be treated with respect.

Although older people living alone are most likely to experience social isolation, those who live in residential care are also at risk, especially if they lack opportunities to participate in the community outside the confines of the care home.

Besides these general factors, which would apply to any community, Hampton had a particular and very significant potential issue. In the sixties and seventies, large areas of Hampton were simply derelict, having been the location of the once-flourishing flower and vegetable nurseries (in 1900 there had been 600 nurseries but by 1973 only 8 were left). The government and local authority saw these waste areas as ripe for housing development. By 1972 the government had announced that 1000 acres of former nursery land could be released for development and gave permission for the building of up to 1100 new homes. In practice this would mean that the population of the Nurserylands area would increase from 2950 at the time of the 1971 census, to 4000 ten years later, to 6500 in 2001.

Many of these homes were designated for families from inner London boroughs. These families had been accustomed to having buses at or near the doorstep, an underground round the corner, a choice of train stations and a wide variety of shops. Also available nearby had been long established pubs and social activities, cinemas, dentists and family planning clinics. None of these would be available, in the short term at least, to the newcomers to Hampton.

Amongst the caring professions in the Hamptons alarm bells began to ring. These newcomers would want access to essential facilities that they had been used to receiving. Who would provide these? Would an area such as the Nurserylands, currently lacking even the most necessary facilities such as telephone and post boxes, be able to support the increased need? In addition, there would be a greater number of elderly and single people who would need physical and social support especially in this isolated area.

The issue was noticed in two main ways. Firstly, local doctors were already facing calls from housebound patients who, for example, simply could not get out to collect prescriptions. These patients just might not

have any way to get their medicine unless it was picked up by a friend or neighbour. Secondly, health workers and clergy were facing an increase in the number of residents who suffered from some form of depression. These two problems had always existed in the community but the prospect of having a few thousand more potential cases focussed local minds on the need to supplement whatever help the government and borough could provide.

By the early seventies the Hampton Council of Churches had begun to think that something had to be done to address these problems and the midwife who brought the CCG into the world was, some say, the Rev. J. Cotgrove of All Saints. But two figures in particular emerged as the leading lights - Hannah Stanton from St James' Hampton Hill and the Rev. Dennis Green, curate at All Saints, Hampton - and they quickly involved a third key figure, David Woodroffe, a local G.P.

Hannah Stanton



Hannah Stanton

The title of this history of the VCG is paraphrased from an obituary of Hannah Stanton by her friend Dennis Green. He wrote that that he never recalled an instance when Hannah said she was too busy to take on yet another commitment. Hannah was a particularly forceful character, described as “fierce and firm” by one colleague and as “a legend in the Hamptons” by another, and her life story forms a backdrop to her work at the CCG.

She was born in 1913, the daughter of Sir Thomas Stanton, director of

engineering at the National Physical Laboratory. She was educated at Summerleigh School in Teddington and during the Second World War Hannah and the family survived their house being demolished by a plane crashing on it. She went to London University where she read English and subsequently took a social sciences diploma.

She trained as an almoner in London and Liverpool and in 1945 worked in refugee camps in Austria. In 1953, at the comparatively late age of 40, she started to read Theology at Somerville College, Oxford and on completing her degree in 1956 went on holiday to visit her brother, Timothy, who was a missionary in South Africa. In December 1956 she took over as warden of the Anglican missionary settlement, Tumelong, in a black township, Lady Selborne, on the edge of Pretoria.

She became increasingly involved in the lives of black Africans, especially those in Lady Selborne. In the aftermath of the Sharpeville massacre in March 1960 the suspicions of the authorities began to fall on white liberals. On 30th March 1960 she was arrested for supporting the black cause and was imprisoned for several weeks in solitary confinement in a police cell in Pretoria Central Gaol. She wrote about this prison experience in her book "Go Well, Stay Well" published in 1961. After three months, Hannah's presence became an embarrassment to the government and she was deported to England as "an undesirable". Nevertheless, she continued to work on behalf of the freedom movements and she went back to Uganda in 1962 to become warden of a hostel, the Mary Stuart Women's Hall, at Makerere University, Kampala until 1970.

In 1972, not long after her return to Britain, the Asians were expelled from Uganda and Hannah put together voluntary support services to assist them. In 1990 Archbishop Desmond Tutu was to describe Hannah as "a stalwart of the South African struggle". As a lay reader at St James' Church, Hampton Hill, her next step was to get involved, with others, in discussions that led eventually to the formation of the CCG. She was undoubtedly its driving force and how she went about the task is described in the next chapter.

At the age of 80 in December 1993 she died in Esher and, at her funeral service on December 14th in St James's Church Hampton Hill, the Rev Brian Leathard, who conducted the service, said "Her home in Burtons Road was always full of people – and sherry! She stuck to what she believed to be right and, if things had to be moved out of the way, then she did it".

Fittingly, her memorial service was held at St Martin-in-the-Fields on April 24th 1994, the day that South Africa's new flag flew for the first time on the South African Embassy next door.

Hannah is commemorated at The Greenwood Centre by the naming of the Stanton Hall and by the inauguration of the Hannah Stanton Lectures, a series of annual talks which was instituted in 1996. In fact only four formal lectures were delivered.

- 17th October 1996 “The Role of the Coroner – Ancient and Modern” given by Michael Burgess, a working coroner and Hampton resident.
- 30th April 1998 “Lifelong learning – from Local to Global – Rhetoric or Reality?”, given by Professor Brian Groombridge of London University.
- 23rd October 1999 – “Good citizenship is constructed out of Trust and Commitment”, given by Randy Metcalfe, Communications Director of the Institute of Citizenship.
- 5th October 2001 – “Heraldic Art” given by Timothy Duke, Chester Herald at the College of Arms

It was decided after the fourth lecture to organise the lectures as and when suitable subjects arose rather than on a rigid annual timetable. Individual events sponsored by the VCG, the “Hannah Stanton Evenings”, are still run in Hannah's name as, for instance, in October 2004 when an evening was devoted to the Youth Café bus project.

It was Hannah's great virtue, based on her experience in Africa, that she could see that a community working together was potentially more productive than many individuals working alone. Hence, in 1973, she co-opted to the cause a local clergyman, Dennis Green.

Dennis Green

The Rev. Dennis John Green was born 1945 in Fulham. His first job was in accountancy but in his early twenties he applied for theological training and was educated at Lichfield Theological College 1969-72.

He was curate at All Saints, Hampton from 1972-74 under the Rev. John



Cotgrove and during this time he met up with Hannah Stanton and David Woodroffe.

Dennis Green is remembered as having tremendous drive and energy so, with Hannah in the same mode, they provided a formidable force for innovation. He left Hampton in 1975 to become Rector of Leverington, a parish in the Fens, and in 1980 moved to become a canon at Ely cathedral. There he left his mark

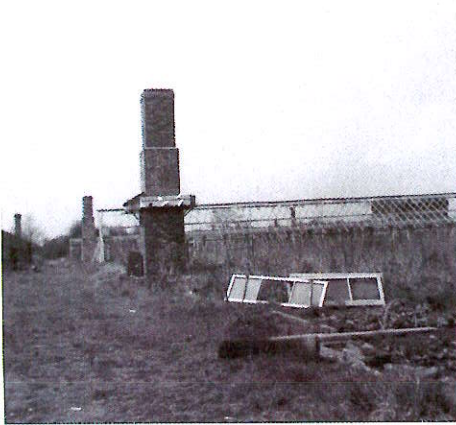
in more ways than one. In the words of the Church Times, “Visitors to the great cathedral of Ely admire not only the great church but also the college which surrounds it. This is the largest collection of medieval domestic buildings in England and the fact that it stands splendidly restored is due to the vision and determination of Dennis Green”.

Dennis died suddenly in April 1999 and, perhaps typically for an ebullient man, a large dog attended his funeral, symbolising Canon Green's long involvement with the Wood Green Animal Shelter. Perhaps that connection explains the otherwise curious presence of the attentive owl in the picture.

Of the Community Care Group, Dennis wrote “the CCG was never set up as a specifically Christian organisation but was set up by drawing from people the goodness in every human life”. Dennis’ contribution is preserved in the naming of The Greenwood Centre.

In the early seventies, Hannah and Dennis, having met to discuss their ideas and both with their pastoral backgrounds, decided they needed a third supporter but with different skills. They approached David Woodroffe, a local GP. Their message to him was that Hampton needed to be “more sociable” – what ideas could he bring to the solution of the problem?

accommodation for families from inner London boroughs - by 1978 Richmond was obliged to house 558 such families, about 1500 people. The pressure was on to provide more dwellings within the area of the borough.



D H Walker Nursery Site,
Hampton c. 1972

Lying in the south-west corner of Hampton, the 140 acres that comprised the former nurserylands were an obvious target for development. In the early seventies only four glasshouses remained in use and on this large site there were just 24 houses. Although there had been attempts since the 1880's to develop the area, particularly in the late nineteen fifties and sixties, proposals had always fallen at the planning stage. In the early seventies

the government eased planning restrictions on some green belt land and in 1975 the council purchased the land and set about gathering proposals as to how it should be used. Regarding housing, the limit proposed by the government was 20 dwellings per acre and the council proposed housing on 65 acres giving a total new housing development of around 1300 homes. This meant a projected inward movement of some 3500 people.

To this large potential influx were added smaller developments in Hampton such as the Oldfield Road Estate which itself in the late seventies added 450 more people. The concern with this and similar new estates was that the residents tended to be either young couples or the retired – there were few middle aged or higher income earners to provide a good social and economic mix.

To the residents of Hampton, however unwelcome may have been the prospect of the pressures of several thousand newcomers with attendant traffic, the benefits to the area were potentially considerable. Forty acres of accessible landscaped parks would replace the eyesore of the scrubland remaining from the old nurseries; twenty acres would be

David Woodroffe

David Woodroffe graduated as a doctor in 1954 and went into partnership at what has become the Hampton Medical Centre built in the garden of his home in Priory Road. He and his father are fondly remembered in Hampton, both trying to retain the tradition of the family doctor in an age when impersonal business skills were becoming almost as important as person-to-person medical practice. David had a deep concern both for the people of Hampton and for the preservation of the area as a pleasant place to live. He knew from first hand the effects of social isolation on depressed patients and was only too aware that the influx of people to the Nurserylands would present a challenge right on his doorstep. He eventually helped to meet this need by expanding his own practice, setting up a branch on the Nurserylands and working with Hannah Stanton and Dennis Green to provide practical help.

David Woodroffe's contribution is preserved in the naming of The Greenwood Centre.

