Spontaneous expression Of Anima!

By Dove (Ganges Ward)
THANK YOU to everybody who has contributed to Issue 16 of Speakeasy. As always, The Advocacy Project has greatly enjoyed working with you all and we are proud to publish your different viewpoints and thoughts, along with your wonderful poems and artwork. *We hope you enjoy reading this edition!*

Natasha (Speakeasy Editor)

Inside this issue ......

POEMS

ART

*POETRY*

POINTS OF VIEW

*Speakeasy* magazine provides a creative space for people who use mental health services in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea to get their voices heard.

If you would like to share your thoughts and opinions, discuss your experiences, or get your artwork, writing or poetry published in the next issue of *Speakeasy*, please contact:

Natasha or Rebecca - **0208 962 8695** or **differentvoices@advocacyproject.org.uk**

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‘In view of mood’
By Aaron Hands (Gerrard Ward)
My Point Of View – The Smoking Ban at the Gordon

I am currently an inpatient at the Gordon Hospital. The government has brought in legislation to stop smoking in all hospitals. This means that patients will not be allowed to smoke in any of the hospital grounds, including car parks.

I feel that the government has got it wrong.

I understand that the government is trying to promote healthy living, but at the same time, I feel that they are taking away a patient’s choice to smoke cigarettes. People should have a right to smoke, smoking is not illegal. Patients are not asking to be able to smoke inside the hospital, they would just like to be able to smoke on the roof garden or a designated area outside.

Some patients have been locked up in hospital against their will, which can be very stressful and smoking can help deal with the stress. It’s not fair to expect patients to stop smoking at an extremely stressful and vulnerable time. When patients stop smoking, it should not be by force but by free will.

When the smoking ban starts I worry that patients will become irritable and aggressive and this will cause problems on the ward, which isn’t fair for staff or for the patients. I think patients should still be allowed to smoke on the roof garden or in an outside area. I feel very disappointed that a total smoking ban is being introduced at the Gordon.

Anonymous (Ebony Ward)

The Godless

Antinomean sorcery, the eye of the witch.
The dark paradigm that will chew slowly at your mind.
The bat will claw at your ancient past.
The word of the sorcerer shall commence in lairs and realms
Where the truth is but a lie
Where shapes are half formed
The night side of the day
We meet in a dream at the Sabbath
With every experience I cross the abyss

By Jonathan (Ganges ward)

To contribute to Speakeasy, please contact Natasha: 0208 962 8695 or differentvoices@advocacyproject.org.uk
The Day Room 1990

Burnt out cases
Mask-like faces
Sit in the day room
Of all places
Some looking normal but with mental scars
The boys/people some said would go far

These burnt out cases
Have resistant depression and psychotic traces
Their illness hits people of all classes, all races
They sit among the basket weavers and the basket "cases"
All strung out with Tardive dyskinesia
Suffering from visions or various stages of neurosis and amnesia

Time goes slowly in the day room
Flowers wilt and fail to bloom
The patients appear sometimes disorientated
Jumpy, eyes dilated
Refused a walk in the grounds
Earnestly waiting for the hospital ward round
Or tranquillised, compliant, on medication
Some sit in intensive care near the nurse's station

Unskilled work is offered as a rehabilitative tool
Packing work, basket weaving
Also classes on the Day Programme, a bit like school
Music appreciation, pottery, a spot of cooking, give structure to the day
Make them feel a semblance of okay

Some people are twitching from their dyskinesia
(They can't be given a maintenance dose)
Some have Catatonia which can make them near comatose
Rigid like flamingos frozen on a lake
The day room and the ward protect from what's hard to take

It's a convenient bubble from the outside world
They are the sort of like 'men that came in from the cold'
Fearing matrices of conspiracies worthy of a Le Carre novel
Escaping tormentors that doggedly lurk, ignored at their peril

The day room seems as if it always existed
Cigarette butts flow from ashtrays made in pottery group
At dinner times patients rush for their three course meal with soup
TV flickers on an elderly screen, rapid lorazepam makes agitators serene
It's a hangover from institutional care, for people with fractured nerves, not devil may care
It's a bit like God's waiting room in a way, they're in there practically all day
Till a nurse reconnects them with the hospital regime, snaps them out of their transient dreams

Anonymous (Kensington & Chelsea)
The Road

Recovery is not easy to understand for me. My nature is to be impatient, organised, and get things done. Arriving on the ward, I felt relief. I had been trying to get better myself at home for months. One morning I had reached the end - I was going to try to silence the pain. At Danube I found people who could support, monitor and care for me during my crisis. Some days are very hopeful. Some days are still very dark and emotional. Recovery is a process which requires patience, understanding and kindness. All of which I fail to give myself. However I have to learn to take my time. Get back into activities slowly. And decipher what I want out of life. I am fortunate to have a supportive family. Nonetheless I have to do the work to recover.

