



The Barron and Wing: Residential Accommodation

Studio Block and Riverside Terrace



REMEDIAL EDUCATION
THROUGH PSYCHOTHERAPY AND
THE ARTS

THE WITHYMEAD CENTRE
COUNTRESS WEAR EXETER
Established by Deed of Trust

Founded 1942 by Gilbert and Irene Champernowne

THE WITHYMEAD CENTRE

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Joyce Partridge, L.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., who died in May, 1956, was Supervising Psychiatrist to the Centre from its foundation in 1947.	
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*REMEDIAL EDUCATION
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WITHMEAD is a residential centre which is undertaking therapeutic work based on the psychology of C. G. Jung. Its primary purpose is to help people who are in need of mental or emotional re-adjustment and in so doing to discover new ways in which such help can best be given. It is essentially a place of healing and not a laboratory—a family and not a hospital.

The National Health Service is, of course, designed to provide for the diagnosis and treatment of all kinds of illness, but it is nevertheless widely recognized that there are gaps which are not yet filled. In the field of mental health there is one such gap. Mental hospitals are seriously overcrowded and priority in acceptance must be given to people with serious mental illness. It is not therefore possible always to accept those who are on the edge of nervous or mental breakdown, and who, by treatment at this early stage, could be the more quickly restored to health. Some break down to the extent of being unable to carry on their normal occupations; others, still quite able to continue their duties in the outer world, are nevertheless aware of conflicts within themselves which impair the quality of the contribution which they would gladly make to life. The Centre can also help people with serious emotional problems, people who need the strength and courage to face life anew after some personal upheaval or tragedy. Such people are not normally recognized as being ill, and could not qualify for hospital treatment even if such treatment were suitable for them. It is just those individuals who feel most keenly their inner conflicts—perhaps even to the point of being temporarily incapacitated by them—who often carry within them potentialities for creative living.

The work of Withymead has many aspects, including:—

- (i) Preventive work, particularly with children and young people who have some slight or temporary maladjustment;
- (ii) Psychotherapeutic treatment;
- (iii) Rehabilitation for people who have had a mental illness and who need a bridge between the mental hospital and ordinary life;

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- (iv) Advisory work for those who come for support at times of crisis or acute difficulty in an otherwise normal life;
- (v) Vocational guidance;
- (vi) Educational work through lectures and study groups, linked with practical work in the studios.

All diagnosis is undertaken in conjunction with the Medical Staff and one or more of the psychotherapists and treatment varies according to the needs of the individual case. Analytical therapy is co-ordinated with therapy through creative expression. Those coming to the Centre in order to work out a psychological problem seldom count the time spent in recovery as a hiatus in ordinary life but go away feeling they have found psychological knowledge and understanding, and greater power of expression in the arts.

The Centre is equipped with studios for painting, modelling, music, drama and dance, and it has often been found that patients who cannot successfully communicate their problems, fears and difficulties in speech can express them and work them out in other media. There is no compulsion—patients may ignore the creative activities if they choose—but it is rare for patients not to find themselves absorbed by the work of one or other of the studios sooner or later. There is little formal teaching, unless it is asked for, but the resident staff are qualified to give it if it is wanted and are present in the studios for most of the day. For some people the work in the studios may be little more than a diversion; for most it is the vital key to health.

Residents come from widely varying backgrounds, a great number from the professional field. Among these are teachers, doctors, nurses and social workers, who come sometimes during holidays as students for psychological study. In this way a gap can often be bridged between educational and healing work.

In addition to practical work in the studios, weekly sessions of small reading groups are held to study books on psychological and kindred subjects. These are graded according to age and previous knowledge. Short courses of lectures related to the experimental work of the Centre are sometimes held and attended by residents and visitors. Study courses of longer duration, to include lectures and practical work, are also arranged from time to time to fill the needs of individual students.

THE COMMUNITY

AN IMPORTANT element of healthy life is the individual's contribution to the community. At Withymead everyone who is able and willing to do so shares in one or more of the many jobs that have to be done. Work in the house and studios, growing and harvesting the food from the garden, are essential contributions to the life of the Centre. Staff and patients also help in building operations and general maintenance work. Taking part in work of this kind produces a sense of belonging which counterbalances the sense of isolation that is a symptom of mental and emotional disorder.

The tendency in our world today towards fragmentation—a dealing with parts out of relation to a whole—is limiting in its effects. So, in the treatment of individuals, the needs of the total person may be overlooked in the haste to dispel a symptom which is the outward expression of his sickness. By relating themselves to a small coherent group, patients can be helped to regain their stability.

Results cannot be assessed or measured statistically. What can be said is that many who have come to Withymead in desperate need have found there new life and health, while others for whom life seemed to have no longer any meaning or purpose have found spiritual refreshment and creative vitality.



The Painting Studio

The Pottery



Building

Children's Wing and Garden