It was the social antennae of these three figures that picked up the need for community-based support services rather than for top-down government intervention. Deirdre Curran, a director of the VCG from 1987-2002, wrote later that "the churches and caring professions believed that there was a need and an opportunity to develop community spirit in the area so that people could become better acquainted, be more aware of each others' needs and, while properly using the statutory services, be ready to help on a more personal and neighbourly basis". But against this backdrop, of the churches and the three founders deliberating together on how best to provide a community-based service, there was a more specific need for action. This was the proposal from the council for increasing the population of Hampton by a quarter.

The Nurserylands development

In the early seventies, Richmond Council had a major housing problem. There were over 3500 applications on the council's housing register, one third of which were from elderly residents. Further, the council had made a commitment to the Greater London Council to provide

allocated to playing fields; and an area was set aside for much-needed shops and community activity. Transport links would also be improved. At first, the Hampton Residents Association was against the new development, mainly because of the planned destruction of part of the Green Belt, but it was eventually minded not to oppose the scheme once the full might of the local authorities and the government was ranged against it. Instead it sought to influence the mix of the housing and to press for improved services.

This idea of a “net benefit to Hampton” was the view of many Hampton residents who welcomed the prospect of new blood to the area, provided it could be supported by appropriate infrastructure. However, for the caring services, this proposed development was of concern. Apart from the sheer size of the development, their main worry was the proposal to build a large housing development without adequate supporting services. Simple basic requirements such as a post office, adequate road signing, a bus service, post boxes and telephone boxes were all missing from the initial plans. All Saints Church was right on the boundary of the new development and it caused its curate, Dennis Green, to pay particular attention to how to provide support for the new residents.

An idea emerges

The issue to be faced was simple – how to develop a community-based support service for the residents of Hampton and Hampton Hill, recognising that the number of residents involved would substantially increase in the short-term? Such a service had to be provided by the residents themselves as it was highly unlikely that official agencies would provide the type of caring needed. On the other hand those agencies needed to be consulted for practical and legal reasons. A community effort would require direction and co-ordination as well as a base from which to operate and hence there was a need for some sort of administrative body. Further, if the initiative was to have any length of life, it would also need funds to provide the support structure and these funds in turn required to be replenished by a steady income stream.

In reviewing these requirements in later years, Hannah wrote that “we took our time, many months, over our discussions and had the help of many people. This slow and deliberate start, and the involvement of others, set the right foundation for this community effort”. Many of these early meetings were held at 75 Broad Lane, the home of Gerald Heath, for twelve years Chairman of the Hampton Residents’ Association, and his wife, Joan. The HRA had been very vocal in its opposition when the Nurserylands development had been proposed but had now, in the interests of the community, it decided to support the plans in principle and try to amend the detail as it thought fit.

Emerging from the long gestation was the proposal for an inaugural meeting of, what turned out to be, the Community Care Group. Dennis Green later referred to this meeting as “The Big Bang”, indicating perhaps the need to get the new organisation off to a high-profile start.

Big Bang

Dennis Green's Big Bang, the first public meeting of the newly-formed CCG at St James' Hall, occurred on 15th May 1974. The three founders had expected twenty, perhaps fifty, to attend. But to quote Dennis Green "we never expected a hall solid with people - in the event, over a hundred, certainly 150, some say two hundred, turned up". The local paper reported that the audience consisted of "residents, local vicars, representatives of social organisations, probation officers, social workers, teachers, local councillors and even the local policeman". It was decided at the meeting that the three founders would act as co-chairmen and this rather unusual tripartite arrangement was carried on for a number of years albeit with different participants.

The strategy that emerged from this and subsequent meetings was to form groups to cater for particular interests, each with its own more or less autonomous organiser. These were called Concern Groups and included:

- Parents & Young People – trying to remedy problems such as lack of facilities for older children
- One Parent Families – to deal with the three main issues of low incomes, lack of child care and inadequate housing.
- Housing – particularly concerned with lack of affordable housing
- Handicapped – addressing needs for good transport and a full social life
- Noon-time social club – providing a "child-free" zone for mothers
- Senior Citizens – arranging services for the elderly. This group soon found itself duplicating work done elsewhere (e.g. by Linden Hall) and so it became a contact point rather than an action group.

Initially, in addition to the Concern Groups, there was a Neighbourhood Responsibilities Group. This had the remit of covering all activities not directly related to the Concern Groups. However, it quickly became apparent that this group was too unwieldy and it was split into five servicing groups:

- The Office – processing requests from clients and providing an administrative service to the Concern Groups
- Information Group – amassing and dispensing information regarding local services. This Group provided a search service, today more readily available by use of the internet or through the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- The Bookshop – of which more later, but it started in November 1974, only a few months after the Big Bang.
- Fund-raising Group – set up in March 1975 with the idea of not only providing income for the CCG but also as a way for volunteers to become involved with the CCG’s work. This Group was eventually overtaken by the activities of the bookshop and the transient CCG charity shops.
- Publicity Group – set up in September 1975 for promoting contacts between members and between the CCG and the outside world. One advantage of this Group was that it was able to recruit volunteers for the CCG organisation as a whole rather than being dedicated to one particular Group.

While leaving the Group leaders in charge of their own affairs, the Information Group aimed at providing contacts for CCG groups with other similar organisations in the borough and elsewhere. In organising this ambitious network of groups, CCG’s policy was to “fill in the gaps” between what assistance was on offer from local authority and other sources and what was required by users as expressed at the inaugural and subsequent meetings. The CCG would provide an administrative umbrella for those groups.

Often the requirements of the groups were extremely straightforward. For example, the young mothers simply wanted a place to meet, have a coffee and a chat. No large supporting structure or finance was required. In other cases, for example the One Parent Families Group, the needs such as a group holiday could only be met by raising significant funds. Over time the work of some of these groups was taken over by the borough’s social services and other specialist organisations and it was decided that these groups would be left to come and go as volunteers themselves came and went. Some groups continued for many years, others faded away early on.

A significant point of note is that these CCG groups had no central base in which they could meet. There was no central community centre in Hampton and Hampton Hill so meetings had to be held in members' homes or in other local facilities. As the groups grew, the need for such a centre had suddenly become more pressing.

What is surprising is the speed at which developments occurred. The inaugural meeting was on 15th May 1974; by June 17th the CCG office in the United Reform Church, thanks to the URC's vicar, the Reverend Ted Harris, had opened at 35 High Street (it was officially opened by the Mayor on August 2nd).



Opening of the CCG office August 1974. From 4th from left:
Dr David Woodroffe, Hannah Stanton and Rev Dennis Green.
Picture courtesy Twickenham Museum

By October a constitution was drawn up and in parallel there was rapid progress in organising the Concern Groups and getting them into action. By the end of 1976, a mere eighteen months after the inaugural meeting, over 400 clients had been assisted in one way or another and the office was receiving 10 calls a day requesting help or information.

The Big Bang had occurred, the Groups were in action and the community had taken notice. Now it was important to maintain the momentum, run affairs in a professional manner and set a course for the future.

The first decade

"The aim of the CCG is to increase neighbourliness and a spirit of self-help and awareness with everyone in the community concerned for and helping each other.

The aim is not passive assistance but is for a dynamic self-help project helping people to help themselves".

Hannah Stanton

If Hannah wanted dynamism, she certainly got it. The first few years of the CCG's operations were full of the enthusiasm of a new venture – by the end of the second year 250 volunteers were in action. In order to involve as many people as possible, and following the pattern established at the Inaugural Meeting, ten "Concern Groups" emerged, each with its own way of operating and theoretically self-governing. Group co-ordinators reported to the CCG Policy Committee.

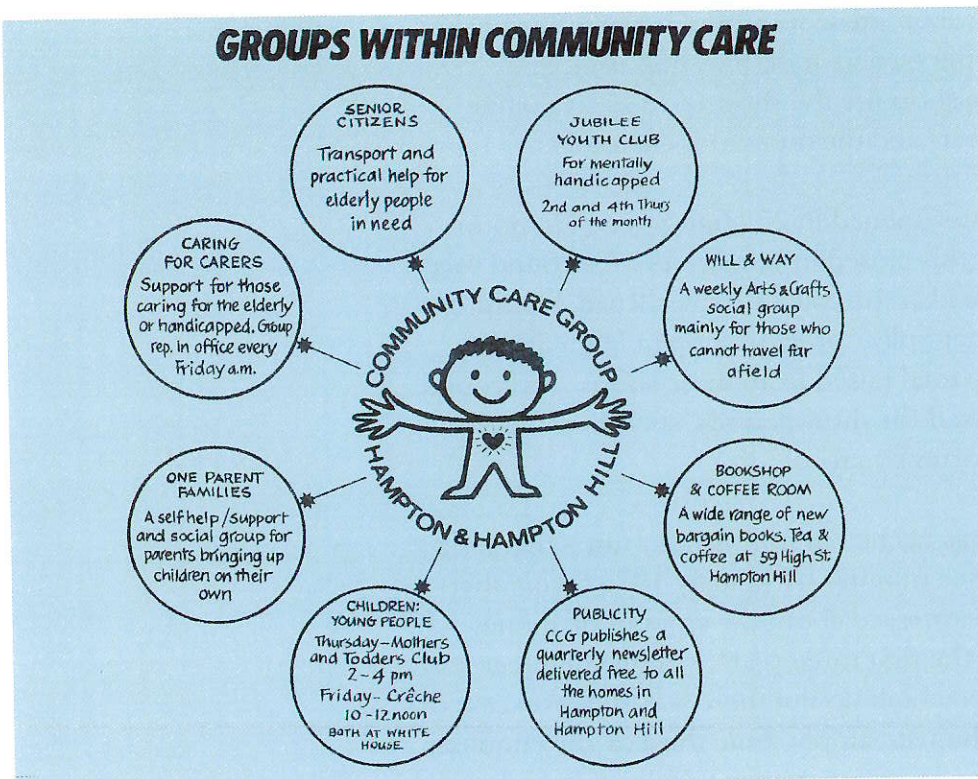
However, it soon became apparent that this free-spirited approach, typified by a "help-ourselves" attitude, had a number of drawbacks. The main one was the difficulty for the central office to handle enquiries and requests, running at 500 a year by 1977, if the groups operated totally independently and without communication with a central point.

Although the aim was still for groups to generate their own ideas and operate much as they wished, these activities needed some form of co-ordinated management. In June 1975 a full-time organiser, later termed co-ordinator, Maureen Sutton, was appointed.

Maureen's vision was for the CCG to operate as an umbrella, providing an administrative shelter for the concern groups but allowing them to run their affairs as they wished. Groups would not be set in stone but allowed to form and disperse as needs arose and were met. Much responsibility rested on the shoulders of the group leaders as, in the final analysis, it was the Concern Groups who actually delivered the services promoted under the CCG banner.

Reading Maureen's reports thirty-plus years later, it is impossible to be other than impressed by the width and depth of the early CCG activities. Not only were the Concern Groups up and running but a number of internal specialist groups had been formed to provide information about services available from CCG, fund-raising and publicity.