Anonymous (Danube Ward)

My medication was all just an illusion. My paranoia wrapped in confusion. My thoughts were crashing down on me. Like a running train inside my head. Like a piece of lead.

My world was crashing down on me. But that’s where recovery starts. That’s me. I had this dream it will all go away. The tears running down my face. Oh what a disgrace.

But I knew I had to pick myself up. And Shannon Ward taught me self-control.

I knew one day I had to get out of this black hole. But it doesn’t matter who you are. But what sticks inside of me – It’s about being free and having recovery.

Anonymous (Shannon Ward)

‘JASH’ by Psyrasavathi (Gerrard Ward)
Dear Dr Olanzapine

My eyes tuned to your frequency
My ears concerned with my mind
My soul gridlocked by the corners of design
My emotions no longer upbeat
But now I fit in
To a common reality
   ay-men

My friends I don’t want to see in this state of low empathy
The songs touch only my boundary
And no longer dance with my soul
Suffering kicks in,
   I feel pain
My body in a different game
Stuck in the islands of man’s creation

The game of blame I’m thinking of playing
Doctor you are tempting me
How our souls are intertwined by our fantasies of a better world
   O architect of my mind, I prefer your design

Oh doctor and lawyer who fight the game for sanity
   Is it clear yet that we know almost nothing
Please let me rest with me, myself and other just the way that I am?
   I’m fed up of this game where the outcome is you win
But like a proud lion you parade the jungle of minds certain only of supremacy
   Whilst others creep around your feet in shame
   I want out of this game
   We’re all kittens to me

Anonymous (Westminster)
What it’s like inside

I am me now
I was wild when I was young
And free
I need to feel the sun on my skin
I am in a cage
I am lost and alone
My body shuts down
When I am locked up
I look out of the window
At the people walking by
At the birds in the tree
There’s a King Charles Spaniel
Running around free
As happy as can be
Two pigeons meet up at night
And during the day take flight
The activities here are too few
The outings are rare
Medication slows me down
I sleep for 23 hours a day

When I get out of here
I hope I can find a space of my own
A home
I will put pictures up
I will have a china tea set
I will bake cakes
And drink tea
With friends
And be happy in my little home

By Bridie Hepton

(Vincent Ward)

Freedom

If just one dream could come true
I would like to spend the day with you
And go back to our old haunt in Margate
I would take a deep breath
And let it all sink in that
I was free
Free as a bird

I think you’d be home
At this time of the morning
I’d be on the blower
To tell you the marvellous news that
I was free
Free as a bird

In my dream
You would be waiting for me
With arms wide open
And I’d say “Have you got a lager on the go?”
Even if you hadn’t
It would still be wonderful
To be free
Free as a bird

But I’m not

Instead, I’m stuck here
In hospital
Not free as a bird

By Paul O’Brien

(Ebury Ward)
It's in your hands...

**This is the Gordon Hospital**
Meant for recovery
Or is it a horror voyage of discovery?
Of hell and torment
Unbearably felt
Crippled, smitten and hell bent

It feels like we
Are kept indefinitely
Not seeing a psychiatrist
Kept for a lifetime
Kept forever
Kept for infinity

Some of those who come for a short time
Get flown back home
Maybe to war-torn countries
Some who stay here
Are left by the wayside
Maybe end up on the streets
Around St Paul’s and St Martin-in-the-Fields

Living on handouts
Sandwiches
Kindly provided by those who are giving
And sometimes by others who just want to look good
But are really making a shady living

**Anonymous (Vincent Ward)**

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**Diversity**

What do you feel about the word... **DIVERSITY**?

