



NEWSLETTER

Contents

- 2 Meeting announcements
- 3 A call for direct Action
- 4 In the News and pertinent Entertainment
- 5 An Update on Tony Nicklinson
- 6 A personal statement
- 7 A 'Do not resuscitate' tattoo?
- 8 What are Google Alerts?
- 9 The Author's Interview
- 10 Interview continued
- 11 Befriending Service Rotas
- 12 Contact information

From your editor

Welcome to our latest issue. I hope you enjoyed issue 43 and my apologies for the poor formatting; we are in transition to a new format and the use of new software. It may take a while to iron out some glitches. Please bear with us. Once we are done the newsletter will look fabulous and new!

I also want to thank you for all your contributions. I have had a rich source of items to select from for this edition and have still more for the next. Keep them coming!

This issue continues our focus on a core issue for our members: Margo Macdonald's Bill. As you know the bill seeks to 'enable a competent adult with a terminal illness or condition to request assistance to end their own life, and to decriminalize certain actions taken by others to provide such assistance'. **The consultation ends on April 30th, 2012.** We know that many responses against the bill have been received, but not as many from our members in support for the bill. To those of you who have written in, thank you. To those of you have not yet done so, please put this newsletter down right now and use the insert enclosed to make your views known before the deadline. Or go to our website, all you need is available there.

On a different note, I had the pleasure of doing my first author's interview. I hope this will be a regular feature and that you enjoy part 1 of my interview with Richard Cote, author of 'In search of gentle death'.

**ACT
NOW**

April 30th, 2012 deadline!! Please send your insert today. Thank you. Included in this edition is a separate sheet for you to complete. All responses count, even if you only say 'I support your bill'. You do not have to live in Scotland to express your support.

Meeting Announcements

- **Update from Libby Wilson on Council meeting held on April 10, 2012:** Council approved the new evolving format of the Newsletter and sent congratulations to the editor. We now have the benefit of a post-graduate law student – Amanda-Jane Scanlon to act as our Minute secretary at Council meetings. She has already proved her worth and we are delighted that it is no longer necessary for a member to try and record our proceedings as well as taking part in the discussions. We took a whole page advert in the February issue of House Magazine (sent to all MPs) opposite a 'Dialogue' article on Assisted Dying between Lord Falconer and Baroness Ilona Finlay. Fate is responding to Consultation documents from the General Medical Council (open to individual members of the public via GMC website) and Margo MacDonald's Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill.
 - **The next Glasgow meeting:** will be on Saturday June 23 in the Blythswood Suite at the Mitchell Library. We have arranged the following speaker: **RUSSEL OGDEN**, an internationally recognized Canadian speaker and writer on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide who has recently founded the Farewell Foundation in support of self-chosen death. He says, 'it is unlawful to provide the means and physical assistance for self-chosen death, but it is not unlawful to support or attend one'. We hope many of you can attend on the day, as this is a great opportunity to hear at first hand from someone who has been personally involved. Listen to this 5-minute interview where he discusses his original research:
<http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/rights-freedoms/sue-rodriguez-and-the-right-to-die-debate/history-of-euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide-in-canada.html>
 - **The Glasgow meeting at the Mitchell Library on February 18th was well attended:** Joanne Ramsey, Lecturer in Medical Law, University of Glasgow, gave a very informative talk on the legal aspects of Advance Directives (Advance Decisions/Living Wills). She gave her presentation clearly and succinctly despite being unable to use PowerPoint due to the absence of a connecting cable! The audience response was, as always, lively and informed.
 - **London meeting held on March 30th:** At this well-attended meeting, the focus was on providing practical information on how a mentally competent individual (terminally ill; severely disabled; or very elderly, with a severe medical problem) can travel today from the UK to Switzerland for a doctor-assisted suicide there, with the help of Dignitas, EX International, or Lifecircle. The main speakers were Michael Irwin, Liz Nichols and Libby Wilson. All those present received a copy of the recently updated FATE "UK Guide to Dignitas" (it is interesting to note that, only a few years ago, the distribution of such a booklet would have been considered illegal). Also, on this occasion, there was a mini-seminar on the preparation and revision of Advance Decisions. The date for the next meeting will be published in the next edition of this newsletter.
-

A proposal for direct action by Ian Smith.

For those of you who do not know me I am a 75 years old – former Fife Police Inspector.

