

Bath

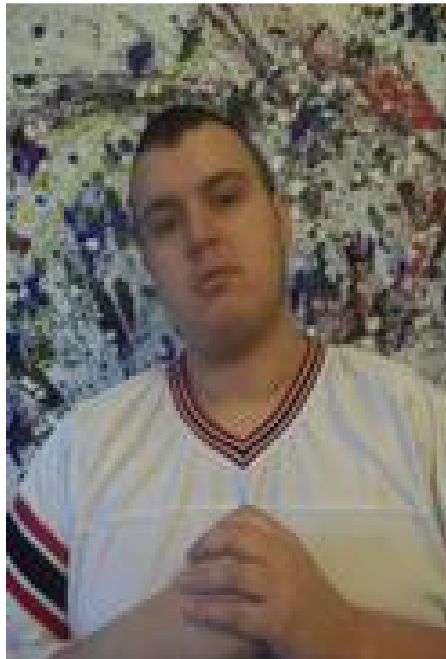


For better  
mental health

THE BATH MIND MAGAZINE

Mindful: a freefall of thought

## Realboy1 Raps on Myspace



*Dave Cass is Realboy*

Dave Cass spent time in hospital after becoming unwell as a young man and going through the isolation and life-derailment that so often accompanies the onset of a serious mental health condition. Friends move on to build independent lives and those who struggle with mental well-being are left behind. It can be a depressing and lonely experience.

Dave was pleased to move into a Bath Mind house after his discharge from hospital and, with support and encouragement, is beginning to rebuild his life and work towards recovery.

One of Dave's interests is hip-hop culture. He loves creating rap lyrics to make his kind of music and has recently achieved an ambition to record a demo CD.

He records under the name of Realboy and is also sometimes known as Dimension. He said,

"In the studio I felt really calm and pleased that I was getting something down. Street poetry can

reach people and it gets you into a broad mix of other music. I really like classical which goes with my style. I like the challenge of arranging my words to fit with the beat."

Realboy has already sent his demo to two radio stations. He wants to keep making better and better demos to perfect his style and get his music heard by a wider audience.

Listen to Realboy's music at [www.myspace.com/realboy1](http://www.myspace.com/realboy1)

BATH MIND  
INVITES YOU TO  
OUR ANNUAL GARDEN  
PARTY

82 Lower Oldfield Park  
midday – 3pm  
Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July

BBQ, raffle prizes, homemade cakes, tombola, garden games, live music

**Feeling powerless?  
No-one listening?  
Fed-up with not being consulted?  
Worried about cuts and changes?**



**Bored?**

**Want to use your skills and experience?**

**Why not do something about it?**

**Make your voice heard.**

**Get active.**

**New opportunities below.....**

## **Active Mind**

**Use your experience to work with Bath Mind and shape decisions and services**

If you live with emotional or mental distress, we are setting up a new group for you to become actively involved with Bath Mind. Enjoy a cup of tea with friends while sharing your opinions and helping to shape decisions.

The new group "Active Mind" is a response to the things that you told us at our meeting in January and in your replies to our questionnaire about the easiest ways for you to get involved.

Active Mind will be a relaxed group, without masses of formal paperwork. Membership is open to anyone who uses, or has used, Bath Mind services. You told us that many people feel unable to permanently commit themselves to voluntary activity because their mental health varies, meaning that sometimes they are able to be actively involved and sometimes they are not. So, membership of Active Minds can also vary. Come when you are able. Your views are always important. You may find that joining in and contributing to your community makes you feel more self-confident and improves your feeling of well-being.

**Where will the group meet?** At 13 Abbey Church Yard.

**When will the group meet?** That will be for you to decide but the first meeting is at 2.45pm on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June. Perhaps you can stroll down the Church Yard after the Hay Hill Drop-in?

**How long will the meeting last?** Probably about an hour but you can decide.

**What will the group do?** Again, that will be for you to decide but activities could include: advising Bath Mind trustees about decisions and service developments, undertaking research among others who use local mental health services, planning campaigns, advising local commissioners on the services that you want, sharing your personal experiences of mental health services, organising formal complaints if you are dissatisfied, responding to government plans and writing to our MP, setting up spin-off groups for activities that you want to do.

**Will the group be supported?** That is for you to decide. Bath Mind's general manager, Chris Hailstone, will attend the first meeting and any other meetings that you choose to invite him to but this will be your group. We can provide a computer with internet access and printer, stationery, photocopying and use of the telephone. We will provide the venue free of charge and will also provide refreshments.

