

YOUR VOICE

In Sheffield Mental Health

A magazine for users, carers and professionals

www.yourvoicesheffield.org

Summer 2014

No 72

Exhibition promotes mental health recovery



Report by Rose Murphy

The sunniest day in June saw the opening of the 'Seasons' art exhibition at the 35 Chapel Walk gallery. This exhibition of no mean talent, which ran from the 18th - 21st of the month, featured artwork created by people city-wide across Sheffield who are using art as part of their own mental health recovery.

The exhibition was a result of a partnership between service users, staff and volunteers at Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust's SPACES mental health recovery service and art student volunteers from Sheffield Hallam University.

The exhibition was designed to promote the creative and artistic

talents of people with mental health issues to as wide a Sheffield audience as possible and to help break down the stigma and barriers related to mental health issues.

The project also aimed to highlight the importance and value of creative expression and activity regarding mental well-being.

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Several of the articles in this issue of *Your Voice* talk about feeling different in childhood as a prelude to later difficulties related to mental distress. Shaun Hunt, who is featured in this edition's profile feature, explains that he went through life from an early age believing he was different from everyone else; Terry Simpson talks about being out of place among the 'posh kids' at school, whilst at the same time leaving behind his working class roots; and John Mills outlines how he felt different and apart from other people, even as a schoolboy. These articles highlight the difficulties of feeling or being different in a society that values conformity over self-expression. This aversion to real or perceived difference is one of the main factors underlying stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes towards people with mental health problems.

Both Shaun and John stress how important the support of others is when trying to come to terms with traumatic and stigmatising life experiences. Shaun talks about the value of human contact in institutional settings, the importance of peer support between people "who were sharing a terrible moment in time together," and the strength and self-confidence he gained from others' belief in him; and John focuses on the support he receives from close friends and his partner as a means of managing a difficult past and looking forward to a hopeful future.

The theme of making contact and developing connections as a way of breaking down stigma and barriers is taken up by Rose Murphy in her review of the recent 'Seasons' exhibition, which she praises for generating a "beautiful creative buzz" filling the gallery with good feeling and a sense of well-being and magic.

Justine Morrison

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Acknowledgements: We would like to acknowledge the input that the Sheffield mental health community makes to the ongoing success of *Your Voice*. Sheffield City Council provides our core funding. Our greatest debt of gratitude is reserved for all of our contributors and readers – we wouldn't exist without you.

The FUSE fund is open for applications

Sheffield voluntary organisations are encouraged to apply to a new funding scheme

A new voucher scheme is available to priority groups, providing free services through the FUSE partnership.

Funded by Sheffield City Council, support and services are available specifically to organisations which work with disadvantaged communities, primarily;

- BME people
- disability / health
- carers
- older people
- young people and children
- LGBT

The scheme also supports groups that are user-led, and groups with no paid staff. Organisations with an annual income of less than £100,000 will be prioritised.

There are more than 90 services available through FUSE, supporting organisations with a range of issues. You could access the fund to receive:

- tailored support to set up a new, robust finance system
- advice and guidance on applying for funds
- a 3 month trial of a fully-managed payroll service

- training for your staff and/or volunteers
- specialist support around business planning, commissioning and legal issues
- a secure, efficient email system
- a free review and update of your HR policies

The full service directory is on the Fuse website. For further details and how to apply, please visit:

<http://www.fusesheffield.org.uk/highlights/20>

If eligible, you will then be issued with vouchers (up to approximately £350) that can be used to pay for services from any of the FUSE partners.

There is £20,000 allocated to the scheme, and vouchers will be issued on a first come, first served basis.

The scheme runs until 31st March 2015.



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The opening ceremony included a warming speech from the Lord Mayor Peter Rippon and a very moving talk from Sheffield artist Joe Scarborough who said that art is an area in your life where you have control and that when you are creating something, you can close off from the world. As he said: "It's like being selfish but in a good way."

Also present at the opening were some of the artists themselves, Will Mayor, Assistant Team Manager for SPACES, and art students Zara Lees, Sandra Prince and Joy Clements, who, working in partnership with SPACES staff, gave their experience and advice so that the seasons theme of the project could be interpreted by each artist as an individual.