This word is a **WONDERFUL** word for me, because it is a word that is chatting about a lot of things – a mix of ideas, and colours, and the powerful union of different people. It is a word that is quite new in the vocabularies and minds of many people. Sadly, some people have an unhappy and negative view that people should be divided. I think this is due to fear, and maybe also ignorant minds.

We should fight to keep this word alive in the minds and voices and hearts of people.

**Anonymous (Gerrard Ward)**

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**Elephant by Richard (Thames Ward)**
Mindfulness meditation

I think mindfulness meditation is helpful for people who have mental health problems and learning disabilities. It has helped me to let go of stress, anxiety and my fear of falling down on to the ground. It has helped me in the community and also at home.

Mindfulness is about being more aware of your thoughts and changing how you think about things and how you think about yourself. It looks at what is happening now and not worrying about the past or the future.

I learned about mindfulness because I did a course which taught me how to practice it. I practice it everyday at home.

It has helped me to feel at peace.

I have also done creative mediation. I visualise flowers and breathe in peace. Taking time out and breathing helps me to feel relaxed.

My religious faith is important to me too. Spirituality has helped me feel peaceful, and meeting people and making friends at church has helped me to feel safe.

Reaching out to people is very important for recovery. Being isolated can be bad for your mental health. You can meet different people at places like support groups, CNWL Recovery College, Westminster Mind, adult education centres, meditation groups or sports clubs. The ‘Different Voices Little Book of Services’ lists lots of places. All the recommendations in that booklet are from service users’ own experiences of going to those places.

Mindfulness and spirituality have helped my recovery. I feel very blessed.

Anonymous (Westminster)
‘Kershaw’s Garden’
By Margaret Ingram (Beatrice Place)
It’s hard enough to get up out of bed in the morning, when you’re in hospital, especially when it’s cold. But the room itself is also cold – because it’s bare. My hospital bedroom feels barren.

There are no curtains in my room. There are no paintings or nice things to look at. The bedrooms are not warm, cosy or inviting. A proper chair and desk would be nice, would make a big difference to me.

Going to activities, keeping busy, being distracted, having your mind directed to other things – these things are essential when you’re unwell.

When there’s not enough to do or see in hospital, it can drive you stark raving mad.

I would like to go on more outings, to the cinema or to the park. Watching TV all day in hospital and doing nothing else can make your mental health worse.

The key is to be active, occupied and distracted.

Comfort and environment are important for recovery, I believe.

**Anonymous (Gordon Hospital)**

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**Laughing**

Laughing,
What’s the point?
I can’t laugh,
At least I,
Can laugh
until it’s unbearable
Used to be able to,
Now.

**Anonymous**

*(Nile Ward)*

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Spring is here!

Spring brings the sun
Winter gloom disappears
Daffodils are yellow
And leaves on the trees appear
The Future ahead brings cheer!

Poem and photograph by
Giorgina L.R.Clarke
(Westminster)
It’s in your hands…

Do you need…

Support when attending Ward Rounds, Care Programme meetings (CPAs), and other meetings related to your stay in hospital?

Support in raising your concerns about your treatment in hospital?

Support in obtaining information about your rights and treatment?

Advocates are…

Free

Independent – We are not part of the team of doctors, social workers or nursing staff.

Confidential – We do not pass on information you share with us to other people.

Information givers – We do not give advice, but provide you with the information you need to make an informed decision.

Contact a mental health advocate on: 020 8969 3000

Speakeasy Magazine

Speakeasy has helped me a lot, when I’ve been in hospital and when I'm out of hospital. I contribute to the magazine regularly and I would encourage other service users to take part if they can.

It’s good to express points of view in a creative way and it’s exciting to see your work published. Speakeasy magazine can help friends and relatives to understand mental health and the experiences of patients in hospital. For example, my mother is from a different generation and doesn’t really understand mental health illness, but Speakeasy magazine has helped her to be more understanding.

I think it shows nurses and doctors another side to service users too. Being involved with Speakeasy magazine has given me confidence, makes me feel proud and has definitely helped my recovery.

Anonymous (Westminster)

To contribute to Speakeasy, please contact Natasha: 0208 962 8695 or differentvoices@advocacyproject.org.uk
By John Clarke (Vincent Ward)
Speakeasy
magazine

Would you like to contribute?

Artwork
Poetry
Points of View
Articles

Contact Natasha or Rebecca:

differentvoices@advocacyproject.org.uk

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