At the Saturday, 18th February meeting in the Mitchell Library, the assembly very kindly allowed me to express my deep concerns about where we stand at present and, depending on events, where we might find ourselves in the next few years. With Margo MacDonald's proposed bill in mind, I highlighted the assets we have, to take the fight to this new parliament:

- Margo MacDonald – an M.S.P. – independent of party pressures – at the end of her political career, so no concerns regarding re-election – very well known, popular, charismatic and given her Parkinson disease, a clear personal reason for wanting change.
- Libby Wilson – Still a force to be reckoned with despite being a few years out of her teens – a radio celebrity who will go anywhere and do much more than we should allow her to do, to achieve her and our aims.
- Dr. Michael Irwin – our most high profile member as former Medical Director of the United Nations – who, like Libby, has stuck his neck out on several occasions to achieve the success we all want, to the point that both could have lost their liberty. He, I am sure would be prepared to do even more.

Many other members make a not insignificant contribution. Since 1935 there have been some ten attempts to have the law changed to enable hopelessly ill people to receive some assistance to achieve a peaceful death. Argument and persuasion appear to be the only weapons used and this approach has failed on every occasion. It rather looks to me that it “ain't working” or at least, while there are signs of green shoots, success is still far over the horizon.

The religious right, our main opposition, will not be moved by argument, no matter how convincing a case we make and their pressure on the politicians will ensure no change. I expressed the view that this up coming bill is the last, best chance we will have of achieving change in our lifetime. We, as an organisation, must pull out all the stops and consider what has, up till now been, “a step too far.” I am here asking you to consider the possibility of some form of direct action to perhaps startle the politicians, get them to sit up and take note. It might give them the bottle to press back against the churches – think suffragettes. If we fail this time and some years down the

***ACT
NOW***

I would like to form a small group of members who will sit down together and discuss what possible direct action we could take to push the process forward, and hopefully from amongst that number, those who were able and willing could in fact take some limited action. As we would be acting in the name of FATE, only action approved by council would be acted upon. Libby has authorised me to go ahead on this score. Anyone interested please contact me at iantismith@virginmedia.com or by snail mail at: Ian Smith, 12 Ashludie Place, Kirkcaldy, KY2 6JZ.

In the news...

- TWO film students from the University of West London have won a prestigious festival award for their documentary on assisted suicide. <http://www.ealinggazette.co.uk/ealing-news/local-ealing-news/2012/04/12/students-win-award-for-assisted-suicide-film-64767-30744186/>

The opposition has been busy writing against Margo MacDonald MSP' Bill. A reason to make sure you make your views heard before April 30th? <http://www.scotsman.com/the-scotsman/opinion/letters/resurrection-of-assisted-suicide-debate-1-2077264>

From our website, a lighthearted piece from spoof news website News Biscuit, about a new 'homeopathic assisted dying remedy'. <http://www.newsbiscuit.com/2012/01/19/homeopath-to-start-offering-assisted-suicide-remedy/>

Husband of Debbie Purdy told 'quit work' for benefits. Ms. Purdy has been summoned to court for failing to pay her council tax bills. She has multiple sclerosis and is being prosecuted for not paying council tax. She says her husband has been told they would be better off if he quit work. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-16714439>

When faced with a terminal illness, medical professionals, who know the limits of modern medicine, often opt out of life-prolonging treatment. An American doctor explains in this article why the best death can be the least medicated. http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/feb/08/how-doctors-choose-die?CMP=tw_t_gu

And pertinent entertainment...

- Derek Humphry explains how he founded The Hemlock Society and the dangers he faced: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_m_Y9cJBwvw

An Internet Exclusive! This video is unlisted as yet and the link has kindly been given to us by the interviewer, so that we can watch Libby's interview before the general public: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMuHAd1SWsc>

Afternoon drama from the BBC written by Jonathan Myerson: 'Scotland has legalized assisted dying and have arrested a couple on their way to the new Dignitas clinic in Glasgow. But is this just a way of promoting Scottish independence and embarrassing the government?' One of our members has shared a personal link to an excerpt of the programme here: <http://tinyurl.com/bnt15kd>

The Case of Tony Nicklinson: An update

The British Humanist Association supports a fair hearing in court for right-to-die case, Tony Nicklinson. We reproduce below the article published on March 12, 2012 in their website. (<http://www.humanism.org.uk/news/view/1000>)

"A severely paralyzed man campaigning for a doctor to be permitted to lawfully end his life has won the right for his case to be heard. The British Humanist Association (BHA) has welcomed the ruling by the court, describing it as 'important opportunity for a complex case to be fairly and properly considered'.