I spoke to Will Mayor, who enthused: "This exhibition is really to highlight the importance of creative arts in supporting people's emotional well-being, helping to define and encourage recovery."

This was echoed in the words of one of the artists who told me: "It's nice to see other artists' work and also collaborate with them in a joint effort. It was good to work over a few weeks and see how it developed. It has given me a sense of achievement, helped me relax and it takes away my troubles and anxieties. A good end to a bad week!"

Many people attended the event which showed exceptional talent. As I walked around the space, taking in the work and the people around me, it became clear that this beautiful creative buzz was filtering from everyone's core, filling the gallery with good feeling, well-being and more than a little seasonal magic. Hats off to a splendid group and a fantastic exhibition!

For artwork from the exhibition see page 11.

Call for evidence about the Work Capability Assessment

This call for evidence is part of the 5th independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA). It is intended for organisations and individuals who have information on how the WCA is operating and further changes that may be needed to improve the process.

Evidence from this review will be used to inform a report to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which will be laid before Parliament before the end of 2014. The consultation closes on 15th August 2014.

For further information, including how to take part, please visit :

<http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/work-capability-assessment-year-5-call-for-evidence>

A Sheffield Mental Health Strategy for 2014 and beyond

What 3 things would you change about mental health services?

The last Sheffield Strategy for Mental Health and Well-being was published in 2009. The Mental Health Partnership Board is now updating the strategy for the next five years to reflect recent mental health policy guidance and to recognise the views and wishes of service users and their carers and we need your help.

We need to understand the experience of service users and carers who seek help when it is needed, and to understand what assists them in their journey of 'recovery'.

We need to find out what is working and what is not; what helps at those decisive moments and what does not?

We want to know from you what you think needs to be different or changed over the next 3 – 5 years to improve the experience of getting help about mental health and illness.

In particular, we want to know if you could change three things about mental health services and support what would they be? Please tell us why, using your own personal experience if you can.

The deadline for responses is the end of July. To take part and find out more please visit the website and open 'mental health strategy' at:

<http://www.sheffieldccg.nhs.uk/get-involved/Your-Views.htm>

If you are unable to access the internet, please request a paper copy of the webpage by contacting:

Rachael Winterbottom
Tel: 0114 305 1056

Mind launches General Election manifesto

Take action for better mental health

In June Mind launched its manifesto for the General Election 2015, 'Take action for better mental health'. The charity is calling on the next government to make six commitments to improve the lives of everyone affected by mental health problems:

- Reduce mental health stigma and discrimination and continue to support the Time to Change campaign
- Mandate the NHS in England to offer talking therapies to everyone who needs them within 28 days of referral
- Ensure everyone gets safe, speedy and accessible crisis care whenever they need it, no matter where they turn
- Transform the support for people who are not working because of their mental health and create a system that really helps them to overcome the barriers they face
- Increase the overall NHS mental health budget by a minimum of 10 per cent in real terms over five years
- Implement a national strategy that helps everyone to take care of their mental wellbeing

Mind is inviting all those who support their aims to join them in taking action for better mental health by sending the manifesto to their local MP and asking them to share it with their party.

To read the manifesto and to send it to you local MP, visit Mind's website at:

<http://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/policies-issues/in-parliament/general-election-2015/mind-supporters/>

Carers Trust creates online community for young carers

'Matter' has been created by Carers Trust to provide an online space for young adult carers aged 16 - 25 to connect, share their experiences, and access trusted support.

The vision of the site is to bring together young adult carers from across the UK, as well as those who work with young adult carers, via an online space which is safe, fun, and most of all, inspiring.

Built for and by young adult carers, Matter is part social network, part online advice centre. It is intended to help young adult carers feel less isolated from others in similar situations. Users can post updates, comment on and like each other's posts, and exchange private messages.

There is an online community team on hand to provide support as and when needed, by messaging or email.