# Mind Readers

## Active Mind not your thing? How about becoming a Mind Reader?

Bath Mind needs help to regularly review our policies and information leaflets..... and we definitely need input from past or present users of our services..... so, how about joining the Mind Readers group?

As a Mind Reader you can become actively involved in your Bath Mind community from the comfort of your own home and in your own good time. We will send you six mailings each year, each containing two or three policies or leaflets. You can choose to receive these by post or by e-mail. We ask you to read what we send you and return us your comments and suggestions, or your approval. Again, you can do this by e-mail, or we will provide you with a stamped envelope.

You can chat with other Mind Readers to share your views or not .... do as you choose..... but please help.

**Becoming a Mind Reader is easy.**

**Contact Jackie on 01225 316199**

**or e-mail [admin@bathmind.org.uk](mailto:admin@bathmind.org.uk)**



## Speak Your Mind at

**[www.bathmind.org.uk](http://www.bathmind.org.uk)**

**Try the new interactive page on our website**

You've got something to say to help improve Bath Mind and our services but don't want to become involved with a group? Our website contains a new page "Speak Your Mind" that allows you to send your message directly to us. You will receive an acknowledgement that we have received your message.

This link will give you with access to the trustees and make sure they are aware of your suggestions. All of the messages received will be recorded and shared with trustees when they are reviewing the Bath Mind Strategic Plan each year.

If computers are not your thing, you will always be welcome to write your suggestion on paper, mark the envelope "Suggestions Box" and post it in our letterbox at Abbey Church Yard. These suggestions will also be passed on to trustees.

## Become a Befriender

Help us cut through the loneliness and isolation that many people experience through their difficult mental health and become a befriender. We never have enough volunteers to meet demand. This is a really practical way to support others in the Bath Mind community.

**Contact Kaz on 01225464656 or e-mail [admin2@bathmind.org.uk](mailto:admin2@bathmind.org.uk)**

## Recession Renga

Morning again,  
same as the one before.  
Stay in bed.

Skint. My pockets are empty.  
Wetherspoons for beer or coffee cheap.  
Home cooking, no eating out.

Searching in Poundland:  
cheap tat keeps me running.  
Homemade always best.

Had to sell the car  
to buy a loaf and teabags.  
Empty pockets sigh.

News both local and national  
is depressing. I need positivity.  
Focus on friends and family.

**Maggie Hawes, Andy Gouldbourne,  
Sean Quinn, Ruby Jennings and Kay Hinde**

*Renga is an ancient Japanese form of shared writing. Poetry is written by a group in which each person writes a haiku on a common theme. The group then decides on the order they want to combine the haikus to create the renga.*

*Recession Renga was produced by the Creative Writing Group.*



## The Writing Group Continues

**11 am every Friday at  
Bath Mind  
13 Abbey Church Yard**

**Contact: Ruby, St Mungo's on 01225 427644**

**The Board Games Group also continues  
1.30 pm every Friday  
Same venue, same contact**

## Wearing a Smile

Look in the mirror and,  
If you're smiling,  
It will show happy creases in your face;  
Not only that but  
You'll look nicer;  
The world will seem a happier place.

It's not always easy  
To be cheerful.  
If it needs an effort, then you should;  
For a happy smile  
Transforms a face  
And you'll usually end up feeling good.

You know a smile  
Can be infectious.  
Should you be wondering what to do  
To avoid a row or quarrel,  
There need not be one  
If you get them smiling too.

There will be times when  
Life's not easy  
Things could be tough and trying for a while  
But you'll really find it helps, my friend,  
To have the will to win  
And wear a smile.

**Neil Harvey**



## A Snail's Life

I am a very tired snail.  
It's not a fun-packed and interesting life.  
Takes me ages to get anywhere.  
Impossible to escape the wife.

The garden path is a maze of danger;  
Cats and children everywhere.  
Nearly been trodden on several times.  
Almost squashed by a garden chair.

Not much fun with my house on my back.  
The weight of it drags me down.  
Get to shelter before it rains.  
I hope I do not drown.

**Andy Gouldbourne**

## A Miracle of Craft

Enriched with sensual, scorching pleasure  
My pen is poised upon my page,  
For words of wonder, love and treasure,  
May fill each verse from any age.

If I could capture life with honour  
And write a line to draw your tears,  
I'd fill your thoughts and heart with rapture  
To draft a book to last the years.

