

## Green Links at Monksdale Road



*Merryl enjoying spring at Monksdale Road*

The Bath Mind application for Ecominds funds to support a three-year community leisure gardening project is complete and waiting for a decision by the fund awarding panel.

The "Green Links" project will involve Bath Mind, B&NES Community Options Team, Bath City Farm and Hillview Lodge in a co-operative venture to develop an area of the Monksdale Road Allotments with raised beds and a polytunnel.

The aim is to get people involved and promote healthy lifestyles by

growing vegetables and herbs. The positive health benefits of exercise in the fresh air are well-proven. Eating tasty, local, fresh veg will bring further good-health advantages.

A quiet seating area, planted for peaceful contemplation, is also planned. People can choose to use the project as a regular opportunity for socialising, for undertaking satisfying and creative physical work or simply as a place to spend quiet moments in life.

Grant, from the Community Options Team, will be on site each Friday afternoon making beginnings, until the funding is secured to make the project really take off and operate every weekday.



### The Marigold Patch



"The Marigold Patch" is the name bestowed on our allotment by Mary, a keen and enthusiastic gardener in her own home. The allotment is beginning to take shape under the direction of Grant and Bill from the Community Options Team.

Fruit trees have been planted – a blackcurrant, two gooseberry bushes and a blue berry – and Mike has been digging over the ground and planting onions. Bob and I have sowed seeds for lettuce, carrots and spinach in one of our raised beds. I have drawn a map of the area that we have worked on and we hope that it will get hung in our shed when it gets built! We are having a polytunnel and we hope that there will be a kettle in the shed. I hope to sow some lavender seeds in April to make a border. Mary is keen to plant marigolds.

It is a very exciting development and we meet outside the Forum on a Friday to go to the allotment, which can also be reached from Coronation Avenue.

Merryl Williams

# Labels

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I have a 'severe, enduring, mental illness' – these words cling to my mind.

Everything is impermanent, always changing; but the concept of labelling fixes me, makes me feel solid, inflexible, incapable of change.

A friend told me of a woman diagnosed with 'schizophrenia'. This woman was distressed at being told this and when she expressed her feelings of rage and despair, these were seen as proof of her diagnosis. Labels give other people power over you. Words are powerful. They can wound for life.

A man I knew was told he was 'treatment resistant' – he killed himself weeks later. When I heard this phrase I felt shocked, stunned, rendered silent by its impact. To the 'professionals' being 'treatment resistant' is just part of their statistics – now he is a 'death' statistic.

Labels create distance – you become subject and object, self and other, separate beings. The sense of connectedness, interdependence, wholeness is lost.

The world in which we as mental health sufferers have landed is one of the medical model. The landscape here is factual, theoretical, scientific, 'box-like' terrain. This is in stark contrast to the inner landscape I inhabit – unmapped, undulating, flowing, mountainous and unpredictable.

Language can give you hope, create images, beauty, colour conversation, be inclusive, heart-felt.

According to the Gospel of St John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." – not psychiatry.

Beverley Ferguson

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## Three new advocates



***Left to right: Joyce Moll, Jeremy Bond, Sue Bradley***

Welcome to the new members of Bath Mind's Advocacy Services team.

Sue Bradley has joined as someone who specialises in advocacy for older people and says that after extensive working experience, she has found the job that she has always wanted.

Joyce Moll will provide advocacy for black and minority ethnic groups. She is delighted that her role has given her the chance to practice new languages and learn about different cultures.

Jeremy Bond is taking the advocacy service into Hillview Lodge, where he will act on behalf of in-patients during their stay and also on their move into the community. "I'm looking forward to meeting new people, listening and supporting where I can," said Jeremy.

## No Language for Madness

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There are no words for madness –  
only blue on my face, sky streams through my skin  
clouds wrap around eyes, green drenches my feet –  
the sun is purple and sits in the hills  
and a myriad of things are scattered.

There are no words for madness –  
only space that opens so birds fall through  
to catch the wind, wings falling in flight  
where air is free and soaks my breath,  
and where my mind runs along with the rivers.

There are no words for madness –  
doors swing with the keys where the watchers have gone  
to wait in the glass that shatters my gaze,  
the red of my blood hears the sound of my screams  
and the paint dries hard on my picture.

There are no words for madness.

Beverley Ferguson

## Onwards, like forever?

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Well, the sun still shines and  
As I think of you  
I take a deep breath. Stop.  
Begin anew.