GROUPS WITHIN COMMUNITY CARE



From Community Care News, 1987

Fund-raising was an early priority. The spread of activities soon made demands on fragile funds but a twelve-strong group emerged to help. Coffee evenings, fashion shows, cake sales, jumble sales, bring-and-buy sales, wine and cheese parties, Bingo, prize draws and a Charity Shop in Hampton were all in action from very soon after Big Bang.

The Charity Shop, lent by Barclays Bank, was at 82 Milton Road and sold donated second-hand items. It was only in operation for a short period but during its life it provided a valuable service, particularly to the elderly and to one-parent families who could, for instance, find second-hand prams in the shop.

A typical example of the shop's activity was that of a pensioner who, on discharge from hospital, was so thin that none of his clothes fitted. He was provided with a complete outfit – suit, overcoat, shirts and underwear - at no expense to him. However, this kind of support came at a cost and,

as the expenses in running the shop grew, so profits became marginal or non-existent. In January 1978 the owners took the shop back for re-development. But during its short life the shop acted as a valuable social centre for the 30 volunteers and the numerous customers.

In April 1978 a charity shop was opened in 22 High Street, Hampton Hill run by Tom Newman but this closed in January 1979. Around this time, brief tenures were also held at the café in Ashley Road, Hampton (for 2 months) and in the former Sully's grocery shop in High Street, Hampton Hill (3 months). The total raised from these shops was around £1600. Other premises were used for short periods, such as in Stanley Road, Teddington, as the opportunity arose.

For the new organisation life was hectic but not without fun – there is a note in the Executive Committee minutes of January 1976 saying that there had been some concern expressed about the amount of money being spent on parties! Within the first three years, a large volunteer base (maybe as many as 250) had been built up but there was still an excess of demand for assistance over volunteer supply. One third of the enquiries were for transport but, for every transport request fulfilled two had to be turned down, and a similar ratio applied to clients requiring befriending. Baby-sitting requests and gardening requests outnumbered the available volunteers by three to one.

These volunteers were working on a wide variety of tasks. Thirty were assigned to office duties and 40 valiant souls helped on jobs such as hairdressing and home-decorating. One problem remained constant – inadequate office accommodation. The room of only 250 sq ft, at the United Reform Church with its outside toilet, was inadequate for a growing organisation and was, in any case, in the words of one worker, “dire” and in another’s “a Steptoe’s yard”. A third wrote rather despairingly that “in one corner there is always a wheelchair, in another corner are two great piles of wool awaiting collection, in the summer there are bags awaiting the mini-market, in the winter heaters clutter the place”. Homely it may have been but the office conditions did not make life easy for the workers or suitable for confidential discussions. In the event this problem was not to be resolved until 1992.

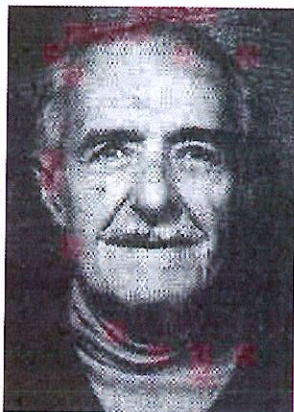
A constitution, devised mainly by Hannah Stanton, was adopted in January 1976 and the first AGM of the new organisation was in May 1976 - the attendance was an impressive one hundred. On December 17th, 1976 the CCG became a registered charity. Later, to recognise the operational and management changes to the CCG over the years, amendments were made to the constitution in 1982, 1993, 1994 and 1999. These changes were mainly concerned with clarifying the objectives of the CCG, with regularising the membership administration and with the need to clarify accountabilities. In particular, the membership was regularised so that only paid-up members could vote at the AGM.

To begin with, there was a tendency to form a committee on every issue. In an effort to be inclusive, by 1976 there was a Policy Committee with 28 members, a large Executive Committee charged with carrying out the decisions of the Policy Committee, a Steering Committee with 14 members and a substantial Liaison Group. This unwieldy structure was largely dictated by the formation of the autonomous Concern Groups but gradually, as the groups merged or were taken over by outside bodies, there were opportunities to refine the structure and reduce the number of decision levels. Today, policy is set by a management committee of trustees while the VCG's day to day operations are supervised by the director.

As the CCG reached its tenth birthday in 1984 it was, amongst other things, receiving 6500 enquiries a year, delivering a quarterly newsletter to 9000 homes, operating a daily play centre in Stanley Road for 160 children, organising holidays in Bognor for the housebound, fixing up over a thousand car journeys per annum and providing 3000 meals a year to the elderly and housebound. All these activities demanded a regular income stream and from the earliest days of the CCG this was provided to a significant extent by the bookshop.

The Bookshop 1974-1996

Funding was always, and probably always will be, an issue for the likes of the CCG so a welcome and regular source of funds in the early days was its bookshop. Hampton resident Gordon Landsborough, himself a bookseller, offered to provide the stock if premises could be found. Quite

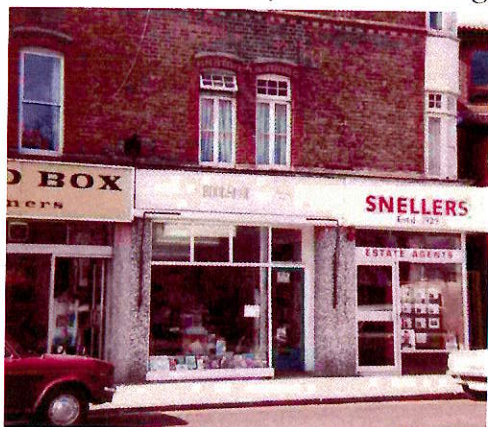


Gordon Landsborough

remarkably, this was achieved in a matter of a few days in November 1974 at 63 High Street, Hampton Hill. The shop, previously a green-grocer's, was owned by E. Gostling (Builders) Ltd, and the premises were vacant as a result of Gostling's need to find new premises to cater for expansion. Jack Gostling, a director, offered the premises rent-free until such time as the company needed to re-possess them.

Dennis Green immediately saw a fund-raising opportunity – "Let's get the bookshop open for

the Christmas trade". Trestle tables were borrowed from the church hall and Dennis later wrote that "I remember painting the vegetable racks white on a Thursday, books arriving on Friday and the shop opening on



Saturday. Customers flooded in to buy bargains and by Saturday afternoon I was part of a fleet of cars, including David Woodroffe, going to the warehouse to collect more stock". Among the bargains were sets of encyclopedias for £25.

Initially the shop was managed by Dennis Green but soon Brenda Smith took over, later joined by

Linda Brignall. Brenda, a Hampton resident since 1945, was a former PE teacher and probably had to call upon her reserves of energy as she had to collect new stock every week from suppliers in Staines, Dorking, Cobham, Ewell and even from Hertfordshire. This stock was financed from the 25% commission received on each book sold.

Gordon Landsborough, an author and publisher as well as a bookseller, provided the finance. He equipped and stocked the shop, provided the paper bags, supplied the pricing guns, took back unsold stock, and was on hand again when the bookshop moved from 63 High Street to new premises. Gordon and his wife Peggy even had sufficient energy to start the secondhand bookshop next to Hampton Station, initially to provide funds to build Linden Hall.

The advantage of the CCG shop coming on stream so early and so successfully was that funds were immediately available. It meant that, while fund-raising was still important, not all CCG's efforts had to go into that activity and volunteers' time could be and was used to help clients. By September 1975 sufficient capital had been raised to allow the bookshop to buy its own stock and finance its activities. In the first three years, the shop turned over £14,000 and made a contribution to the CCG of £4,700.

After a few years Gostlings wanted to redevelop the site at 63 High Street and so in July 1979 the shop transferred to new premises a few doors away at 59 High Street, Hampton Hill. Although the CCG office remained at the United Reform Church, the bookshop's back room became a gathering place for those interested in the CCG's work and those who just wanted to drop in for a chat. In the first year in its new premises the shop turned-over £4366. The operation of the shop depended entirely on volunteers – in 1984 there were no less than twenty-six volunteer helpers at the shop - and maintenance was carried out by two more volunteers, David Nunn and Herbert Moses.

In 1983, Gordon Landsborough died. With his passing the main source of supply of books dried up and also the great bonus of having stock on a sale or return basis. But, nothing daunted, the shop continued and up to 1987 was still contributing an annual average of £2500 to CCG funds.

In 1988 the shop had a facelift but signs were beginning to appear that trading conditions in general were becoming more difficult. Not only were overheads rising but there was continuing discussion on the future amount of rent payable on the shop - the lease was due to expire at the end of December 1990. However, the rental issue was resolved and the

shop marched on, even managing to sell over 1000 copies of the 1989 CCG calendar.

In May 1990 the shop was reported as having made cumulative sales of £216,349 since it started and contributed £50,000 to CCG funds. Since the Premises Fund at the end 1990 stood at £80,000 it is not difficult to see what a significant contribution was to be made by the shop to the equipping of The Greenwood Centre.

However, in the mid nineties, a legal problem arose. The VCG trustees were advised that the operation of the shop contravened charity law which expressly prohibited the sale of new books not specifically related to the aims of the VCG. Legally, the books had to be on subjects related to VCG's work. This restriction was, of course, commercially untenable. The trustees were advised that, if they continued to sell a range of new books, they must stop trading virtually immediately. Since the bookshop traded mainly in such books, this limitation pulled the mat from beneath the shop's operations. This legal obstacle occurred at a time when rent increases on the premises had in any event brought the shop's operating profit down to a narrow margin.



Closing down - from (left to right: Synnove Jordan, Doreen Branchett, Jean O'Sullivan, Linda Brignall, Brenda Smith and Ivy Howe

The trustees therefore took the hard decision to cease trading and the shop was closed in March 1996. This caused a good deal of concern locally but legally the shop could not have continued as it had been.

A crowd of about 60 turned up for the presentation of a farewell cake donated by Cavan Bakery. The shop is still fondly remembered by many Hampton residents.

The Greenwood Centre: 1992

By the late eighties it had become apparent that the CCG needed a new base, mainly because the United Reform Church was intending to redevelop its High Street site but also because the working conditions in the URC office, being described using such adjectives as “grim” and “dire”, were clearly not sustainable for much longer.

It had always been the aim of the founders of the CCG to have permanent premises – a community centre - rather than rely on the generosity of local individuals and groups. From the earliest days of the CCG, a constant item on the agenda of management meetings had been the search for suitable premises. The preference was to have a High Street presence similar to the URC office as this would serve to advertise CCG operations and be near public transport links. However, the problem was of balancing the affordability of a High Street location against a requirement for substantial space – a shop no longer fitted the bill – and with parking free from irksome High Street restrictions.