When inspiration, long sought after,  
Leaves all my paper blank and bare,  
I'll read again those ancient masters  
To fill my soul with crafted care.

A poem is a living creature  
Like solemn music, sweet and low,  
That moves my senses through each feature  
And leaves my spirit long for more.

Oh gentle poet, earnest reader,  
Meet up together as we draft  
A world of tender adulation  
For this a miracle of craft.

**Meryl Williams**

## National Express

I have been on this coach for what seems like an eternity. On board the National Express for Victoria Coach Station, London.

A lorry has jackknifed on the M4; the traffic tailed back for what seems like an endless chain of frustration. No toilet in this rattling tin with wheels. I am just about holding on. Everything crossed. Wish I had never had those beers at lunchtime.

Is it legal to lock that screaming child in the luggage compartment?

The aircon has broken down and the heat is rising from the sweating gentleman sitting behind me. All I need now is for somebody to announce that they are handing out the egg sandwiches.

Why did I say I would go to our glorious capital on the hottest day of the year? Why did I scrimp and save?

Should have caught the train.

**Andy Gouldbourne**

## St Edward the Confessor's Messenger

Reflecting on my life, I can hardly believe where I stand. My body has suffered years of harsh Lenten fasts. My vestments hang off my back, ribs poking through. Yet a weakened body has strengthened a clear mind.

As a fifteen year old I left my penniless family to search for my journey and path in life. I tried many occupations from farm labourer to castle guard. Eventually I became a novice hermit monk. I began to spend hours in prayer, gathering firewood and foraging for mushrooms and wild garlic. Then my life changed for ever on a misty autumn morning.

Awoken, my stomach grumbled; only briefly calmed by a thick dry slice of bread. I had not eaten a balanced meal for three months since I had begged for food at a rich baron's gates. When ambition tempted whilst day dreaming, I would stop and rebuke myself, tightening a cord around my waist.

I decided to walk down to an isolated well with a bucket in either hand, pushing aside autumn leaves. Arriving at the well, I noticed a young woman, a black cloak wrapped around her body. She smiled modestly. I could not escape her entrancing eyes which dropped to the ground, self-conscious at eye contact. She then took a crucifix from under her loose sleeve. I regained my confidence and accepted the crucifix. She pulled the cloak down, revealing long black hair and, pointing to the crucifix, said that England would one day be at peace and that I would unite every earl, lord and prince in this great land. I thought she must be insane. On returning to my cell and settling down, I found the episode amusing.

Early the next morning I heard a loud knock on my cell door. The smartly dressed man asked my name, which I confirmed. He opened a large scroll from which he read that Queen Beatrice wanted me to report to the palace. She had heard reports of my life and wanted me to be Dean of Westminster Abbey. That was the beginning of my greatest journey.

**Sean Quinn**

## Write for Mindful

**The Mindful editorial committee is pleased to consider all contributions to these pages.**

**Send pieces by e-mail, post, or hand delivery.**

**The copy deadline for the autumn edition is Friday 9<sup>th</sup> September**

# Alternative Therapies

## A personal perspective from Meryl Williams

---

There are a range of alternative therapies available to anyone experiencing any health issue, whether emotional or physical. Some of them are expensive and their positive effects are likely to depend on what suits you best and whether you can afford to try them for a complete course rather than just a one-off. Here I look at some that I have tried myself and some my friend Julie has derived benefit from. I would welcome any feedback on this issue to the magazine.

I have tried psychotherapy and was able to get a discount for being on a low income. I found it to be tremendously beneficial but it did last for two and a half years. It's good to talk; I had a lot of unfinished business from my childhood and my working life and we studied transactional analysis. Using this technique, we are considered to have a parent, adult and child ego state. I learned that the child in me was still responding to negative messages from my parents.

On a similar vein, I have completed a course of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) that was available on the NHS. Using this method I was able to identify red signs and coping strategies and highlight the pros and cons of illness. Surprisingly, there were one or two pros - especially the insight and experience one gains that is apparent to me now.