If you're aged 16 - 25 and are caring for a family member or friend, Matter is a platform for you to share your story with others and to hear the stories of those with similar experiences to your own. Your thoughts, your world, matter.

To find out more about how Matter works visit the FAQs page at:

<http://matter.carers.org/help>

How to cope as a carer

Mind has produced an information booklet about looking after your own mental health as a carer that you can read and print for free.

It offers advice on how to look after yourself and where to get further support.

http://shop.mind.org.uk/shop/booklets/practical_help/326

Mental Health Action Group Sheffield

An update on the drop-in centre's new venue and an invitation to new members

Mental Health Action Group Sheffield (MHAGS) has now successfully relocated to a new venue on Creswick Street at Langsett Estate. Having moved from Castle Market back in October 2013, and after a lot of work getting the new venue ready, we want to let *Your Voice* readers know that we are still around!

monthly day trips to places like Whitby, Skegness and Blackpool as well as camping trips.

We also give everybody free access to our very popular internet café and there is always someone who can help with a problem or refer you to another person or organisation if necessary.



MHAGS members at the new venue

MHAGS is open as usual and continues to provide a cheerful and non-judgemental environment for people who have, or have previously experienced, mental health problems.

We aim to create a safe environment for members to come and meet others for support, a chat and friendship.

We have an open lounge with tea and coffee making facilities and a fully working kitchen offering meals from £2.50 which is open most week days from 12 noon – 2.30 pm. In order to help with funding, we have introduced a daily charge of 20p per day.

MHAGS also offers a range of activities which include an arts and crafts group, a photography group and games facilities such as pool and board games. We also arrange

MHAGS is open Monday to Friday from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm.

If you are over 18 and have, or have previously had, mental health problems and are interested in becoming a member you are very welcome to visit us.

We would also like to welcome anyone from the gay and lesbian community, armed forces, ethnic community or any other groups.

For more information, please contact:

**Mental Health Action Group
Sheffield (MHAGS)
46 Creswick Street
Sheffield
S6 2TN**

**Office tel: 0114 234 1705
Email: admin@mhags.org.uk
www.mhagsheffield.org**

Healthwatch Discharge Questionnaire

Healthwatch Sheffield wants to hear your experiences

Have you been discharged from a hospital, care home or mental health setting in the past 18 months?

Healthwatch England have launched a special inquiry into people's experiences of discharge from hospitals, care homes and secure mental health settings.

We would like to provide feedback to Healthwatch England about the experiences of people in Sheffield.

If you have been discharged from any of the above in the last 18 months, we would welcome your views.

To take part in the survey, please visit the website at:

<http://www.healthwatchsheffield.co.uk>

New mental health site for young people piloted in Sheffield

Find Get Give is a website for people aged 16 - 25 to find local mental health services, get the help they need and give feedback about services to other young people.

<http://www.findgetgive.com/>

CAST arts exhibition for Sheffield Mental Health Week

As part of Sheffield Mental Health Week, CAST will be holding an exhibition entitled 'Rhythms of Identity' from 9th to 12th October 2014 at St Mary's Church community centre, Bramall Lane. If you would like to submit work please contact Chrissie Hinde:

Email:
admin@castsheffield.org

Your Profiles

Shaun Hunt on why the medicalisation of symptoms like hearing voices can be unhelpful and the importance to mental health recovery of having someone who believes in you



What brought you into contact with mental health services?

There wasn't a particular thing or event that led to me using services; it was more a culmination of life events and experiences that eventually led to me being unable to cope.

I'd had quite a difficult and traumatic childhood and was very unhappy growing up. I'd heard voices since being 8 years old but it wasn't a problem for me; the voices were generally friendly and even strangely comforting at times. I went through life believing I was different from everyone else, not better just different. I had a strange feeling that's hard to describe, a feeling that someone was looking out for me and that my life was mapped out already. But again these unusual thoughts weren't a problem for me.

In my mid-twenties after my son was born, I began working a lot of hours and found myself under an increasing amount of stress. My marriage was falling apart and I'd started drinking too much to try and cope. Around this time the voices

and unusual thoughts changed and became very dark. The voices became highly critical of me, constantly belittling me and telling me how worthless I was. The thoughts I had changed from me feeling protected to feelings of persecution. I thought everyone was spying on me. I couldn't take anything at face value. Everything had to have reason or meaning and I became totally preoccupied trying to make connections between things.

Things came to a head and I was admitted to hospital and subsequently sectioned. This was my first ever contact with psychiatric services; that hospital admission went on to last for three years and my life changed beyond recognition.

What was your experience of mental health services?

A mixed bag really. I felt at times I was treated quite badly but other times I was treated with a great deal of compassion. I'm a tall stocky guy and with the diagnosis I was given it's a double whammy when it comes to stigma. I think unfortunately at times people went

with the stereotypes of mental illness and were too quick to medicate me with rapid tranquilisation if I became distressed. That left me with some very bad memories. My overall feeling through all those years in hospital was fear, absolutely terrifying fear. I think people struggled to grasp that an 18-stone, 6 foot 3 man was so frightened.

Everything that was real and happening to me was questioned. I was told the voices that I hear are not there...but I could still hear them. The things that I can see aren't really there...but I could still see them. I was unable to trust any of my senses any more; that's an incredibly distressing feeling that I don't think words can do justice to.

All that said though, I met some wonderful caring people within our services doing a fantastic job; staff from all professions, and I include those not in a direct 'caring' role such as housekeepers and admin staff. It's funny how little things mean so much when things get so bad. I remember that if I wanted to access my money I had to go to the cashier's window with a signed note giving me permission to have a couple of quid (a totally humiliating experience). But the woman behind the counter used to say: "Hi Shaun, how's things" as I approached then proceeded to natter to me about all sorts of random irrelevant things totally oblivious to the fact I have a mental illness. In a world full of madness, that made me feel normal. I was just someone like everyone else, even if only for a few minutes. I actually bumped into her about 10 years later; she remembered my name and asked me how I was, just like normal.

One of the amazing things on the wards was meeting fellow service users who offer so much support to others in a similar position...a sort of informal peer support. Far more

counselling went off in the smoke room than anywhere else in the hospital! People in turmoil themselves but still had time to help those around them, people who were sharing a terrible moment in time together.

The hospital admission was a very dark time for me, unfortunately the medicalisation of my symptoms and experiences didn't help. I can look back and see I certainly needed intervention, without it I can honestly say I wouldn't be writing this article now. But my own view is that we are sometimes too reliant on medical models of illness and treatment with drug therapy. I don't blame the staff for that, I appreciate it's the way the system is set up at the moment. For me gaining a greater understanding of my experiences and their origins has been the key to my recovery. In the community there have been some key people I have come across who helped me rebuild my life and take control of the experiences I have; enabling me to live alongside the 'symptoms' instead of trying to eradicate them.

What aspects of your life were affected by contact with mental health services?

After a long admission I'd become institutionalised, it took a long time to readjust to living on my own. I'd become used to being told when I could eat, when I could go out, all of the normal things we take for granted. I left hospital with no job; no home and my marriage had ended. I began to experience first-hand the stigma and discrimination that people with a mental health diagnosis suffer, facing problems gaining access to my son and huge issues finding accommodation. Quickly I realised that the symptoms were only 10% of the problems I had to overcome; the social factors play a huge part in a person's recovery.

What projects, or work, are you involved in today?

I feel I've got my life back on track. I did a course of study with the Open University and gained a BSc Hons

degree in IT. Doing that helped give me confidence to think about getting back into work. With that in mind I started volunteering around SHSC in several different settings. I found a great mentor who encouraged me and helped me to focus on things that I am good at. He highlighted that I had a lot to offer and really helped me to begin to look at the strengths I had and how I could best use them.

Voluntary work helped me get something back on my CV and enabled me to start applying for paid work. I'm now in paid employment again, with SHSC, working as a recovery tutor within our recovery education unit. I genuinely don't know if I'd have been able to get here without the kindness and the unwavering belief shown in my abilities that my mentor held for me. Not to forget the boundless and infectious enthusiasm my mentor at User Support and Employment services had as she helped me along this journey. It's a job I really enjoy as it gives me the opportunity to try and influence our services by spreading the word about recovery approaches and values. We run a range of recovery courses, short courses, online courses and postgraduate study for staff, service users and carers.

I also do some work with other groups such as the Paranoia Network, speaking at conferences and helping with the delivery of workshops and training. I've gone back to university and have just finished my first year of studying towards a master's degree in psychosocial interventions.

What is your proudest achievement?

Probably my next one, then the one after that! I've experienced so much and been written off by so many people that I see everything I do as a proud achievement. I was recently asked to deliver the opening key note speech at a 10th anniversary conference, which was a really proud moment. Often the little things

mean the most to me though and give me the greatest satisfaction. I suppose it's just being able to be myself again.

Is there anyone in mental health you particularly admire?

There are several people that have been a huge influence on my life personally. I'm not going to name them as I wouldn't want to embarrass them; they know who they are though. People who have taken the time to get to know me, rather than the symptoms I have, those are the people who have really had such an impact on my recovery. There are some wonderful people out there doing such a fantastic job.

I have a few friends who I've met through using services too who inspire me, people who really have been rock bottom but have managed to bounce back. The resilience of us human beings never ceases to amaze me.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

If my experiences have taught me one thing it is that we should never lose hope. People believing in me has been a recurrent theme in my recovery and at times when I have lost any hope people have carried it for me, that's been so important. During that 3-year admission I was fortunate to have the same support worker all the way through. Someone who always had faith in me, even at my lowest ebb she always believed things would get better for me. I didn't believe her, but she was right and I still think back to her words when things become difficult for me now.

Never ever give up hope, no matter how dark and how bad things become, there is always a way back.

If anyone is interested in attending one of our recovery courses please get in touch.

http://www.shsc.nhs.uk/training-and-courses/Recovery_Education

Men and mental health

Terry Simpson reflects on his experience and the damage caused by stereotypes of what it means to be a man

Like a lot of men who follow football I was moved a couple of years ago by the apparent suicide of ex-Leeds United footballer Gary Speed. It seemed doubly shocking since Gary was in a traditional sense everything you'd envy in a man - handsome, athletic, successful, wealthy. Two things in particular stood out for me about his death: one was the reaction of colleagues who'd seen him the day before and noticed nothing out of the ordinary; the other was that in worldly terms he was a great success. It left two questions for me – how can men live such secret lives that even people close to us aren't aware of how we really feel? And why do our greatest successes sometimes feel so hollow?

background, and out of place at home because in lots of ways I was 'starting to talk posh' and leaving behind my working class roots.

I felt very alone with all this. Apart from the class stuff that affected me, it seemed as if boys back when I was growing up were discouraged from having any but strictly bounded relationships. If you still wanted to play with girls when you were ten years old you were suspect, and you had to be very careful about your relationships with boys.

Emotionally I stopped crying when I was about twelve after one particular humiliating incident. I didn't cry for ten years until the night

younger than women; young men are twice as likely to die from violence and accidents; and 3 times as many men will kill themselves as women. A 2010 article in the International Journal of Clinical Practice, 'Are Men Short Changed on Health?' found that men have lower life expectancy than women in most countries around the world including the US.

The national ongoing enquiry into suicide shows that although overall rates have been falling, ratios for suicides between men and women are still 3:1. A new cause for concern is older men where the suicide rate continues to rise.

In 2010, 'Untold Problems', a 'review of the essential issues in the mental health of men and boys' by the Men's Health Forum, made the following points: depression may be under-diagnosed in men as many men who need help may not say so, and some may come to notice in ways that do not encourage a sympathetic response; a cultural shift is needed that will allow boys and men to explore a less restricted version of masculinity; and many men in prison have had adverse childhood experiences and are suffering from psychological problems.

In 2011 the Mind and Mental Health Foundation report 'Delivering Male' sought to address the problem of men's mental health, highlighting issues like stigma, but clearly there's still a long way to go. It seems we need to change fundamentally, and also to change how we teach boys to be men. But perhaps it's much more than just education. Perhaps the form of society we live in now needs men to be isolated and expendable, so that they'll continue to overwork to keep it going? Perhaps if we want real change we may have to think about creating a different kind of world altogether, where it's who you are, and how well you relate to the people around you, that counts, rather than what you do and how much you earn.



Terry

Stories of suicide always get to me mainly because I'm a suicide survivor myself. Although I've had many low points I've only been suicidally depressed once in my life and that was in the months following my graduation when I was 21. In some ways it was my great achievement – a working-class boy who'd gone on a scholarship to a fee paying grammar school and then got a 2:1 Honours degree in philosophy. But somehow during the course of that I'd left myself behind. I was out of place among the posh kids at school because of my

before I went into a psychiatric ward, so there was little release from the stresses of adolescence other than alcohol and cigarettes, which clearly bring their own problems.

But that was all back in the 1960s. Surely things have moved on?

Apart from mental health there's been good evidence for some time that men's health in general is problematic. The 1994 report 'The Crisis In Men's Health' quoted that men die on average 7 years

Living with borderline personality disorder

John Mills writes about dealing with a difficult past and finding hope for the future

I had a happy childhood but there was something which made me feel different and apart from people, even as a schoolboy. Things started to happen when I was about thirteen years old. I had feelings of paranoia about other children, feeling they were talking about me. I also began to hear voices telling me the children were against me. All of this made me feel very scared.

Despite this I had a few good friends at the Sheffield United club where I played for Sheffield's 'Boy's Football' and 'England Schoolboys' teams after a talent scout spotted me playing in the playground.

I had a serious injury at the age of 16 which prevented me from playing football any more. I was very upset, especially as I had been signed up for Sheffield United reserves.

My dreams had all been shattered and it was at this point that my life took a real turn downwards and I began to take drugs and alcohol to deal with the voices and paranoia which had become much worse. I began to feel I was living in a dream world – nothing felt real.

At the age of 25 I had renal failure due to alcohol and I spent four months in a coma. I spent many years abusing myself with drugs and alcohol, self-harming and overdosing. I finished up yo-yoing in and out of psychiatric units where I was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder and drug-induced psychosis. I lost contact with my family due to my behaviour.

One day I decided I had to stop drinking and so, with strength, I managed to do that by reducing my intake daily until I had reached sobriety. But I was still vulnerable mentally and was led into taking

crack cocaine which I then became addicted to. It was a hectic and very dangerous lifestyle and it wasn't until I had reached 'rock bottom' that I said to myself "Enough is enough!".

With the help from someone at Shelter I was able to move away from the situation and the people I was circulating with and I stopped taking all the illegal drugs.

Today I am coping with being clean but still have good and bad days. Life is still a struggle. I feel isolated but I have a social phobia and I find it difficult to leave my flat although since meeting a wonderful and caring woman (now my fiancé!) my life has turned around and I feel more self-confident. I feel loved for the first time.

I have had a lot of support from various services, whom I applaud and thank, and now have some good close friends, all of whom encourage me and make me feel wanted.

Really, I had a bad start in life but now, at the age of thirty-nine, I can look back and put all the bad stuff behind me. My wish for the future is to marry the woman I love and to continue to remain stable.

My life has come good and I urge anyone who is suffering alone as I once did to take courage and seek help, advice and support. There are good people out there who can and want to help you.

Listening to the Silences

I have been hearing voices for nearly thirty years - without becoming ill. I have written a book which describes my experiences and which offers many insights. The book is meant for voice-hearers, carers and professionals. 'Listening to the Silences in a World of Hearing Voices' is free to download at:

www.royvincent.org

What keeps me well

Cynthia Hitch on the benefits of being involved in mental health groups

I am on the *Your Voice* editorial group which decides what goes into the magazine. I really enjoy our meetings. It is nice to be with and talk to the friendly people in the group. One of the things I love is taking photos of people and looking at photos for the magazine. I think that coming to meetings gives me a lot of confidence in myself.



Cynthia

I also love getting my copy of the magazine through the door. I find it very interesting and helpful to read about other people who, like me, have mental health problems.