Eventually a potential solution was identified. The Parish Hall of St James’ Church, a building once used as a boys’ school and dating from 1869, was located in School Road, 250 yards off the High Street. This school had an interesting history. In 1867 the vicar of St James, the Rev Fitzroy Fitz Wygram became increasingly concerned that, of the one thousand children in his parish, only a handful were receiving any formal education. He therefore made over some land off the then Mill Lane, now Windmill Road, to be set aside for school premises. Two separate buildings were erected, one for boys, on the current site of The Greenwood Centre, and one for girls and infants on the opposite side of the road. Fitz Wygram’s contribution is recognised in the naming of a close opposite School Road after him.

By 1875 the number of boys had increased to 200 and extra rooms were added to the schools over the years as numbers continued to grow. By 1889 the schools had 537 children, putting an ever increasing strain on the fabric of the buildings, so much so that by 1885 parts of the boys’ building – the water closets and the cesspool - were officially condemned.

Over a hundred years later, vestiges of these conveniences were unexpectedly found when The Greenwood Centre was being built. In 1924 the schools' managers were informed that the County Council were going to build a new mixed school in nearby Windmill Road. The managers opposed this mixing and it was this conflict that spelled the end of the church schools in School Road. The schools lasted until their closure in 1928 when St James' Church re-took possession of the site as a church hall. By the 1980s the Parish wanted a modern hall, nearer to its church in St James Road. There were planning limitations on the usage of any new building on the School Road site – a housing development, for example, was not a real option – so choices were limited.



The old St James' Hall

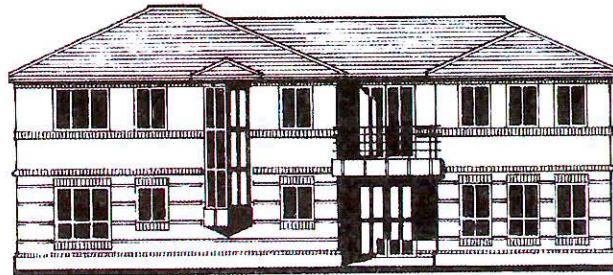
Through an amount of wheeling and dealing an arrangement was struck whereby the Parish would sell the School Road premises and use the money to build itself a new hall next to its church. The vacated School Road site would be then available for the building of a new community centre.

At this point step forward the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity (HFAC). This charity dates from 1811 and was set up to ensure that land allocated for charitable purposes continued to be used for poor relief, including the workhouse, across the Parish of Hampton. By 1976 it was facing a funding crisis and eventually decided to sell its land, occupied by St Clare's Nurseries off the Uxbridge Road, which was only yielding a small rent of around £500 a year. After legal tussles, the site was sold to the Sainsbury's supermarket chain in 1989 for £21.6 million. At a stroke, the HFAC was transformed from a small organisation giving modest grants of a few pounds each to one being able to fund seriously large projects. Much was expected of this windfall by the local Hampton community and at the HFAC's AGM in January 1990 it was announced that it would support the building of a new community centre.

That support, primarily gained through a case presentation led by Denzil Isaaks, was eventually expressed in a grant of £770,000 in 1990 which covered the purchase of the old church hall for £220,000 and the construction of the Greenwood Centre. Over the years since then the HFAC has made substantial sums available to the VCG that has enabled it to maintain and expand its operations.

In 1989, John Webb, a local architect, had been appointed to design the new community centre that was to become The Greenwood Centre. His brief was formulated by a

sub-committee of three CCG officers – David Wilson, chairman 1988-91 (and the Science Correspondent for the BBC TV News 1967-81), Chris Knowles, chairman



1991-3, and Diane White, president 1989-92. The design, while being completely modern, preserved some original features. The whole of the new general office – three walls and a ceiling – are part of the old school building and the external walls of the new hall are original too.

John recalls that he “had never had such a good group of clients”. This sub-committee came up with six main design requirements – a large hall for meetings and events, a welcoming entrance, an office for the co-ordinator, a general office, a large kitchen and three meeting rooms. This specification was in large part driven by the need to have a building suitable for lettings for all types of events that would generate a constant income stream. The design was approached with the aim of producing a building that would be welcoming (by extensive use of glass rather than solid partitions) and of a visibly high standard (hence the use of high quality wood in doors and Wilton carpeting). These high standards, besides being attractive and professional, had the added benefit of providing resistance to wear and knocks.

In early 1992 the building was nearing completion and during the Easter weekend the CCG moved in even though the works were by no means finished. Probably the builders were losing enthusiasm as they went out

of business in mid-1992, but a start was made on establishing The Greenwood Centre as an operational base. A small parcel of additional land at the front of the building was purchased to create parking places. The premises fund, built up painstakingly over 18 years, was used, under the direction of president Diane White, to purchase mops, brooms, filing cabinets, crockery, spoons and the like. A small garden was designed and supervised by Graham Pattison and in April a tree was planted by the Mayor, Keith MacKinney.

Pat Isaaks co-ordinated the contents of a time capsule which was buried in the fabric of the building. The capsule contained local images and early pictures of the construction, plus a list of the current officers and minutes of the Premises Committee. Local children from Hampton Hill Juniors, Denmead School and the Jack and Jill Nursery school provided personal stories of community life in the 1990's.

The building was officially opened by Birgitte, HRH the Duchess of Gloucester. The day, 3rd July 1972, dawned wet and dreary after weeks of sunshine and blue skies. But golf umbrellas were hastily summoned up in time for the arrival of the welcoming party – Toby Jessel, the local MP and the Mayor, Councillor Anne Summers. The sun eventually came out as the Duchess met John Webb, the architect, and various officials and volunteers from the VCG.

The Duchess was presented with a few mementoes including an elegant patchwork cushion, courtesy of the Will & Way group, and a book on the Thames as a local highway inscribed by Dick Waltham.



The Duchess of Gloucester at the Opening

The concluding act of the opening was to unveil the brass plaque that is on the wall just inside the entrance.

The VCG has derived great benefit from The Greenwood Centre and, as envisaged by the Centre's commissioners, has continued to generate a good income from lettings - indeed about 40% of the VCG's income comes from this source. Of course, with the new building came an increase in overhead costs - items such as boiler maintenance and cleaning had to be catered for, placing yet another demand on the VCG's fund raising efforts.

The site and the building remain the property of the HFAC and the building is leased to the VCG at a peppercorn rent. The VCG used its premises fund to pay for much of the equipment.

In a touching letter to the Community Care News in 1992, a Mr E. Gubbins, who had been a pupil at the Boys' School 1920-24, wrote of how memories of the old school were evoked by his visit to the new building. He recalled how the room now used as the office had been the classroom of Charlie Evans, the church warden, and how the toilets were still exactly where they had been in the old building except that now they were covered over. He believed he could still smell the carbolic disinfectant!

In September 1994, using the proceeds from the sale of the school building, the new Hall at St James' Church was opened.

For CCG read VCG - 1994

At a General Meeting in January 1994, the Hampton & Hampton Hill Community Care Group changed its name to the Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care Group. This change was occasioned by the passage of The Community Care Act in 1989/90 which gave a gate-keeping role to social service departments by specifying that it was for such departments to decide which needs to meet and how to fulfil them.

The Act's title caused the CCG trustees to fear that, by having the word "community" in its name, the Group would be seen as some sort of quasi-official body instead of a purely voluntary one. There was also further room for misunderstanding as certain voluntary organisations in the borough had started using the marketing line of "Care in the Community" thereby making a subconscious association between official community services and voluntary activities. Two other benefits of the name change were firstly that, by including the word "voluntary" in the title, it would hopefully be easier to attract potential volunteers, and secondly it would remove the continuing confusion between Hampton & Hampton Hill CCG and two other local groups - the Hampton Hill Association and the White House Community Association.

An interesting by-product of the passage of the Community Care Act was that the CCG began to receive enquiries for assistance from clients who believed that, by using the word "community", the CCG was obliged to provide services under the Act rather than do so on a voluntary basis. One client phoned to say that the CCG had to provide the service he requested as "I have paid national insurance all my life". It was hoped that by using the word "voluntary" in the title such calls could be kept to a minimum.

Renewal 1997

In the middle of the nineties, and after twenty years of operation, the VCG was in need of reinvigoration. There was no urgent requirement to adjust the goals of the organisation but there was a feeling that delivery of the VCG's operations could be improved. Co-ordinator Deirdre Curran and chairlady Jane Jewell organised a group meeting in November 1997 which was facilitated by Vincent Cable, the newly-elected MP for Twickenham. Its purpose was to see how best the VCG could upgrade delivery of its mission of "providing community health and wellbeing".

The meeting spent some time examining the VCG's operations. A number of organisational strengths were identified. Among them were the excellent premises at The Greenwood Centre, the broad skills base of its volunteers, minimal bureaucracy, good co-operation with local groups and the fact that the constitution placed very few restrictions on the VCG's remit. This latter virtue meant that the VCG very rarely had to turn a request down as being "not our business".

But there were also a few "weaknesses" identified such as office location (tucked away off the High Street), ageing profile of the volunteers, constant battle for funding and the practical planning issues arising from dependence on volunteers who could be available one week but not the next. The overall challenge was that, whereas it was possible to use and build on the strengths, it was not possible to do much to ameliorate the weaknesses; for example, The Greenwood Centre was where it was – it could not be moved, and the peripatetic nature of volunteers just had to be accepted.

Three areas were singled out as being special targets for an improvement in the VCG's delivery. They were communications, social exclusion and activities for youth:

Communications – in order to make clear what the VCG actually did, it was decided to build on the range of communication improvements that had already started with The Greenwood Post's introduction in 1996. A number of promotional leaflets and a website followed.

Social exclusion – that this could best be tackled by providing affordable transport links had always been recognised. Now a determined push was to be made that resulted in the partnership with RaKAT and the formation of Hampton Enterprise .

Activities for Youth – Deirdre Curran especially felt that the provision for youth could be improved and out of this meeting came the idea that led to the development of the Youth Café and Bus.

In effect this meeting helped to re-energise the VCG and re-focus it for the future.

The Greenwood Effect 1992-2008

Maureen Sutton, the CCG's first co-ordinator, maintained that there was no clear dividing line between those who "gave" (volunteers) and those who "received" (clients). Those who gave also received – driving for an hour or so a week could fill up an empty morning and provide interesting companionship while those who befriended could themselves receive an enriching experience. This two-way benefit is important in understanding why the government estimates that almost half of the population of England and Wales volunteer formally at least once a year.

The new Greenwood Centre became an immediate focus for the work of the VCG. The building allowed meetings to be held in comfortable surroundings, there were rooms for confidential discussions to take place, the work of the office could be conducted with some semblance of professionalism and the income from lettings provided a measure of financial independence and stability. The comings and goings involved in these lettings, to private and public groups, also gave the building an air of bustling energy that had been difficult to display in the former limiting and cramped CCG accommodation at the United Reform Church.