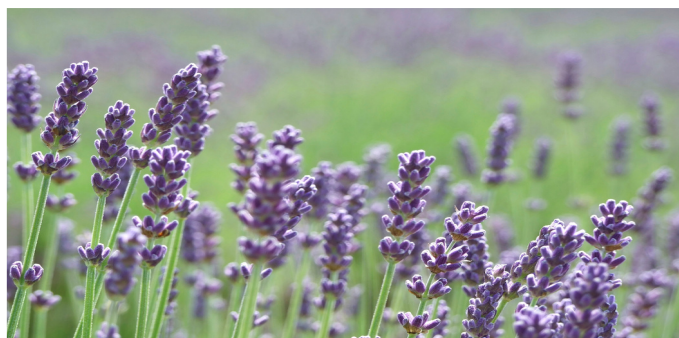
I tried aromatherapy twice but did not find it beneficial to me. I had a massage with scented oils but I did not feel it gave value for money. Julie on the other hand has difficulty sleeping and found aromatherapy particularly helpful. The cost is less she says if you go to the City of Bath College for a massage but you can use the essential oils at home in addition. The oils can be burned in an oil burner with a candle and you only need a few drops so the essential oils last quite a long time. You can also add a few drops of the oils to your bath water. There are a range of oils that can help you sleep if used in moderation. These include lavender, patchouli, rose and ylang-ylang but Julie just used lavender at home as you need to have knowledge of aromatherapy to understand the combinations. Citrus oil on the other hand makes you more alert and wakeful.

Julie has also tried reflexology. Unlike a massage, pressure points on your feet relate to different parts of the body. It is also available at the college and Julie found it to be very relaxing. Some people might not enjoy it the same if they don't like having their feet touched.

Shiatsu is a method of applying pressure rather than a massage. It has been suggested that it is like acupuncture but without the needles. With Shiatsu, you lie on the floor in loose clothing and the effects can be quite profound. Julie tells me that she sometimes came away floating on a cloud and the effects could be quite long lasting. With aromatherapy and reflexology Julie found even one session beneficial but with Shiatsu she recommends a course of treatment. Julie and I have both tried herbal teas and not found them very successful and Julie has also had a go at homeopathy.

Homeopathy aims to treat the whole person holistically rather than one specific illness. Julie tried caffeine, normally a stimulant, diluted to a minute amount that was meant to have the opposite effect and be relaxing. She did not find it as successful as the other treatments that she has tried.

Finally, both Julie and I have derived benefit from yoga and Julie has found meditation to be helpful. All these therapies can be beneficial but do not provide a 'cure' for mental illness and for full benefit more than one approach may be needed. We hope this article will encourage people to try something new and send in your feedback, whatever your experience.



**What are your experiences of alternative therapies?**

**Positive? Negative? Ineffective?**

**Mindful is interested in our readers' experiences.**

**Write and let us know.**

## Moravia Beckons

The second episode of  
Meryl Williams' serialized  
story

## The Randalls at Home

At the check in desk at Glethamgetty Airport, Royston was losing his temper. The petty official insisted that their visas weren't in order and Cassie's passport was due to expire in six months time. As they were only going for one month they had assumed everything would be fine but Daniel liked to do things by the book. He also insisted on checking that they had been vaccinated for yellow fever and ordered a search of their luggage. They finally finished all the checking and

repacking and sat down in the departure lounge with hot coffees.

"This is what it will be like at the other end," said Cassie feeling gloomy and depressed. "Only it will be far worse in Moravia as they will be carrying guns and it will be scorching hot."

"It's only April Cassie," said Roy snapping. "The guide book said it would be around 30 degrees Celsius".

"Scorching hot like I said," answered Cassie as she studied the latest issue of the County Interloper Magazine.

Alighting from the plain at Octavia Airport, deep in the heart of the Moravian mountains and close to the border with Ashokstan, a surprise awaited the intrepid couple. They were met by the smiling faces of some of the medical team from Octavia City General Hospital and they were taken directly to their hotel to freshen up. To Cassie's surprise and delight there was cold running water and the sheets were clean. The next day, however, all was not so civilised. At Octavia General, the staff was dedicated and hard working but in April the gnats came in swarms and spread disease making conditions almost intolerable. Cassie had studied tropical medicine when reading for her higher degree and this knowledge came in useful as she visited the clinics and wards, speaking to patients through an interpreter. The interpreter was big on local knowledge and explained to Roy and Cassie that Octavia's biggest employer was the diamond industry with mines in the hills surrounding the city. He told them that dust affected many of the miners' lungs and they suffered from arthritis and other joint problems as a result of the cramped conditions and repetitive stress.