The High Court has today ruled that Tony Nicklinson has 'established an arguable case' with reference to two declarations he is seeking; firstly, that it would not be unlawful on the grounds of necessity for a physician to terminate or assist in the termination of his life, and secondly, 'a declaration that the current law of murder and/or of assisted suicide is incompatible with Mr Nicklinson's right to respect for private life under Article 8, contrary to sections 1 and 6 Human Rights Act 1998'.

The case will now proceed, although Mr Justice Charles struck out Mr Nicklinson's request to seek a third declaration that domestic law fails 'adequately to regulate the practice of active euthanasia (both voluntary and involuntary)', and that this failure was in breach of Article 2 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

BHA Head of Affairs Pavan Dhaliwal commented 'We strongly believe Mr Nicklinson's case should be heard. The BHA has consistently defended the rights of all individuals to make decisions about their own lives so long as they are fully informed and do not result in harm to others. At present, the law does not ensure these basic principles of autonomy are respected for those who find their lives unbearable and wish to end them, but cannot do so because they are physically incapacitated.

'We will continue to call for an ethical and humane law on assisted dying that would protect the vulnerable, but also allow mentally competent adults the right to die with dignity in a time and manner of their own choosing.' "

Read more on this here:

- ◀ A paralysed man who wants a doctor to be able to lawfully end his life can proceed with his "right-to-die" case, a High Court judge has ruled. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17336774>

A Personal Statement

Tony Nicklinson

(<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2012/mar/12/right-to-die-hearing-tony-nicklinson>)

"It left me paralysed below the neck and unable to speak. I need help in almost every aspect of my life.

"I cannot scratch if I itch, I cannot pick my nose if it is blocked and I can only eat if I am fed like a baby – only I won't grow out of it, unlike the baby.

"I have no privacy or dignity left. I am washed, dressed and put to bed by carers who are, after all, still strangers. You try defecating to order whilst suspended in a sling over a commode and see how you get on.

"I am fed up with my life and don't want to spend the next 20 years or so like this.

"Am I grateful that the Athens doctors saved my life? No, I am not.

"If I had my time again, and knew then what I know now, I would not have called the ambulance but let nature take its course.

"I was given no choice as to whether or not I wanted to be saved.

"However, I do concede that it was a fair assumption given that I had asked for the ambulance and associated medical staff.

"What I object to is having my right to choose taken away from me after I had been saved.

"It seems to me that if my right to choose life or death at the time of initial crisis is reasonably taken away it is only fair to have the right to choose back when one gets over the initial crisis and has time to reflect.

"I'm not depressed so do not need counselling. I have had over six years to think about my future and it does not look good.

"I have locked-in syndrome and I can expect no cure or improvement in my condition as my muscles and joints seize up through lack of use.

"Indeed, I can expect to dribble my way into old age. If I am lucky I will acquire a life-threatening illness such as cancer so that I can refuse treatment and say no to those who would keep me alive against my will.

"By all means protect the vulnerable. By vulnerable I mean those who cannot make decisions for themselves – just don't include me.

"I am not vulnerable. I don't need help or protection from death or those who would help me.

"If the legal consequences were not so huge, ie life imprisonment, perhaps I could get someone to help me. As things stand, I can't get help.

"I am asking for my right to choose when and how to die to be respected.

"I know that many people feel that they would have failed if someone like me takes his own life and that life is sacred at all costs.

"I do not agree with that view. Surely the right and decent thing to do would be to empower people so that they can make the choice for themselves.

"Also, why should I be denied a right, the right to die of my own choosing, when able-bodied people have that right and only my disability prevents me from exercising that right?"

A 'Do Not Resuscitate' tattoo?

Joy Tomkins has had the tattoo since the start of 2011. An 81-year-old woman from Norfolk has had "Do Not Resuscitate" tattooed across her chest in case she falls ill and attempts are made to revive her. Joy Tomkins had the message tattooed, along with "P.T.O." and an arrow on her back, earlier this year. The former magazine company secretary said she could not bear to "make beds and wash-up for another 20 years".