This package of change, generated largely by the facilities afforded by the new building, came to be known as the "the Greenwood effect". Summarised very briefly this is encapsulated in the VCG's former motto - as "generating community health and well-being" (now replaced by "Caring in the Hamptons since 1974"). In practical terms there are two sets of people who contribute to and benefit from the Greenwood effect – the clients of the VCG and the staff and volunteer workers.

Deirdre Curran, the VCG's longest-serving co-ordinator, used to stress to new volunteers that their work was a two-way benefit. It was not simply a question of what the volunteer could give to the VCG but also of what the VCG could give to the volunteer. Most obviously this could be seen when a volunteer's circumstances changed and he or she needed the direct help of the VCG but in most cases it was more simple than that – the volunteer could gain much personal satisfaction from participating in the VCG's day-to-day operations.

This symbiosis can be perfectly seen in the following letter published in the Summer 1998 edition of *Community Care News*:

“Elderly and somewhat housebound, I was asked through the CCG whether I wanted a regular visitor. I didn’t jump at the idea, not wanting to be too dependent on the other people, but on reflection said “Yes, please.” I know now it was the right answer – for two of us it seems.

My visitor, after quite a few years, has become my very good friend and is kind enough to say “It’s two-way”. We laugh sometimes about how it came about and wonder who is visiting whom! We go more or less equal shares on the talking, listening, friendly guidance, even nap on occasions. Being in theory the one who is visited, I do cheat a bit in not washing up after the snack lunch we have made together. Also perhaps in the odd shopping brought in to me – a great help.

I myself once went out visiting – all kinds of people: some in the slums of our prosperous cities, living in dire poverty; old people on their own in need of more than just problems to be worked out.

As social workers we learned mainly on the job and as a guide in visiting old people we were given two booklets entitled “Someone came” and “No-one came”. I don’t remember the guidelines but do remember the kind of thing which could happen, and sometimes did, and no-one came. Less likely today we hope, but still not impossible. So it is good to include visiting in our programme for Community Care. And often it’s fun!

Having been on both sides of the fence I can’t think of a better way to sign this than - Visitor/Visited”

There are many similar instances of volunteers who themselves have come to use the VCG’s services. This may come about through sheer longevity or it may be a sudden illness or bereavement and several older drivers have had to call upon the VCG when they themselves have had difficulty getting to social or medical appointments.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the VCG. Without them VCG operations would cease. It is doubtless unfair to pick out individual volunteers from the hundreds who have helped but consider the following examples, perhaps extreme, of what volunteers can do:

- Over the period from 1974-91, Marie Martin, with the help of her husband and sons, cooked a total of 32,000 lunches in her own home to make up for the council's lack of weekend provision for elderly people. That's 36 lunches a week.
- Each year, over several Christmases, Synnove Jordan and Janet Nunn produced 6500 re-cycled cards for re-sale - in 1988 they made 7500. In the same year they made 4500 other cards, mainly birthday and Easter cards.
- Heather Gibbs has run the weekly Will & Way club for alleviating social isolation of the elderly for 25 years

There are many such examples of work carried out with no direct reward and little or no official recognition. Some drivers have been on the VCG's list for two or three decades and a few office workers are still regulars over a similar period.

The VCG currently uses volunteers in the following roles:

- Car drivers, ferrying clients to and from appointments
- Newsletter writing, production and delivery
- Bus drivers, for shopping trips and outings
- Escorts on outings
- Trusteeship
- Office work, administering the transport project, helping with correspondence and telephone enquiries
- Befriending

Along with befriending, driving is one of the most direct volunteer/client relationships. In 1987, one volunteer driver wrote about her experience of clients:

“Dave always talked en route to his weekly painting class as he battled to regain speech after a stroke. A brave widow discussed test match cricket on her regular visits to the Charing Cross Hospital. All the ladies who struggle to the hairdressers despite crippling arthritis and rheumatism manage to joke about their disabilities, tell me stories from their travels and show me photographs of their grandchildren. Even the day when I had to tie my car door up with string and climb out after a lock jammed was a happy one because a tiny girl took her first solo steps at the Family Centre in Ealing.”

Requests for help arise from a number of causes but clients share an inability to use public transport either through age or illness. For infirm people without transport, simple tasks such as meeting a friend, visiting an optician or collecting shopping all become almost impossible. That is why volunteer drivers make many of the VCG's support operations possible.

The operational statistics that the CCG and the VCG have collected are sometimes hard to compare as, over 35 years, it is not always clear on what basis they were compiled. But as a rough guide, the following figures illustrate the type of transport operations:

- In 1986, 1600 car journeys were undertaken covering 11,000 miles
- In 1994, 2600 car journeys were made covering 22,000 miles
- In 2002, 13,300 passenger trips were made of which 3800 were by volunteer drivers and 9500 were by the VCG's buses.
- In 2007 a total of 14,862 passenger journeys were made.
- In 2008 a total of 15799 passenger journeys were made.

In 1981 there were 500 volunteers on the VCG's books; 1988 there were 300; in 1991 there 385. By 1999 there were about 90 volunteers, of which 57 were drivers (20 men, 37 women), 19 were office volunteers and the remainder (14) were carrying out general support tasks.

This seemingly dramatic fall in volunteer numbers was largely a consequence of a number of VCG activities being taken over by outside organisations. But it also reflected the beginning of a more general trend in society towards families with two income-earners rather than the traditional “man-at-work, wife-at-home” culture; the number of people, particularly women, with free time in the day was diminishing. Also the Hamptons were changing: supermarkets were opening, offices being built, all requiring both full-time and part-time staff and all thereby

diminishing the pool of people who would have traditionally formed the volunteer corps. Even those who were willing to volunteer had a difficult decision – the number of formalised volunteering opportunities was growing as central government sought to push an increasing number of caring tasks out into the community. In 2008 this had now reached a point whereby a volunteer looking for a placement through the government-sponsored volunteering database (www.do-it.org.uk) could now have the choice of well over a thousand placements within a few miles' radius of Hampton.

One issue has become apparent over the years. In the early days there was a feeling of direct involvement – volunteers had a very close relationship with the work of the CCG, particularly in the cramped single office environment of the United Reform Church. A visitor to that office could not help being aware of its work. Over the past thirty years, with succeeding waves of legislation, and with a move to a segmented building, volunteers tend to take less part in the totality of the VCG's operations. Instead they work in individual areas of the VCG's operations and as such may not become as involved in its operations as in less formal times.

Clients

As has been seen, the distinction between volunteers and clients sometimes blurs. However, most clients come to or are referred to the VCG when they encounter a practical access problem such as going to see the doctor or getting to a social event. The help may be needed short term or for longer periods.

In the early days the largest group (one third) of requests was for transport. By 2008 the VCG's clients were receiving the following services:

- 350 clients registered for the volunteer car driving scheme
 - 50 for the weekly shopping bus
 - 25 for befriending
 - 80 for outings
 - 100 attend the New Year's lunch
- There is of course some overlap between these groups but the figures give

some idea of the spread of clients' needs. In total, in 2008 the VCG had around 550 clients registered for its services.

There is no such person as a typical client but clients do have profiles that overlap in a number of ways. A client is often over 60, single or widowed and has difficulty using public transport. This difficulty is often due to a physical disability and may be compounded by an anxiety about using public or hospital transport. Often this anxiety is simply one of getting to an appointment on time – the client is quite happy to get back under his/her own steam. But it may also be tied up with finance: if the client is unable to use public transport, a weekly state pension does not allow frequent use of taxis to get to appointments.

Sometimes clients create their own problems. The VCG once received an emergency call from a lady who rang to say that she was in a wheelchair and that her son, who lived with her, had gone into the loft two hours ago and had not returned or answered calls. A volunteer was dispatched to help only to find the son working in the garden. He had finished his loft duties hours ago; his mother had fallen asleep and not noticed him going out.

Project re-organisation

One re-organisation that took place soon after Fiona Brennan's arrival was the creation of "projects", each with its own organiser. This had the virtue of establishing clearly identifiable parcels of activity that could be managed individually, discussed with potential funders and against which measurable targets could be established. Currently, the two major projects are Neighbourhood Care and Transport.

The Neighbourhood Care Project

At its inception, the CCG had been organised in Concern Groups. In 1995 there were at least nine groups managing the activities of Parents & Young Children, Will & Way, Youth Drama, Social Events, Senior Citizens, Newsletter, Bookshop, Hamptrade and Drivers. These groups still had, as in the early days of the CCG, their own co-ordinators.

Starting in 2003 the VCG formally re-assigned its disparate outreach services to the Neighbourhood Care Project and appointed a co-ordinator, Tessa Trapmore, reporting to the VCG director, to manage day-to-day activities. This single umbrella gathered under it some of the services originally envisaged at the inaugural meeting of the CCG in 1974. But now, by having a single project co-ordinator, the fragmentation resulting from a multitude of independent groups could be avoided. The re-organisation also reflected the changed nature of the VCG's activities. In the early days the CCG was very much hands-on, its staff and volunteers delivering the services which it promoted. In later years, following the opening of The Greenwood Centre, many of the services at the Greenwood are being delivered by independent organisations who use The Greenwood Centre both as a communications channel and a venue. Through the Neighbourhood Care Project the VCG is getting back to its core activity of hands-on support.

Neighbourhood Care now comprises two main activities. The first and most visible is the Befriending Scheme; the second is a less formally structured way of providing direct ad-hoc assistance to those with specific needs not covered by other services in the borough. These needs are often

short-lived – some advice on benefits or maybe help with shopping after an illness – while others may require more lengthy attention. Over the last thirty-five years, befriending has always been one of the core activities of the VCG: in 1977 13% of CCG calls were in respect of a befriending need. Nowadays, it has assumed a more formalised structure, but from the beginning the need for old-fashioned good-neighbourliness, of helping to relieve social isolation, was recognised. Then and still today, befriending is usually the result of a neighbour or relative instigating the request rather than the person themselves. Isolation is not only experienced by single people – housebound and infirm couples too can feel alone. In 2008, about twenty-five people were being befriended, including some couples. By the end of 2009, we aim to have trained over 50 befrienders.

Training is one area where current practice differs from the early CCG days. The CCG pioneers saw their function as acting as good neighbours, a role for which formal training was not thought to be necessary. Today, partly due to legislative requirements, potential befrienders are given guidance by attending three short courses at The Greenwood Centre covering such topics as boundary awareness and action in cases of suspected neglect or abuse.

The Transport Project

The transport of clients to social and medical events has always been the enabling activity for many VCG activities. In the first three years of the CCG's existence, one third of the calls to the office were transport requests. One reason for this was the lack of good transport to and from the Nurserylands, an essential need when considering the proportion of older people in the area (over 20% of the Hamptons are over 60 years of age and 22% are lone adult households, mainly pensioners). Even where reasonable public transport links now exist, the elderly and frail find it difficult to use especially if the station or stop is some distance away. A pensioner living on the Nurserylands still has to take two buses to reach the railway station, a journey of only about a mile. It was one of the earliest issues to be addressed by the founding group of the CCG.