It is with too few words, apologies,  
I've no doubt  
That linger like the silk scarf  
Caressing my neck;  
That linger on, sighing from a  
Mantle-shelf of oak leaves  
And daffodils picked fresh from  
Your garden this morning.

This morning I awoke and in  
Not knowing stoked the fire  
And delved ever deeper into the  
Recesses of my mind.

Oh, and I mind.  
Except, unlike yesterday's leftovers  
I can continue onwards.

Jessica Lovelace

## My Life as a Self Manager

As a sufferer of bipolar disorder, I try to be an expert on my own mental health. I enjoy being a Bath Mind Trustee and I feel that having to cope with my own mental health problem helps to bring a useful perspective to the Bath Mind Management Committee.

My illness is characterised by changes in mood and I use a combination of methods to try and maintain the balance that I am always aiming for.

I am aware of my warning signs, which tend to include difficulty sleeping with an increase in stressful life events. I find things an effort at times because I put myself on my guard when I think something may cause a mood swing. This raises the problem of being assertive enough to say 'No' if I feel I have a lot going on but also not refusing every request in a 'never cross the road' sort of approach.

I take lithium and feel that this generally keeps me well and on an even keel. I have developed a good grasp of the illness and use my self management techniques before turning to additional medication. This combination provides me with the confidence to take charge of my life.

If I feel that things are going a bit off balance I call on my self management strategies. These vary depending on whether my mood is starting to drop a bit or if I am starting to feel speeded up.

If I am feeling low, I try and put tasks into manageable 'chunks'. I try to eat and sleep regularly and get some physical exercise. Distractions are also helpful such as reading and favourite music.

If my mood is climbing I keep to a strict routine and cut out stimulation such as the television, telephone and e-mail. I also postpone major decisions and try to slow down my thinking. I aim to do relaxing things to ground myself.

Family and friends are vital in the understanding of bipolar because they can help to recognise when 'down' time is needed and also provide valuable feedback. One of my friends gave me a useful book called 'The Book of Idle Pleasures'. It reflects on the value of simple pastimes and how to achieve the grounding that everyone needs from time to time. I have added it to my self management library!

Joanne Howell

# hypnotherapy and me

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so there i was outside the natural life centre, about to embark on a whole new way of being.....

i've tried a lot of ways in the past to boost my confidence, all without much success. then, i stumbled upon the latest answer one day, watching paul mckenna on tv. if hypnosis can make you thin, surely it can make you feel better about yourself too? that's when it hit me. i was going to try hypnotherapy.....

i made an appointment with the woman on reception. she sounded nice but told me that hypnotherapy cost £45 per hour - ouch! that's a big chunk of my week's money gone - but i decided to press on anyway and, a few days later, i went to my appointment, full of anticipation.....

the hypnotherapist was a nice-looking middle-aged woman called wendy. she handed me a glass of water and said she would like to take some notes so she knew exactly what sort of problem she was dealing with. she asked me when i thought my lack of confidence began. i told her it was twelve years ago, when i was diagnosed with schizophrenia. she put down her pen.....

"i'm afraid in that case that i may be unable to treat you," she said, without saying why.....

not the response i was expecting but, being used to this sort of thing, i reassured her that i was perfectly harmless and unlikely to cause any trouble.....

"it's not that," she said. "i'm merely worried that the hypnosis will prove too much for you" ..... pause .... "let me consult my crystal." .....

after swinging the pendulum back and forth for a bit, she decided that we could after all continue.....

i lay back in my chair as she told me to close my eyes and count backwards from 100. i became aware that she was talking but wasn't that bothered as she seemed so far away. the hypnosis was very relaxing and it took me to a beautiful place where i was able to communicate with myself.....

but, when i came out of it, she told me i'd need months of weekly sessions to be more confident.....

"oh dear, not likely," i thought to myself. "not at that price." .....

walking home, i felt more and more depressed and still lacking in confidence. but looking back on it, at least i'd had the confidence to tell her i didn't want any more hypnotherapy. so, perhaps it did work after all.

nej

**All users of Bath Mind services,  
volunteers and staff**  
are cordially invited to  
**LUNCH WITH THE TRUSTEES**  
12.30pm – 2.00pm  
on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June  
at 13 Abbey Church Yard

If you have ideas for how we could improve our services, or develop new projects, come and share them with us. Or, if you are considering putting your skills and experience to use by joining the Board of Trustees, you can talk it over with them.

Or, feel free to come along, eat and chat and relax. This will be an informal occasion to meet the Trustees and friends and enjoy a buffet lunch.