The other group I go to which I thoroughly enjoy is a weekly knitting group for people with mental health problems. I like making things and find it very satisfying to see the things I make growing. It's a really nice way to spend my time. It's also good for me because I'm in a group with other people who are also making things. So there's the social side too. It's an excellent group.

Your Reviews

Service user Steve on 'Sectioned' by Hilary Coveney, a moving and multilayered account of being detained under the Mental Health Act

ISBN 9781496183347

'Sectioned' by Hilary Coveney is a very candid account of the author's experience of being detained for a period in excess of three years through provisions of the Mental Health Act, commencing in June 2010. This period is described in vivid detail, chronicling a time when the emotional and physical wellbeing of Hilary are in a state of flux.

The foreword by the author is very open in acknowledging the events are conveyed very much through her viewpoint. Like any narrative, whether speaking of self or others, all will be filtered through the eyes of the scribe. The work begins with a description of the events leading up to admittance. The passing away of friends and a family member seem to provide the emotional blows which leave Hilary struggling to cope with administering her insulin to control her diabetes, and lead to being taken in for assessment.

Once detained what unfolds is a mixture of events that cover the emotional range from bleak and desolate to the humorous and hopeful. Catalogued in detail are Hilary's urges to self harm, and staff

attempts to ameliorate this. When in a vulnerable place mentally, Hilary recounts how she perceives the insulin as toxic and therefore her reluctance to have it administered: "I still can't explain why it seems like poison when I get that ill. I just know that it does and the fear is very real."

As events progress you get a real sense of frustration as Hilary mentions how her life seems on hold, and hopes of a career, partner and parenthood seem far away as the outside world marches on. I found this both moving and sad and could empathise with such sentiments.

The monotony of living in an enclosed and highly regulated environment is conveyed, but penetrated by moments of emotional connection with staff or fellow patients. Something as rudimentary as a game of I Spy with a staff member becomes almost a profound experience in such conditions.

Whilst much of the tale is harrowing there are also positives that display the many strengths and talents of the author. Hearing about her love

for folk dancing, and her commitment to study despite the many obstacles in her way show real dedication. Hilary's ability to design Braille resources is another manifest talent. Particularly impressive is her motivation to produce art and craft items for the Koestler Trust, of which she receives recognition in several categories.

Another triumph is when she is instrumental in the launch of the Herald, a ward newsletter. The book ends with her discharge back into the community and the mixed feelings this provokes.

Overall I found 'Sectioned' a fine portrait of one person's experience of detention in Low Secure and specialised services. Whilst it is bleak at times there are many subtle moments of humour, observation and varied narrative devices to give the necessary light to proceedings. One is left with the feeling that you want Hilary to triumph in her ambitions, and a sense of respect for what she has already achieved.

'Sectioned' is available from Amazon in paperback and on Kindle.

Also by Hilary Coveney: 'Behind Hospital Doors: Experiences in Mental Health Hospitals in Poems'

adventures in counselling : 'relaxation' exercise



Your Artwork



'Hamlet' by Becky Vigor



'Summer Flower Border' (detail) by Jill Whitfield

Your Letters

The importance of evidence based treatments

In the Winter edition of *Your Voice* Jim Friday addressed the possibility that repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) might be useful as a cure for severe depression. While it's not surprising that those desperate to cure a debilitating illness might reach for any possible solution, this is not one of them.

Guidelines from NICE clearly state that, while there are no major safety concerns with this procedure, the efficacy of rTMS as a clinical tool is far from proven. This guidance

goes further in stating that rTMS should only be used during research studies at present.

Further evidence is obviously needed before any meaningful review of this procedure can be carried out so any recommendation is definitely premature and could lead to assumptions about its effectiveness for which there is no justification. By all means encourage clinical researchers to consider its possible applications but do not assume that other treatments are not needed.

Jackie Lubbock
Occupational psychologist

Your Verse

Anxiety

Anxiety the invisible gravity
Anxiety that makes me feel I'm losing my sanity
Why not serenity instead?
All this turmoil in my head

Every day a strain
Wish I could stop my racing brain
Constantly uptight
Always this internal fight

People don't see what happens to me
I just wish my thoughts would leave me be
Constant thoughts about being dead
Getting the illness I absolutely dread

There is a person hidden
A man from the past forbidden
Locked in a cage of thoughts
Not living a life, distraught

I look back to my youth in envy
Wishing I could get back to being happy
I know it's all in my head
These feelings leave me like lead

Brief respites from this mental hell
Keep me hoping for a day I'm well
One of these days I'll win
One day these thoughts will dim

So everyone I know and love
I hope will be patient
While I try to discover
The steps I must take to recover

Lee Smithson

Win a £10 book gift card

Write us a letter or send us some of your artwork or poetry and you could receive a £10 book gift card.

The *Your Voice* editorial group will send the prize to the person who contributes our favourite poem, artwork or letter in each issue - not including items from current members of the *Your Voice* management committee and editorial group. (Annabelle Hanson receives a gift card for poetry in issue 71).

YOUR NOTICEBOARD

Inspired Potters

A pottery group for anyone with experience of mental health problems. Meets every Wednesday from 12.30 pm to 2.30 pm. The atmosphere is relaxing, fun and creative. No experience needed and all levels welcome.

For further information, please contact Sarah:

Email:

sarah@chupinkapottery.co.uk

Mobile: 07837 187 930

CAST Artist Gathering

Open mic night meets on the first Thursday of the month from 5 pm to 7.30pm at the Harland Café, John Street. All welcome to come and perform poetry / live music or just enjoy the friendly atmosphere.

From September we plan to move the venue to Eten café (entrance on East Parade next to Sheffield Cathedral). Visit our website for the latest updates:

www.castsheffield.org

SUN:RISE (Service User Network)

A monthly forum which enables service users to be informed, involved and engaged in SHSC business. Meetings are held at The Circle, 33 Rockingham Lane on the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 1 pm – 4 pm.

For further information, please contact:

Noelle Riggott

Tel: 0114 271 8789

Email: sunrise@shsc.nhs.uk

Mental Health Carers Group

For carers of people with mental health problems. Meets on the third Thursday of the month. Next meetings are:

Dates: Thursday 21st August &

Thursday 18th September

Time: 10.30 am - 12 pm

Venue: Sheffield Carers Centre, 7 Bells Square, S1 2FY

Come along and meet other carers in your situation, along with Carers in Sheffield staff. Booking is not necessary, but if you want to talk to someone in advance, please ring Jan or James on:

Tel: 0114 278 8942

Social Cafés

Regular events held at the following venues around Sheffield: The Sheaf Café @ St Mary's Community Centre; Time Out Café @ Manor Library; and The New Brew @ The Learning Zone.

If you are feeling fed up and would like someone to talk to, you are welcome to drop in and have a chat with others in similar situations over a cup of tea or coffee.

The Cafés are run by experienced staff and volunteers, providing a relaxed atmosphere, optional wellbeing activities and refreshments. Sheffield Mind is working in partnership with a number of different organisations to deliver the Cafés.

For dates and times, please visit:

<http://www.sheffieldmind.co.uk/services/social-cafes>

Free Mental Health First Aid Course

Sheffield City Council are offering a free 2-day training course in Mental Health First Aid for people who live, work or volunteer in Sheffield.

Date: 15th September to 16th September 2014

Time: 9.30 am to 4 pm

Location: Fulwood

This is a national/international course. For general information, please visit:

<http://mhfaengland.org/>

Learning outcomes for the course:

- To preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others
- To provide help to prevent the mental health problem developing into a more serious state
- To promote the recovery of good mental health
- To provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem
- To raise awareness of mental health issues in the community
- To reduce stigma and discrimination

There are a series of courses running throughout 2014 and early 2015, at venues throughout Sheffield.

For enquiries, please call:

Bob Levesley

Training & Development Consultant

Tel: 0114 229 3046

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Website: www.yourvoicesheffield.org

Please send contributions for the Autumn issue by 26th September 2014