Partnership with RaKAT

From 2001 the VCG's transport operations have been organised under the banner of Hampton Enterprise, currently co-ordinated by Frances Smith. Services are provided by the VCG in conjunction with RaKAT (Richmond & Kingston Accessible Transport), a charity funded amongst others by the councils of Richmond and Kingston. RaKAT was constituted and registered as a charity in January 1997, and began operations in April of the same year. The aim of the organisation is to provide group transport for other community and voluntary organisations in the boroughs of Richmond and Kingston. In simple terms, RaKAT owns and maintains the vehicles; the VCG operates them in the Hampton area. The partnership aims to widen the transport options available to the VCG's clients by encompassing all



transport activities – the shopping buses, people carrier trips and voluntary driving - in one flexible organisation.

The Hampton Enterprise vehicles have been provided in large measure through grants from the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity. The first bus, a 15-seater, wheelchair accessible VW, was purchased in 2001 with a grant of £39,000 from the HFAC.

There is an amusing, if perhaps not surprising, story that, on the first run of the

bus, it was so full of dignitaries, including the mayor, and VCG staff that there was scant room for the actual clients ! An Iveco Daily replacement for this bus was purchased in 2007.

A seven-passenger Peugeot Eurobus people carrier (PC) was acquired in 2005 through another grant from the HFAC, this time of £19,000. The PC was christened “Barbie” in recognition of the contribution over the years to the VCG of Barbara Withers, both as a volunteer



and as president. The bus and the PC enable the VCG to provide its full range of transport activities ranging from shopping buses to individual trips. Besides shopping, the bus is also used for outings and excursions. In 2007, about 15,000 passenger journeys were undertaken by Hampton Enterprise. Of these about a quarter were for shopping and one third were for trips to day centres. The volunteer car scheme provided a fifth of the total passenger journeys.

Volunteer Car Scheme

The VCG has a regular core of around 60 drivers who undertake trips to doctors, dentists, opticians and hospitals and for social occasions.

Volunteers using their own cars have been the mainstay of the transport project, especially for individual journeys where a bus would be too large. Over the years the numbers and profiles of volunteers have remained much the same – mainly the retired or younger mothers. In the early days it was a slight worry that many of the drivers were well past the age of 70, often older than the passengers they were carrying. This has now been remedied with the addition of some younger volunteers.

The car scheme has a registered client base of around 350, a number which, over the years, has remained fairly constant with new arrivals balancing those who no longer require the service.

One driver recalls that the most interesting aspect of the job is the often surprising information that his clients reveal. One lady client had stories of the many years she lived for many years in China, and an elderly gentleman told how his uncle won a VC in World War I, and there was “an old sea dog with many oriental tales to tell”. Most drivers have had similar experiences and the fact that many drivers have been operational for a number of years illustrates the two-way benefit of the scheme.

Pulling it all together

It became apparent very early on in the life of the CCG that its activities needed central management to ensure that the various self-managed Concern Groups, the office, fund-raising, CCG committees and so forth were working towards the same objectives and were doing so in a coherent manner. This was a challenge but it was made more problematic by the total dependence for every operation on volunteers who, unlike paid employees, were free to come and go as they pleased and owed no official obligation to the CCG. To tie all these loose ends together, the role of co-ordinator was established in 1975. Perhaps it was best defined by one of its holders, Deirdre Curran, when she wrote in “We are an umbrella organisation, and the co-ordinator holds the umbrella”.

The co-ordinator undoubtedly represents the public face of the organisation. She is the representative on the various external committees that are an essential part of the fund-raising process, she reports at the AGM, hires staff, recruits and motivates volunteers, provides support and guidance to staff and even, occasionally, rushes out in her car if a volunteer fails to turn up for a client. Without such an enabling role the VCG machine would stutter to a halt. In the period 1975 to 2008, the CCG/VCG has had six co-ordinators:

Maureen Sutton 1975-1978

Maureen was a former social worker in the north of England and was CCG’s first co-ordinator and paid employee. In some ways Maureen oversaw the most complicated period in the VCG’s 35 year history. This was when the unfocused energy that is always generated by a new project had to be channelled, controlled and, as important, sustained. The various newly-formed Concern Groups needed nurturing and there was a large body of volunteers that needed utilising. Maureen was also conscious of the need to create links with neighbouring organisations and to maintain a high profile with the council to ensure maintained funding.

Maureen’s main administrative issue seems to have been that she felt, quite rightly, that it was almost impossible to do her job properly without an office and a car - the latter was solved fairly quickly but the office took almost 20 years to arrive.

Jan Murray 1978-84

Jan was External Co-ordinator with Fay Robins as Internal Co-ordinator managing the office for 1978-80, giving Jan time to concentrate on external affairs, mainly public relations and fund-raising.

Jan joined CCG in September 1978, the second paid worker the Group had employed, working 15 hours a week for an honorarium of £1000 per annum. As years went by, this situation changed and eventually she worked 30 hours per week with a regular salary.

Jan says “The co-ordinators were responsible for organising volunteers, liaising with other organisations, both local and wider London-based Neighbourhood Care Groups like ours, and raising the profile of the group, particularly with health professionals to ensure they knew of the services we offered”. She particularly remembers the role of the newsletter in the CCG’s activities:

“The newsletter was a great communicator. I have strong memories of newsletter meetings. More volunteers helped to write it, took pictures, pasted it up (no computers in those days) and I would eventually deliver it to the printers. When I joined the CCG I thought the print was very small so I insisted it was enlarged. This was just before I was prescribed glasses! However the larger print stayed. Lots more volunteers delivered it to every house in Hampton and Hampton Hill”.

Anita Fox 1984-87

Anita moved into Hampton from Hampshire in 1979 where she had worked for Age Concern and the Samaritans. “To get to know people” she became a volunteer driver for the CCG which she did for five years.

On Jan Murray’s departure, Diane White offered Anita the job of co-ordinator and she started in September 1984 on 30 hours a week. She recalls her time at the CCG with affection but verifies the views of others that the URC office conditions were “grim”. She particularly remembers Hannah Stanton as “a wonderful, patrician lady”. Anita left in 1987 to join Richmond Crossroads, a local charity supporting carers.

Deirdre Curran - 1987-2002

Deirdre had the longest term as co-ordinator – 15 years. Originally from Dublin, she married Malachy and they had three daughters. Malachy



was very supportive of Deirdre's work at the VCG. Deirdre had several jobs before coming to Hampton but looks back with particular pleasure at her spell as an air hostess for British Airways on the famous Comet airliner.

She oversaw the move from the United Reform Church office to The Greenwood Centre. She is remembered as a "people person", being very effective at generating ideas and persuading companies and individuals to participate in the VCG's activities. She became the recognisable public face of the VCG for over a decade. Following her retirement from the VCG, she and her family went to live in France.

Fiona Brennan – from 2002



Fiona comes from a background of working with a number of leading national charities, notably the Cancer Research Campaign, the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. She has also sat as a non- executive director on the board of Ayr Hospital, a large general hospital covering South West Scotland and Northern Ireland.

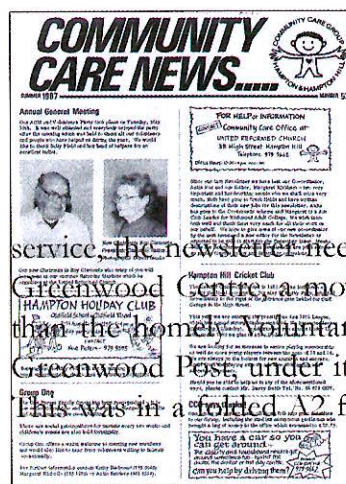
After the birth of her daughter, Fiona decided she would prefer to work at a local level and

became Director of the VCG in 2002 and can point to a solid record of achievement. She oversaw the launch of the Youth Café Bus Project (along with Adrian Sumption and Ruth Quigley) and has since gone on to expand the Accessible Community Transport Project, formalise the Neighbourhood Care and Befriending Project and extensively develop the Communications Project. She has also been instrumental in securing funding for additional staff and resources, and improvements to The Greenwood Centre infrastructure. In 2009, Fiona was responsible for extending the befriending project to support mothers with children over the age of five.

Communicating the message

Any voluntary organisation needs a way of cost-effectively reaching its client community. The CCG recognised this at an early stage, only two months after its inaugural meeting, by issuing a series of five one-page Progress Reports from July 1974. Then, in September 1975, co-ordinator Maureen Sutton initiated the first Community Care News in a two-page quarterly format, subsequently expanded to four pages and then to eight pages in 1978.

Community Care News was produced by outside printers – previous newsletter-type communications had been produced in the office, described as “an enormous labour” to produce a run of 8500 copies. Jan Murray, Barbara Morath, Mark Kemiss, Kim & Colin Petty, Joan Barrett and Margery Kirkham were among the early CCN editors but, from Spring 1994, the format was re-titled Voluntary Care News under its editor Joan Barrett. In Jan Murray’s time, her husband Mike used to record the CCN for the Talking Newspaper scheme.



The newsletters greatly benefited from illustrations and cartoons, first by Gordon Stowell and then, when Gordon retired in 1990, by David Lewis.

By the mid nineties, after twenty years of service, the newsletter needed refreshing. It was felt that, in line with the development of The Greenwood Centre, a move had to be made towards a more professionally produced format rather than the homely Voluntary Care News with its recipes and gardening tips. Thus was born The Greenwood Post, under its first editor, James Woodford, with its initial issue in the summer of 1996. This was in a folded A2 format and a black

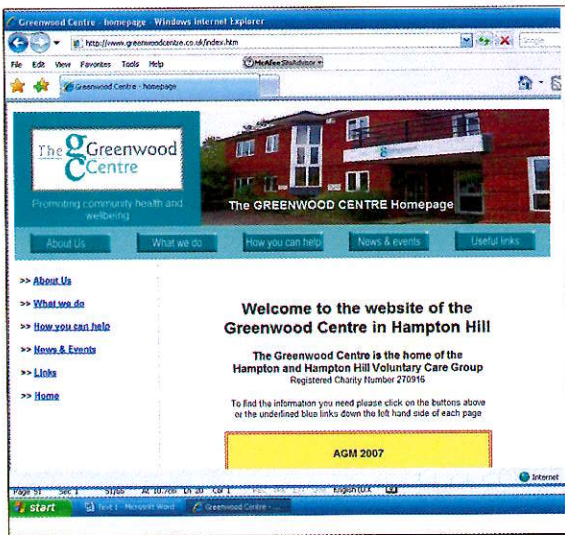
and white design. For the record, mention must be made of the issue in Spring 1999 celebrating the VCG's 25th anniversary. This was "a souvenir issue" in full colour, even featuring Nelson Mandela on the front page. Essentially this remained the format, albeit with some single colour refinements, from 1997 until the spring of 2008 when a change was made to A4 format and full colour.