Bath Mind's new updated  
**WEBSITE**  
will be live at the beginning of  
May!  
[www.bathmind.org.uk](http://www.bathmind.org.uk)

Congratulations to the  
**Mad Hatters**  
who raised £66 for Comic Relief by doing something funny for money in Abbey Church Yard.  
Comic Relief is a major funder of Bath Mind's Advocacy for Older People Service.

## **WRITE FOR MINDFUL**

Get yourself published. 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 Issue 4 is Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009**

## Untitled

The sorrow I feel as I sit alone,  
In my home is because I miss,  
Him and his voice,  
His frame, eyes, even his name  
Which no longer he says on the days or nights he delighted  
My heart and spirit with, "Hello Mum."  
Is it all done,  
Now?

When, why, what, how did it happen?  
This loneliness, which is my choice.  
I cannot bear his voice.  
It is token, patronizing, broken. This relationship.  
Because the penny dropped with a CLANG!

I don't matter anymore.  
I'm not part of his family.  
I fooled myself, not them.  
It hurt, the revelation that I don't matter  
In the plans of my sons, their wife and girlfriend.  
It is the end.

They love new complete families now. But how  
Did it come to this?  
The fault is his, but the blame is mine.  
They punish me still, and I have no will to suffer their  
disrespect.  
Still.

So, I have decided to end my role as mother to sons  
I thought were more than friends.  
Here it ends.  
I can't be bothered anymore to care about them in a vacuum  
of silence.  
Theirs.  
I will not take their leftovers of forced affection.  
So this is my defection from mum to lonely old lady.  
Or will it be lovely old lady? Maybe.

It doesn't hurt quite so much, so often now.  
It's easier to do what they said about  
My daughter. She doesn't exist they said.  
Only in my head not hers.

He doesn't exist in my head and in my heart they'll soon be  
dead.  
I loved them once. I still do, as figments of my mind.  
That's all anyone will find.

Gloria Temple

## The Light Force

Burning bright  
Through the night  
The lights of fairies grow .....  
Still all day  
Come what may  
Their gossamer will show  
The way to go .....  
Search your heart  
Still your mind  
Not far apart  
From the path  
You will find  
Their own sweet truth.  
For fairies won't remain aloof  
To those who seek  
Through all that's bleak  
Believing they'll discover  
A road recovered!

Jenifer Daniel

## Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training

After the fantastic feedback from the first two MHFA courses run by Bath Mind, word has obviously spread that this is an excellent, not-to-be-missed opportunity to develop understanding and practical skills in mental health support.

The 12 hour course is spread over two days and is accessible to all – carers, members of community or voluntary groups as well as interested individuals. It is free. A free lunch is included.

The courses arranged for April, May and June are all fully subscribed. There is some availability in September and November and more availability in January and March 2010.

**To find out more, or book a place, call  
01225 316199.**

# The Frobisher Case: Episode 1: Head for the Heights

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My sister had asked me to 'phone Mum the moment I landed at Heathrow airport. It was to be a long haul flight from Auckland, New Zealand to England for a six-month placement in the Children's Hospital, Bristol. Mum worried about the flight and the damp climate; she fretted that I'd be away over Christmas and wouldn't have my turkey done the way I liked it. I couldn't wait to get away. My decree absolute had come through the month before the visa was finalised and there was nothing to hold me back.

I thought wryly about Lisa, my first wife. She had never come to terms with the fact that my job as a staff grade doctor almost always came first. Somehow, there never seemed to be enough time for social activities or togetherness. She moaned constantly that if I wasn't in the clinic I was out on the hills hang-gliding with the Army Reserves. I love hang-gliding; I feel free and at peace when floating on the thermals and it helps me deal with the harrowing nature of my job. I work with children and diseases of childhood and was hoping that six months in England would help me reach Consultant status.

The plane touched down at Heathrow and had to taxi along the runway in an orderly queue before we could disembark and head for the facilities. Then it was immigration control and finally I was reunited with my baggage. I was being met by Dr Avril McAllister in the arrivals hall and, as I walked through, I saw her standing there holding a big sign with my name on it. I approached her and she shook my hand, beaming a welcome.

"I've booked a taxi to Bristol," she said. "If there are two of us it works out cheaper than the train and it's so much more comfortable."

Arriving in Bristol, I was taken to my digs – a spacious room in the home of a Mr and Mrs Toombs. They were an older couple who talked about the war. Mrs Toombs did the cooking and would give me a full English breakfast every morning during the week and a two-course dinner in the evening. At the week-end I had to fend for myself but I was promised that plenty of people from the department would be willing to take me out.