Despite having a living will for about 30 years, she said the tattoo meant there was be "no excuse" for error. "The tattoo is immediate... no excuse for not knowing what I thought," she said. The grandmother, who is diabetic but said she was not seriously ill, said she got the idea from a retired nurse, who did something similar in 2003. She said her willingness to not be resuscitated would "save money" for the NHS.

Mrs Tomkins, who went to a tattoo parlour to get her message done, said she was happy with life but stated she would be "just as happy" not to wake up in the morning. She added she was determined to have the final say if she falls seriously ill.

Dr Anna Smajdor, a lecturer in medical ethics at the University of East Anglia's Medical School, said she could see that Mrs Tomkins wanted to send a "very clear message" and "cover all bases" with her tattoo.

However, Dr Smajdor said tattoos were not effective "as a sole way of ensuring wishes are fulfilled" as they would "not be legally binding".

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-norfolk-14802369

What are Google Alerts? How to set up your own alerts to stay updated (...if you use a computer)

By Dr. Hugh Wynne, PEng.

When I mentioned at our last meeting that I used Google Alerts to search automatically for news of interesting topics, it was suggested I write a few lines in explanation for this newsletter. What follows is adapted & shortened from the Google article, which may be found at:

<https://support.google.com/alerts/bin/answer.py?hl=en&topic=28415&answer=175925&parent=28413&rd=2>

Google Alerts are emails sent to you when Google finds new results -such as web pages - that match your search term. You can use Google Alerts to monitor anything on the Web. For example, people use Google Alerts to:

- Monitor a developing news story.
- Get the latest news on topic
- Find out what's being said about them.

You enter a query that you are interested in, Google Alerts checks regularly to see if there are new results for your query; if there are, Google Alerts sends them to you in an email.

For general queries like [*euthanasia*], you may get new results every day. For specific topics, like [*assisted dying Albania*], you may not, but you will find out when something new appears.

The link above leads to several further pages of helpful information.

If you have a craving to know about something new, I would suggest you give Google alerts a try.

Visit: <http://www.google.com/alerts>



The author's interview: Richard N. Cote

(Part 1)

"Côté's book is unique in being the most current, the widest ranging, and remarkably intimate look at those people behind the burgeoning world right-to-die movement in the last thirty years." Derek Humphry

After five years' full-time work, Côté's intensely researched book, *In Search of Gentle Death: The Fight for Your Right to Die With Dignity* will be available in a deluxe hardcover edition as well as all eBook formats in April 2011 from Corinthian Books and through Amazon.com. It is not yet available from Amazon.co.uk, but if you want to buy the book Corinthian Books ships worldwide.

Through its 525 pages and 90 images, Côté describes the rapidly growing international death-with-dignity movement through direct interviews with its founders, leaders, and volunteers worldwide. The book explores why and how they developed means that people who were terminally ill or enduring unspeakable, untreatable pain could use to end their tortured life legally, painlessly, in a dignified way, and surrounded by their loved ones, at the time and place of their own choosing.

We have been lucky enough to be given an interview with the author. In this edition we offer a light hearted look at the author who kindly agreed to answer the questions below, which originate for the Actor's Studio in America. In the next edition we will review the book and you will be able to read the in-depth interview which will explore the author's passion for the following quote: *I want to ask you, gentlemen, if I cannot give consent to my own death, then whose body is this? Who owns my life?* (Sue Rodriguez to a Canadian parliamentary committee, 1992).

When asked to say a few words to our members about the value of the book to them, Richard said:

"The answer to what happens at the end of life will never change - but, thanks in great part to the death-with-dignity movement, the QUALITY of our last weeks or days is now open to our OWN CONTROL. We could have a "good death"; one where pain control is in OUR hands, as is the choice of WHERE to die, WHEN TO DIE, and we could have the option of dying at home among family and friends. It has been brave heroes such as Libby Wilson and Nan Maitland and Michael Irwin and Chris Docker who have brought this to the public's attention in Scotland and the rest of the U.K."

The book also has a whole chapter on Scotland titled 'Those Feisty Scots'.

Continued from page 9...

The author's interview: Richard N. Cote

His answers to the Actor's Studio questions can be found below. Enjoy!
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inside_the_Actors_Studio)

What is your favourite word?