The Greenwood Post has a print of 10,000 and is distributed in the Hamptons mainly by volunteers. Occasionally recourse has to be made to a professional distribution company but on cost grounds this is very much a least-favoured option.

In 2000 the VCG launched its own website under The Greenwood Centre banner at www.greenwoodcentre.co.uk.

Through the web site the VCG advertises its services, including the important lettings service, and also encourages volunteers to come forward.



By means of the Greenwood Post and the web site, the VCG aims to reach the majority of people in the TW12 area. By doing so, potential volunteers can get a feel for the possible opportunities open to them and potential clients can determine the type of services on offer. And, of course, the Post generates some welcome revenue through its advertisements,

helping to offset the costs of production – more than half of the cost of the Post is paid for by advertising.

Friends and neighbours

The VCG operates in The Greenwood Centre alongside other welfare and activity groups. Just to take a random example of activities, in the Autumn of 1999 the following events were being run:

Health

Bowling, Parkinson's Group, T'ai Chi
Yoga, Holistic yoga, Health & Beauty
Music time, Remedial Exercise
Moves to Fitness, Home Birth Group

Wellbeing

Parent/toddler Groups
Bridge Old Peoples' Welfare
WEA Educational
Greenwood Babes,
Playschool, Guitar
Meditation
Divorce Recovery

Most of these are run and administered separately from the VCG but the edges of demarcation have sometimes been blurred - a good example is that of the Will & Way group.

Will & Way

Will & Way was originally a craft group set up in January 1983 at Wayside, St James Road by Sylvia Larking, with Hannah Stanton's backing, to help disabled residents make use of their creative talents - "where there's a will, there's a way". Sylvia herself suffered from a serious spinal condition and she and others built up the group to try to break down some of the isolation they experienced.

Heather Gibbs, along with Synnove Jordan, took over the administration of the group in 1984 and the group has met regularly to the present day. Will & Way has never advertised or charged a membership fee although all the members are paid-up members of the VCG. Some financial assistance has been received from HIFAC and the Bridge House Estates Trust and, looking back through the photograph albums, it is impressive to see the various outings, activities and holidays that the group has undertaken.



Outings have included such diverse locations as Buckingham Palace, the Imax cinema and Heathrow airport. When the VCG moved into its new premises, the Will & Way group created an embroidery. This now hangs on the staircase and incorporates the former CCG logo.

The group also made a patchwork cushion for presentation to the duchess when she opened The Greenwood Centre. This work was undertaken by Heather Gibbs, Synnove Jordan and Pat Isaaks amongst others.

Heather received an MBE in 2003 for her voluntary work at the VGC and elsewhere.

This idea dates from around 2000 when there was a growing recognition of the lack of facilities for young people to meet outside of school hours in certain parts of the borough. As the local MP, Vincent Cable, said, “My generation had cheap places to hang out - coffee bars with juke boxes. There isn’t anything comparable today in Hampton.”

Adrian Sumption, chair of the RCVYO (Richmond Conference of Voluntary Youth Organisations) and Deirdre Curran, co-ordinator, of the VCG, grasped the challenge with alacrity. Deirdre had been trying for some time to find an effective way of offering some facility for young people in the Hampton area, but she had met with little success. She was enthused by Adrian’s vision for a bus that could go to where young people were rather than forcing young people to go elsewhere. On May 7th, 2002 Ruth Quigley was appointed the manager of the project under the direction of the newly-appointed Fiona Brennan.

The group was given a small sum by the Hampton Philanthropic Society to kick-start the project, a £20,000 grant followed from the Fuel Allotment Charity and other charities contributed over time. London

United Busways were very supportive and helped the project by offering to garage and maintain the bus and also to use their drivers to take the bus out to the locations where it would work. The Youth Café Bus was launched on the 5th July 2003.



The bus is a unique unit offering project space for young people aged 13 to 19 and designed to make youth work possible in areas where there is little or nothing in the way of provision for young people.

The project offers informal social and personal education for young people through safe social space. Activities and education sessions are designed to meet the specific needs of each group and currently include sexual health and relationships, drug and alcohol awareness, careers work, group work, and the creative arts.

The Bus has been visiting the skate park at King's Field in Hampton Wick regularly on Saturday afternoons since the summer of 2004. The success of that work there has led to an agreement with Richmond Council that Richmond Youth Partnership would take over the running of the newly refurbished pavilion building at King's Field which is now a permanent youth project and a community café.

Funding

Funding has, and always will be, a problem to be faced by most voluntary organisations. In the VCG's case, funds have been provided by the usual mix of voluntary donations, grants from local authorities, contributions from charitable trusts and assistance-in-kind from local traders. The VCG's files are full of letters, starting with those from Hannah Stanton back in 1974, making the case for financial support to the trustees of dozens of funding bodies. Some appeals were treated very sympathetically, others were ignored or cursorily rejected by return of post which, Hannah observed, was "very dispiriting".

But, by one means or another, money has been forthcoming. Now the question becomes, how is it used? To answer this, let's look at some examples from the financial accounts (all figures are rounded approximations).

In 1975, the gross income of the CCG was £2,275 (this would be about £13,750 in 2008 terms), of which 70% came from the bookshop. The grant from the council was a small but welcome £100 (4%). The other major income source was £210 (10%) from donations. Costs were quite low, mainly office expenses, so the amount of surplus was £1600. No salary costs were incurred. A year later, income had grown fourfold to £9,000, mainly due to bookshop operations, but expenses had shot up to £10,000. Already Mr. Micawber's delicate balance was in evidence.

In 1984, ten years after the foundation of the CCG, gross income was £27,000, a twelvefold increase in ten years, of which £6,500 (25%) was from a grant and £14,000 (50%) was from the bookshop. Donations totalled £2900, about the same percentage level as ten years earlier. But £23,500 expenses were incurred thus leaving a surplus of £3500. Most of this went into the premises fund which had been established in 1981. Salary costs ran at 20% of expenses.

In 2000, income had risen to £72,000, of which half came from lettings and a quarter came from grants. There was a reasonable surplus of income over expenditure of £9000 (12% of income), the first surplus for five years. All the expenditure was on administration.

In 2007 the VCG's income was £108,000, nine times the inflation adjusted figure for 1975. Of this, £15,600 (14% - a relatively small increase over the 20 years) was from donations and £50,000 (46%) was from grants. A substantial income - £42,400 (40%) is generated by lettings and VCG owes an enormous debt to the business acumen and dedicated work of Paul White, Lettings Manager for over 20 years. Expenses were £89,000 of which about 60% was incurred in salary costs.

Three points are immediately apparent from the recent accounts.

- The success of The Greenwood Centre as an income-generating resource.
- The reliance on outside funding bodies such as Richmond Council and the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity to supplement the income generated by lettings and fundraising activities.
- The need to ensure continuing funding for the Centre's three salaried staff - one full time and two part time - so as to maintain and develop the range of services provided to the community.

All funding sources tend to be short-term and conditional (the purposes to which the money may be spent are defined by the donor). While an element of Trustee and management energy needs to be expended on funding issues, this has not resulted in a loss of focus on providing services to clients.

Postscript - 2014 - Forty years on

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The preceding chapters of this history were written for the first edition in 2008. The VCG having reached its fortieth anniversary year, the trustees have decided to add a further chapter to cover major developments in the subsequent six years.

In 2011, a new charity and company limited by guarantee was established to replace the original charity. At the same time the charity's name was amended to Hampton and Hampton Hill Voluntary Care (H&HHVC). Both these changes were made for administrative purposes and do not affect the charity's main function of good neighbourliness.

Two important impacts on H&HHVC have been occasioned by changes in the economic and political climates. First, over the past six years, with the UK suffering its worst depression since 1945, raising money from donors and accounting to them for its effective use has become even more imperative. H&HHVC has risen to the challenge and, for example, now derives a significant income from its charity shop in High Street, Hampton Hill opened in 2010.



The Old Flower Shop

Second, there has been a move by central government to encourage local councils to contract out local services as a more efficient method of delivery than keeping services in house. Richmond Council took the decision to extend this practice to grant giving for the voluntary sector.

The old grant process was stopped and charities were invited to tender for contracts with the council. This system is known as commissioning. The driving forces behind the process for smaller charities, were Fiona Brennan, CEO H&HHVC and Joan Barnett, Chairman of Elleray Hall social centre who played a major part in convincing other local charities that together they could successfully participate.

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**Joan Barnett, Chair,
Elleray Hall Day Centre**



Fiona Brennan, CEO, H&HHVC

This approach brought the provision of services nearer to the users within the community and offered equal opportunities to access services. For local organisations such as H&HHVC this has meant that they have had to become far more commercially aware and have had to be prepared to partner with other organisations so that they can compete effectively for available funds. For example, in H&HHVC's case it has tendered for and been awarded funding for its befriending project to develop the outreach project into Teddington and Hampton Wick. A new post has been created to co-ordinate the befriending service in the new area and the befriending co-ordinator is based at Ellera Hall Social Centre in Teddington one day a week. The new arrangement through commissioning is known under the contract "Community Independent Living Services".

Transport

The Transport Project continues to provide its essential community services although some of the operational details have changed since 2008. The Eurobus people carrier ("Barbie") has been retired and been replaced with a 9-seater Citroen Relay which is fully accessible for wheelchairs.



New Minibus Added To Transport Project

This new vehicle has been christened "Paul Charles White" in memory of Paul White (see below). The upgrade was funded mainly through the continued support of the Hampton Fuel Allotment Charity (£20,000) and was supplemented by H&HHVC's own fund-raising efforts, including £3000 from the sale of the 2012 H&HHVC calendar which featured local business women and was supported by local traders

Pauline Hollis, transport co-ordinator, says "Over the past six years, the number of volunteer drivers has remained constant at about 60 but efforts are always in progress to recruit more to meet the 3000 annual return journeys requested by clients. We continue to rely on our volunteers to drive about 20,000 miles a year for us while the bus and the people carrier do another 20,000 miles on 5000 trips.



Pauline Hollis Transport Co-ordinator.



FI MacGreggor, Minibus Driver

Befriending

The objectives of the befriending project have not changed in the last six years but some of the administrative and management procedures have undergone modification. As far as clients are concerned a new service of telephone befriending is on offer. Clients can elect to be called at a set time each week and about thirty such clients are registered now with half a dozen befrienders handling the calls. Telephone befriending is particularly valued by clients who feel uneasy at the idea of home visits by a befriender, perhaps because of health problems or simply due to the effort involved in preparing for a visitor. This service is available to clients in the Hamptons as well as in Twickenham, Whitton, Teddington and Hampton Wick and is funded through a Livewell Richmond contract awarded to Age UK in 2012 and subcontracted to H&HHVC.