Roy was able to visit the local magistrate and learned about some of the cases that typically came before him. He was shocked to learn that the miners had no rights under the current regime, were paid only the minimum required to keep them alive and had little access to the benefits of the law. Roy had big dreams at this point of setting up a British style legal aid system but the enormity of the task was beyond him. The magistrate had a good command of English but couldn't always identify with Roy's more benevolent and broad minded approach. The magistrate's day to day work seemed to mostly involve fining people for pick-pocketing with the occasional cold blooded murder to spice up his life!

"I think," said Roy to his wife as they came to the end of their tour, "that you have had a more exciting time than me. I am looking forward to getting back to Glethamgetty and my own arm chair."

"Whereas I can't wait to write to my local Member of Parliament of all that we have seen and heard," answered Cassie. "I wonder how our neighbours are getting on."

Back at home in old Blighty, the Randalls quickly slipped into a routine and Cassie went back to work at her busy surgery. Roy typed up Cassie's letters and wrote some of his own to the Foreign Office and the like. He was just about to leave the house for the post office one Saturday morning, and Cassie had gone next door to see Mrs O'Shaunessey, when the 'phone rang. It was James.

"Hello James, how are you. Yes thanks we had a super time, yes really great. You're bringing a friend for lunch tomorrow? Oh that's lovely James, what's her name? Oh ok, well we will see you both at one o' clock. Ok James, take care, bye."

Just as Roy finished speaking and had put the 'phone down Cassie came in from next door.

"Roy, guess what!" she cried.

"James has rung," said Roy, interrupting her. "He's bringing a friend to lunch tomorrow."

"Why that's lovely," said Cassie. "What's her name?"

"She's called Jonathon," answered Roy smiling, "and James is sure we will take him to our hearts."

"Then we will," said Cassie firmly.

### The Randalls at Home continued ....

"I'm sorry darling you were about to say something," said Roy.

"Oh yes, you'll never believe it but I have met Mr O'Shaunessey!"

*To be continued.....*

## Two New Trustees

Bath Mind's Committee of Management has recently been joined by two new trustees:

**Kate Morton:** trained as a psychologist and managed resettlement programmes for ex-offenders in the probation service in Kent and Strathclyde. She chaired a homeless charity for 5 years before becoming Director of Supported Housing and Care for the Notting Hill Housing Group, leading a team of 180 housing support and care professionals and working with 1800 residents across 8 London boroughs.

**Elizabeth Griffin:** runs the Minerva Centre in Bath, where holistic treatments are provided by a number of therapists. Family experience has given her insight into the problems within mental health services as well as the confusion, lack of knowledge and isolation felt by carers.

All trustees give their time freely as volunteers and Bath Mind is grateful to those who choose to use their experience and skills to support our work in preserving and promoting positive mental health. Welcome Kate and Elizabeth.

## Volunteer Advocates

After a rigorous application and selection process, eight new volunteers successfully completed two days of training in June, enabling them to join Bath Mind and expand our team providing general mental health advocacy casework.

Their training will be extended by shadowing experienced advocates to develop their casework skills and they will be able to access our Mental Health First Aid course.

We experience high demand for general advocacy support and are delighted that we have been able to expand our capacity to meet that demand.

Advocacy is needed by individuals who live with poor mental health or emotional distress and find it hard to speak out. They may feel powerless, alone and unable to get the help that they need.

Advocates support and empower individuals to make their voices heard so that other people understand their needs and wishes, their point of view and their hopes and fears.

If you would like to see an advocate to discuss any specific concerns or problems, phone 01225 464656. All calls are confidential.

## Membership of Bath Mind

Find out how to join us and support Bath Mind in making a difference to the lives of people living with mental health problems and emotional distress.

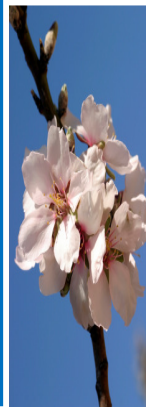
**Phone: 01225 316199**

**E-mail: [admin@bathmind.org.uk](mailto:admin@bathmind.org.uk)**

## Greenlinks

Enjoy active relaxation by joining this gardening project at Monksdale Road Allotments. Learn new skills, have fun and make friends. Eat fresh organic produce.

Contact: Amanda Boston  
07583 010589



**Donations made to Bath Mind will help our important work to improve the lives of people who live with mental distress and to counter discrimination.**

**Please give generously**

**Contact 01225 316199 to discuss how to increase the value of your donation through Gift Aid.**

**Thank you.**