I went in to work the next day and met my new supervisor Dr Lance Largesse, a giant of a man by reputation with a great sense of humour and an appetite for all things healthy, especially lettuce. He was also a great champion of humble tap water and drank the regulation two litres per day. He refused to buy the bottled stuff in a restaurant - corporation pop he called it. Lance slapped me on the shoulder and told me that, as soon as I'd recovered from my jet lag, my first duty would be to travel to London, to Great Ormond Street Hospital, to collaborate with doctors there on a study of childhood leukaemia.

"It's the only perk of the job," he said sipping from his glass. "We'll put you up in hospital accommodation for a few nights and you can present your findings at one of our monthly seminars. If you're bored on the train, read the International Journal of Epidemiology. You'll sleep like a log!"

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The train journey started in an uneventful way; my ticket had been booked in advance for economy's sake and all I had to do was sit back and enjoy the scenery. I had brought my papers to study but found that the tannoy kept interrupting my reading. At Bath, a very attractive young lady sat opposite me with a small boy. He was wearing a baseball cap on his completely bald head and kept asking how long the journey would take. Then they announced over the tannoy that we would be delayed due to an electrical fault and the mother looked anxiously at her watch.

"We'll be late," she said to the boy, "and I've come out without my mobile."

"Can I help?" I enquired. "There's a signal on mine. Please use it to call ahead."

Mrs Frobisher introduced herself and her nine year old son, Liam. "He's got leukaemia," she said, "and we have to be at Great

Ormond Street by 11am to try a new course of treatment. It's not bound to work. It's been a constant worry for two years now."

Then Mrs Frobisher talked about other things. I told her that I was a doctor, also bound for Great Ormond Street but we discovered that we were going to see different consultants. At Paddington our ways parted as she took Liam into a taxi and I took the tube to save the department money.

Professor Gambit saw me in his office that day and talked about the new treatment regime that Mrs Frobisher had mentioned on the train. He said that early results were promising but he was aware of Liam's particular case.

"He's very poorly," said Professor Gambit, "and we are not very hopeful. He has an aggressive illness and has reacted badly to chemotherapy at the higher doses."

That night I rang Avril to offload. She was preparing for a night out with colleagues from the General Stokeley Ward at the Infirmary.

"It's going to be one of those ghastly hen nights where you have to dress up," she said. "But it's miserable to think you might lose a patient and particularly tragic when they're very young. Have you seen the chaplain?"

"Avril, have you ever been hang-gliding?" I asked cautiously, avoiding answering her directly.

"No, I never have," she replied. "It's something I've always wanted to try. What makes you ask? Have you tried it?"

"Yes. We'll go to Abergavenny at the week-end," I said. "Hang-gliding is said to be great off the Blorenge. I'll give you a few lessons."

"Count me in," exclaimed Avril, beaming delightedly down the 'phone.

.....to be continued .....Merryl Williams

## Opera Piccola Performs for Bath Mind



The Rondo Theatre in Bath will host an evening of operatic passion from Opera Piccola on Friday July 3<sup>rd</sup>, to benefit Bath Mind. Opera Piccola is a musically skilled and versatile group that aims to bring enjoyable and accessible opera to new audiences. Their programme includes an attractive variety of solos, duets, ensembles and choruses characterized by stimulating commentary to give the context of each excerpt and to enhance the dramatic and humorous nuances. Their latest anthology confirms that torrid passion generally flourishes in a sultry Mediterranean climate, even if this is often viewed from a North European perspective.

Tickets, priced at £9 (£7 concessions), will be on sale at Bath Mind's offices at 13 Abbey Church Yard and from the Rondo Theatre box office.

Bath



For better  
mental health

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"Mindful: a freefall of thought" is available in paper or electronic formats.

If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please contact

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## THANK YOU

Your gift will help  
Bath Mind continue  
working to improve  
the lives of people  
labelled, diagnosed  
or treated as  
mentally ill.

## GIFT AID

**Make an even bigger contribution at no cost to you.**

If you are a UK tax payer and would like to make your contribution worth 28% more, at no extra cost to you, please sign and date the following declaration –

- I am already registered with Bath Mind's Gift Aid scheme  
or (delete as applicable)
- I want Bath Mind to reclaim tax on all contributions that I make from 1<sup>st</sup> December  
2008 onwards.

I pay sufficient income and /or capital gains tax to equal the amount that Bath Mind will  
reclaim

Signed:

Date: