



Dear Reader

Welcome to our final news sheet.

As you are no doubt aware, securing funding for the operational costs of the charity has remained a long-standing issue, and matters came to a head a few months ago, when the chair of our trustees issued a winding-up notice (printed below).

Founded by Roger Scotford (deceased 2018) as Adult Children Accusing Parents (ACAP), the BFMS was set up in 1993 following a moral panic about alleged historic child abuse by adult accusers who claimed to have recovered abuse memories after undergoing therapy. Roger was a tireless campaigner who raised awareness about false memory, providing help and support to families whose lives had been ruined by false allegations. The BFMS telephone helpline was inundated with 528 callers in the period from 1993 – 1994. The very first newsletter, published in May 1993, aptly summarised the plight of our falsely accused members:

ACAP is a group of parents searching for an understanding of a new phenomenon. Our shared tragedy results from an adult son or daughter making a claim of childhood sexual abuse. The group is promoting research into false memories and by publicising the existing knowledge of the problem, it is hoped that the rising tide of these false allegations can be stemmed...

We must acknowledge that childhood sexual abuse does exist, and many caring agencies are helping the victims overcome the damage caused. ACAP does not wish to detract in any way from their efforts. We hope that our work will ease their burden as the different problems facing our adult children and their families come to be recognised.

Our children are different because they claim that they had no knowledge of their abuse from the time it happened until the time they “recovered” their memories of it, decades later. This memory recovery was instigated by a therapist, a psychiatrist, or a counselor, who had been approached for help with an unrelated problem. Often, our children were encouraged by them to read “survivor” literature, including, in many cases, the American book, *The Courage to Heal*.

The final paragraph neatly encapsulates the remit of the BFMS.

Madeline took over as Director of the society in 1998. In her first newsletter editorial to members, Madeline commented:

I hope that we can all work together to take the Society into the future with the aim of ensuring that parents will never again have to endure the devastation that “false memories” wreak upon families. With unscientific beliefs still much in evidence among some mental health

Table of Contents

Editorial.....	1
Nearly Thirty Years	2
Winding Up	3
The Future	3

professionals we have a long struggle on our hands!

In the light of recent false memory-type allegations, this passage is illuminating. However, our caseload has declined significantly over time.

It is perhaps fitting to publish the short speech Madeline gave at our recent thank you buffet lunch, held in Bath.

Dr Kevin Felstead

Nearly Thirty Years

How did this work start and how did I come into this world of false memories? At the time, I was a working mother with two teenage children. I had a background of working for charities – one offering horticultural therapy for disabled people and one training volunteers for work in developing African countries.

It was 1993 and I was contacted by an employment agency to consider the post of deputy director working with Roger Scotford, the founder and director of the organisation called, Adult Children Accusing Parents. The title simply summed up what was happening. It had happened to him; he was an accused father looking for an academic understanding as to how and why this was happening. He found Professor John Money, who was a professor of paediatrics and medical psychology at Johns Hopkins University, Maryland who introduced him to Dr Pam Freyd who had started the False Memory Syndrome Foundation in 1992 after she and her husband had been accused. She informed Roger about a large meeting of grey-haired Americans who were facing the same problems Roger had encountered. He attended.

He returned to England and gave a powerful interview to the Daily Telegraph. The response was amazing with lots of similar stories being told. That was the beginning of our membership organisation. After an inaugural meeting of all those interested in meeting up, it was agreed to set up a registered charity and trustees were chosen. I know that we have one of those original trustees here today and I am very pleased that he will be taking a few minutes to speak to us later.

Back to my interview – it was a shock! I walked

into the room while Roger was taking a first call from a father who had been accused; the conversation was extraordinarily frank, and I proceeded cautiously. Cleverly, Roger recognised that I had never been confronted with the subject matter openly discussed in his office and after an hour's chat he advised that I take away a number of academic articles (all American, at that time) about the development of therapeutic practices inciting recovered memories of childhood abuse, and to take a couple of weeks to consider the problem, to see if I wanted to work in the field. Once I had worked my way through the articles, I felt committed to join this organisation determined to help challenge this new threat to family life.

By 1994 we were applying for charitable status and changed the name to the British False Memory Society. We won three years of pump-priming funding from the Department of Health, although I clearly recall the problems, we encountered in claiming the final tranche following the change of Government in 1997. It was all part of the development of a powerful divide between the burgeoning therapeutic industry and the academic exposure of the 'Memory Wars'.

It is a lifetime ago now and although it has been a continuing struggle to keep the organisation going for nearly thirty years specifically for all those who need a voice otherwise denied them, many would say that that battle has been won; sadly we know that cases do still occur and we are saddened that we will not be here for those people whose lives will be turned upside down but they will be able to gain much reassurance by reading the valuable content of our continuing website.

