Bereavement Care

for all who help the bereaved

Volume 2 No. 3 **Winter 1983**

Wrestling with the Worst

"What can you say to the mother of a child who's been murdered"?

Cruse's Chairman, Colin Murray Parkes, in his introduction to the recent international conference on Bereavement following Violence, told of forebodings, in the previous weeks, about the awe-inspiring topic Cruse had taken on. "It is a characteristic of violent bereavement that nobody wants to cope." he said. "It's not that nobody cares, but that everybody cares too much. They're so upset and they feel so helpless that they stay out of the way". Would many caregivers have the courage to come to the conference at all, he had wondered.

In the event there were over 300 delegates from many different walks of life: doctors and other healthcare workers, university teachers, social workers, clergy and service chaplains, police and prison staff, victim support scheme counsellors, and many others.

How did the conference try to tackle the tough themes on its agenda? In the first place all the four plenary speakers dared to lay bare, and share, details of awfulness gained from personal experience as well as theoretical knowledge. All four were not only able to describe their own subject fully, but also relate it to the (often very different) work of other caregivers. This opened the way for a full sharing of problems and verbalising of fears in the discussion groups.

More hopeful, less hopeless

What did the conference achieve? Many people said, in one way or another, "the wrestling made me fitter". There was also a general sense that most delegates went away more hopeful, less hopeless, about the subject than at the beginning. With such a subject it is surely a huge step if people returned to their work feeling even marginally better able to care for those bereaved by violence.

Summaries of two of the plenary speeches are printed on pages 4 and 6.

ROYAL PATRON FOR CRUSE

On the eve of our Silver Jubilee Year, we are thrilled to be able to announce that Her Majesty the Queen has agreed to become Royal Patron of Cruse as from 1st January.

Royal patronage is a wonderful milestone, a measure of the distance Cruse has travelled since its beginnings in 1959.

We are deeply grateful to Her Majesty. We know that she will take a sensitive personal interest in our special year, and our work and progress in the future. We feel sure that this splendid news will bring uplift and pleasure to everyone involved with Cruse.

DEREK NUTTALL

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

The 1984 Cruse professonal course will be at the Institute of Family Therapy, London, W.1. in 2 non-residential weekend blocks (9th-11th March & 13th-15th April). Fee £98. Details from Cruse House.

WELSH RESIDENTIAL COURSE ON BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING: See p.11

Since our last issue, Cruse branches have opened at:

Cheltenham: (Mrs. M. Meaker, 38 Regent Court, St. Stephen's Rd., Cheltenham, Glos.)
Taunton: (Mrs. P. Druce, 5 Woodstock Rd., Taunton TA1 1EJ. Tel: Taunton 54458).
South-East Surrey: (Mrs. J. Carr, 7 Ridge Green Close, S. Nutfield, Surrey. Tel. Nutfield Ridge 2518).
Alloa: (Mrs. N. Cowie, 99 Hill St., Alloa, Clacks. Tel: Alloa 215248).

Steering Committees have been formed at:

Guildford, High Wycombe, Melton Mowbray, Ogwr, Suffolk Coastal.

Published by cruse The National Organisation for the Widowed and their Children. Registered Charity No. 208078.