**Tessa Trapmor Befriending
Co-ordinator
Hampton & Hampton Hill**



**Alice Maslen-Robert Befriending
Co-ordinator,
Teddington & Hampton Wick**



Rossllyn Kerslake Volunteer Telephone Befriender

Face-to-face befriending numbers have remained steady at about 30 befriendeds and a similar number of befrienders. Tessa Trapmore, befriending co-ordinator, says “The H&HHVC befriending team accept referrals from social services, other voluntary and statutory organisations and the newly formed Community Partnerships. Individual friends and relatives and self referrals are also ways of introducing clients to the service. The overwhelming majority of clients are still women although that is mainly a reflection of the fact that women tend to live longer than men but there is also a reluctance on the part of many men to recognise that they could benefit from this opportunity of social contact.”

Lives remembered 2008-14

Dr David Woodroffe was one of the founding triumvirate of the H&HHVC. David followed his father at the Priory Road Surgery (now Hampton Medical Centre) and his role in the H&HHVC is more fully described on Pg 11. He died in October 2009 at the age of 82.



Dr. David Woodroffe



Paul White

In September 2013, the community was shocked by the sudden death of Paul White just short of his 61st birthday. In the course of 25 years, Paul had served the H&HHVC in two main roles. He was a dedicated volunteer undertaking numerous administrative tasks relating to the Greenwood Centre and he was lettings manager responsible for attracting and administering a major share of the H&HHVC's income. As Fiona Brennan, H&HHVC director, says, “If you wanted a template for the very best in volunteering, it would have to be Paul.” His contribution was formally recognised in 2008 when local MP Vincent Cable presented Paul with The Hannah Stanton Award to mark his outstanding

work for the charity.



JOHN DORMER

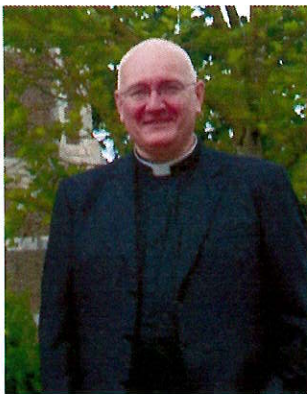


JOSIE SHANTONAS

John Dormer, who worked with Paul before his untimely passing now continues the good work in tandem with volunteer Josie Shantonas

St James's Church

As described previously on pg 25 onwards, the building of the Greenwood Centre arose out of the need for St James' Church to fund a new church hall. In 2013 St James' celebrated its 150th anniversary and for the last forty of those years the clergy and congregation of St James have provided much support to the H&HHVC by way of voluntary assistance, fund raising and other support as exemplified by the present vicar, Rev. Peter Vannozi, who is an enthusiastic trustee.



**Reverend Peter Vannozi,
Trustee**

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Spreading the word

The Greenwood Post, in its refreshed design introduced in March 2014 continues under long-serving editor James Woodford, in its work of keeping the people of Hampton and Hampton Hill informed of the H&HHVC's activities.



JAMES WOODFORD
Greenwood Post Editor



LINDA HARRISON
Project Support Worker

James works closely with Linda Harrison, Project Support Worker, whose responsibilities include liaison with Greenwood Post advertisers. In addition she is the administrator and supports the three other projects and the CEO. Completing the team is Angie Adams, bookkeeper, for all four projects.



ANGIE ADAMS
BOOKKEEPER



The H&HHVC website has also had a makeover with the aim of attracting more traffic.

Luke Gear has joined the team as IT administrator and works closely with the CEO to keep the website and publications fresh and informative as well as

maintaining our IT systems



Luke Gear, IT Administrator

The future

Forty years after it set up in business in the “dire” back room of the United Reform Church, the VCG is still going strong – a client base of 550 testifies to that. But it faces much the same issues, externally and internally, as it did in 1974. Clients have, and probably always will have, much the same range of problems and there is still a chronic shortage of volunteers, especially in the younger age range. Getting the necessary funding is a continual demand on management time. The number of legal and other government-imposed hurdles that need to be negotiated is increasing; these requirements are undoubtedly sensible (e.g. checking of volunteers’ details against the Criminal Records Bureau) but they impose yet another diversion from the VCG’s main purpose of directly assisting clients.

In describing Hannah Stanton as “never too busy to take on another commitment”, Dennis Green summarised the ethos of the VCG’s work. But the issue remains that the number of potential commitments will always exceed the VCG’s ability to satisfy them. Therefore the question is where best to devote the limited resources. The VCG would like to increase its outreach activities, helping people directly with such services as befriending, gardening or simple maintenance jobs. Meeting such an increase will depend on the VCG’s ability to attract funding, recruit volunteers and to provide adequate training and supervision for them.

The VCG Annual Report in May 1995 included a quote from Theodore Zeldin, the Oxford philosopher and historian, which, I am sure, neatly encapsulates the vision of the three VCG founders back in 1974:

“It is in the power of everybody, with a little courage, to hold out a hand to someone different, to listen, to attempt to increase, even by a tiny amount, the quantity of kindness and humanity in the world”.

That surely has been, and will remain, the mission of the VCG.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my particular appreciation to the following for their reminiscences and source materials in connection with this history:

Vera Bannister, Joan Barrett, Joan Barnett, Fiona Brennan, Catherine Burgess, Anita Fox, Heather Gibbs, Jack Gostling, Joan Heath, Jane Jewell, Synnove Jordan, Marie Martin, Jan Murray, Janet Nunn, Michael Ryder, Fay Simpson, Ted & Brenda Smith, Frances Smith, Adrian Sumption, Tessa Trapmore, John Webb, Paul White, Barbara Withers, James Woodford, Bryan Woodriffe plus the numerous, often anonymous, writers of articles in the CCG/VCG newsletters and Greenwood Post since 1974.

My apologies to anyone whose name I have not quoted directly. There are hundreds of volunteers, past and present, who have all made vital contributions, that naming them all would have taken several pages.

Thanks are due for permissions to use photographs as follows: to Richmond Library Local Studies Collection for the photo of Hampton Nurserylands; to the Dean of Ely Cathedral for the photo of Dennis Green; to Janet Nunn for the photo of the outside of the bookshop. Other photographs have been reproduced from publications in the VCG archive.

For those interested in Hannah's book, covering her work in South Africa 1956-60, its details are: "Go well, stay well", published by Hodder and Stoughton, 1961. The title comes from the exchange of expressions of goodwill when African friends are parting. The book is out of print but the VCG has a copy in its archive.

More details of the history of School Road may be found in Margery Orton's book "The birth & growth of Hampton Hill".

CCG/VCG Officers past and present

This list has been compiled from AGM minutes. In the early years there is some lack of clarity on roles so my apologies if there are any errors in the list.

Year	President	Chairman	Co-ordinator
1974/75		Hannah Stanton	
1975/76		Hannah Stanton David Woodroffe <u>Mark Robinson</u>	Maureen Sutton
-			
1976/77		Hannah Stanton David Woodroffe <u>Mark Robinson</u>	Maureen Sutton
-			
1977/78		Hannah Stanton <u>Briar Phillips</u>	Maureen Sutton
-			
1978/9		Hannah Stanton Marie Martin	Jan Murray Fay Robins
1979/80		John Kitchin Marie Martin <u>Christine Salter</u>	Jan Murray Fay Robins
-			
1980/1		John Kitchin Marie Martin <u>Christine Salter</u>	Jan Murray Fay Robins
-			
1981/2		John Kitchin Marie Martin <u>Christine Salter</u>	Jan Murray
-			
1982/3	Hannah Stanton	Christine Salter	Jan Murray
1983/4	Hannah Stanton	Mark Robinson <u>Fay Robins</u>	Jan Murray
-			
1984/5	Hannah Stanton	Diane White	Anita Fox
1985/6	Mark Robinson	Brenda Smith	Anita Fox

Year	President	Chairman	Co-ordinator
1986/7	Christine Salter	Joyce Doughty	Anita Fox
1987/8	Christine Salter	Roy Clements	Deirdre Curran
1988/9	Christine Salter	David Wilson/ <u>Barbara Withers</u>	Deirdre Curran
1989/90	Diane White	David Wilson	Deirdre Curran
1990/1	Diane White	David Wilson	Deirdre Curran
1991/2	Diane White	Chris Knowles	Deirdre Curran
1992/3	Barbara Withers	Chris Knowles	Deirdre Curran
1993/4	Barbara Withers	Joan Barnett	Deirdre Curran
1994/5	Barbara Withers	Joan Barnett	Deirdre Curran
1995/6	Barbara Withers	Catherine Burgess	Deirdre Curran
1996/7	Barbara Withers	Catherine Burgess	Deirdre Curran
1997/8	Barbara Withers	Jane Jewell	Deirdre Curran
1998/9	Barbara Withers	Jane Jewell	Deirdre Curran
1999/0		Heather Gibbs	Deirdre Curran
2000/1		Heather Gibbs	Deirdre Curran
2001/2		Nigel Newby	Deirdre Curran
2002/3		Nigel Newby	Fiona Brennan
2003/4		Carole Atkinson	Fiona Brennan
2004/5		Carole Atkinson	Fiona Brennan
2005/6		Jim Jewell	Fiona Brennan
2006/7		Jim Jewell	Fiona Brennan
2007/8		James Woodford	Fiona Brennan
2008/9		James Woodford	Fiona Brennan
2009/14		Nigel Newby	Fiona Brennan

Following the revisions to the constitution in 1999 the role of President was allowed to lapse after Barbara Withers retired. Barbara was given lifelong membership of the VCG.

Objectives of the VCG

From the constitution:

1. *To promote and provide services of a charitable nature for the benefit of the community* within the wards of Hampton, Hampton Hill and Hampton Nurserylands as constituted from time to time in the London Borough of Richmond with the aim of improving the conditions of life of the persons for whom the services are intended and of training them in the principles of good citizenship.
2. *To advance the education of the aid community* in particular in regard to mental, physical and social welfare.
3. *To provide further education and training* for men and women and to encourage them to undertake voluntary work in education, social services and charitable activities for the said community.
4. *To undertake and promote study, research and development* of work in the social services by volunteers either as individuals or in groups or as members of organisations and to publish the useful results of all such study and research.
5. *To carry out such other legally charitable purposes for the benefit of the said community* and the Executive Committee hereinafter constituted shall determine from time to time with particular reference to the continuing care of the aged, those physically and mentally disabled and those by reason of their youth, poverty or social and economic circumstances are in need.

Cover Illustration: Prill Hinckley

Do you have a tale to tell?

This is the Third edition of the history of HHVC.

If you have any stories or information about
HHVC which could be included in a future
edition, please contact the author or the Centre
Director.

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The Greenwood
Centre



Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care

THE LOCAL CHARITY FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Charity Number 1140070

Caring in The Hamptons since 1974

Published by Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care

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