We owe a toast to the dear departed Roger Scotford and his fellow trustees who have been willing over the years to pin their names publicly to the mast, and of course to all our supportive members who have believed in us enough to give their ongoing support. Thank you all.

I would also like to say a big thank you to each of you. It has been a huge pleasure to work for the BFMS, although I wish the circumstances were different.

For those who may not be acquainted with the winding up order, it has been printed here in full.

Madeline Greenhalgh
Director
BFMS

Notice of winding up the BFMS

For three decades BFMS has been a beacon of integrity, knowledge, support, and information. I am sure you are aware that many small charities are struggling financially.

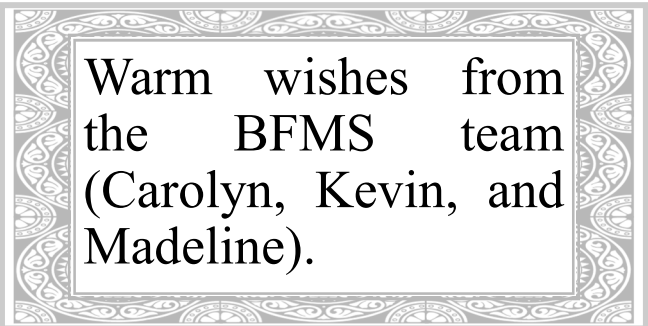
At our recent Trustees meeting we looked at the present financial situation and evaluated what finances would be required to sustain the running of the society in the future. We as trustees and our wonderful staff have trawled the sources of funding over a lengthy period with little or no success in locating secure finance despite many hours and days of research and applications which were eventually turned down.

There is also a further issue we must recognise, one of age and succession. Most of our trustees are advancing in years; several of us are approaching 80 years of age, also let's not ignore Madeline and Carolyn who are now of retirement age. Sadly, we have no successors to carry the society forward; therefore, with heavy hearts, we, the Trustees, announce that the society will close by the end of the year and, as one would expect, in an orderly and graceful way as possible.

We must not ignore the generous and unstinting support our membership has provided over the decades. While we are incredibly grateful for that support, it would be most unfair to seek support from you once again, and with no prospect of securing longer-term funding.

We intend to maintain the website for a further five years, albeit with a different name. Kevin is contributing to an academic paper (if accepted) focusing on the work of the BFMS; he is also writing a book (working outwards from *Fractured Families*) which will be ready for publication next year. Our intention is to wind down the operation on a positive note, and to leave a legacy of good working.

Yours
Chair of the Trustees



Warm wishes from
the BFMS team
(Carolyn, Kevin, and
Madeline).

Managing the continuation of the BFMS Website in the future

You will have gleaned the importance to us of maintaining our website as a future resource for anyone facing the sort of issues you, our members, have had to deal with over the years. We also want you to continue to be able to access the vast collection of material that has built up on the site over 25 years.

Sorting out how this can be managed has proved tricky as we will be calling on the goodwill of two of our current trustees and the willingness of Kevin, Madeline and Carolyn, to continue to guide the site for some years to come as well as seeking support from our stalwart members who want to see that the resource is maintained and made available to anyone who needs access to this unique resource.

As, is understood, we do not have the funds to pay staff for the work involved but nonetheless we will need funding to pay for a recurring subscription to host the website on the internet and to protect the domain name. There will be a need for expert technical help to transfer the website to its new home and potential occasions when we need to iron out any future issues with it that may arise.

An option that fulfils our needs is to set up a Trust to manage the website. The Trust should be simple to run with minimal administrative overheads.

It need only be run by two or three trustees. With my knowledge of running the BFMS I am proposing myself as a trustee so that I may continue to help but as with any trusteeship, on a voluntary basis.

Liaison with the Charity Commission and with HMRC are necessary to clear the way for the setting up of the Trust. As soon as we are able to confirm the address of the newly settled website I will be in touch with our members to give you the details. At this stage I am unsure just when we will be able to confirm that the process is complete but would like to contact members with this information even if this means we run into the early part of 2023. If you no longer wish me to contact you please do let me know before the end of 2022 by emailing me at :-
madeline@bfms.org.uk

Madeline

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Archive of the False Memory Syndrome Foundation
www.fmsfonline.org

The Scientific and Professional Advisory Board provides BFMS with guidance and advice concerning future scientific, legal and professional enquiry into all aspects of false accusations of abuse. Whilst the members of the board support the purposes of BFMS as set out in its brochure, the views expressed in this newsletter might not necessarily be held by some or all of the board members. Equally, BFMS may not always agree with the views expressed by members of the board.

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