Empowerment

What is your least favourite word?

Impossible

What turns you off?

Those who would impose their value systems on me without contemplating the possible value of mine.

What turns you on?

Those who encourage the good of the many over that of the few.

What is your favourite sound?

Joyous laughter and an encouraging voice.

What is your least favourite sound?

The ranting of zealots.

What is your favourite curse word?

Zot! Alors!

What is your favourite profession?

Writing, with the hope that the result has at least the potential to make the world a better place or laugh out loud.

If you had not chosen this profession, what profession would you have attempted?

Underwater archeology.

What profession would you never have attempted?

I am intellectually omnivorous and terminally curious.

Individuals changing the world: Watch this film if you can find it!

The Sea Inside (2004)

The film focuses on the death of Ramon Sampedro, a sailor who became a quadriplegic after injuries caused in a diving accident when he was 25. After 29 years, he asked for assisted suicide and when refused, he wrote a book about his suffering, appealed to the Spanish Parliament, took out a court case, all of which failed. "I'm just a head stuck to a body," he stated. Eventually a group of euthanasia sympathizers successfully helped him with his suicide. In Spanish, with the title 'Mar Adentro', the film won a special jury award at the Venice Film Festival.

www.finalexit.org/assisted_suicide_in_the_movies.html

Befriending Service

If you would like to talk to someone about end-of-life choices, please contact one of our volunteer befrienders listed below. Please help us by keeping to the times given.

Monday	Libby	6 pm to 9 pm	0141 334 3287
Tuesday	Libby	9 am to 12 noon	0141 334 3287
Wednesday	Libby	6 pm to 9 pm	0141 334 3287
Thursday	Libby	9 am to 12 noon	0141 334 3287
Friday	Libby	1 pm to 4 pm	0141 334 3287
Saturday	Joan	9 am to 12 noon	0141 956 1967
Sunday	Joan	6 pm to 9 pm	0141 956 1967
	Hugh	All reasonable times	0141 332 7153 07771 668 365

Friends at the End

FRIENDS AT THE END

Tel: 0141 334 3287 info@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

11 Westbourne Gardens Glasgow G12 9XD

Website: www.friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Membership £15 p.a.
Joint Membership £20 p.a.
(Two people at the same address)

Webmaster:
Alan Henness
webmaster@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Apply to Membership Secretary:
Douglas Hall
6 Learmonth Park
Edinburgh EH4 1BZ
membership@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Newsletter Editor:
Mariana Funes
11 Westbourne Gardens
Glasgow G12 9XD
editor@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

All Information Leaflets:

Jean Hewit
8 Blairatholl Gardens
Glasgow G11 7QN
jean.hewit@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Book Enquiries and DVD Distribution:

Liz Nichols
42 New Road,
Reading, RG1 5JD.
liznichols@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor or of the Society

INFORMATION LEAFLETS AVAILABLE

General Information:

Introductory Leaflet on Friends at the End - Our Aims and Activities
Why we support Euthanasia

Advance Decision/Directive Packs (Living Will Packs):

Basic Pack Now you have decided to make an Advance Decision/Directive
Advance Decision/Directive (Living Will) Form

Basic Advance Directive pack and the following for Scotland

(£5 each for non-members)
Welfare Power of Attorney in Scotland
Specimen Welfare Power of Attorney
Do Not Attempt Resuscitation
Extended Values History

Basic Advance Decision pack and the following for England

(£5 each for non-members)
Lasting Power of Attorney England and Wales
Do Not Attempt Resuscitation
Extended Values History

Pro-Choice Living Will

Explanation of Alternative Types of Living Will
Alternative Living Will Form
Extended Values History

Each pack includes labels for fixing to the front of your medical records
Individual leaflets in the packs can be obtained separately from Jean Hewit

Additional Leaflets:

Directions to your Carers When You are Terminally Ill
UK Guide to Dignitas £3, available to members only

FOR THE FOLLOWING BOOK and DVD

Apply to Liz Nichols 42 New Road Reading RG1 5JD liznichols@friends-at-the-end.org.uk

Final Exit by Derek Humphry £10 inc p+p

Final Exit by Derek Humphry on DVD £12.50 inc p+p

A Good Death - An Argument for Voluntary Euthanasia by Rodney Syme approx £30 inc p & p.
Available from www.thebookdepository.co.uk