

# equilibrium

Haringey's magazine for **wellbeing**



**Chewing Gum  
Artist!** Ben Wilson

**Mind Champion**  
Talking to **Liz Miller**

**BOUNCE BALLET**  
Insane in the Brain

**Dogs as support:**  
**Marion Janner** Interview

Angela's **Journalism** course  
John: **service user** interview  
Launch of **Clarendon 2** poetry

ISSUE 35  
AUTUMN  
2009  
FREE

Just been taking a look at Equilibrium - it's really good. I took the liberty of posting a link to the Equilibrium website out to our Twitter followers: [hShift stigma campaign: www.shift.org.uk](http://www.shift.org.uk)



## We are now on the web!

[www.haringey.gov.uk/equilibrium](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/equilibrium)

### Web alerts:

Please email us at [equilibriumteam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:equilibriumteam@hotmail.co.uk) if you would like an alert each time our magazine is published on the web: ([www.haringey.gov.uk/equilibrium](http://www.haringey.gov.uk/equilibrium)).

### Coming up in Issue 36:

- ✓ Books, Mood Mapping, Doctoring the Mind, Omega 3, Healing without PROZAC
- ✓ West End Opera Review Interview with Denise Mack
- ✓ Day at MIND HQ - roadshow
- ✓ Film Review The Soloist
- ✓ Play Review The Idiot Colony
- ✓ Art exhibition: Black History Month at Hornsey Library
- ✓ UPDATE Volunteer Weekend Management at Clarendon
- ✓ WOW Award Mark Francis
- ✓ Trees at St Ann's
- ✓ The importance of diary writing
- ✓ Jabbok Support Services



**Patron:**  
**Dr Liz Miller**  
**(Mind Champion 2008)**

Equilibrium is devised, created, and produced entirely by team members with experience of the mental health system.



Cover image: Anthony Parke

Photo Copyright remains with all individual artists and Equilibrium. All rights reserved. 2009



**Haringey Council**



# contents

**4 -5** Round-up of local shows and book launch, news from Hornsey library, Woods on Prescription.

**6-7** Visual Art Focus: Ian talks to the Chewing Gum Man of Muswell Hill. Madness and Modernity / Bobby Baker

**8-9** Open Initiatives scheme: Challenging Discrimination. 'Agnes' Jacket'- a new book on the meaning of narratives.

**10-11** World Mental Health Day: coverage at Conel and the Clarendon.

**12-13** Ballet Review from Sadlers Wells: Insane in the brain. News on Star Wards.

**14-15** Siham interviews Marion Janner on the importance of dogs.

**16-17** Pumla's Posers. Angela at the Hayward Gallery: Walking in the mind. Liz Miller-doctor and patron of Equilibrium talks about her new book on Moods

**18-19** Trip to Whitstable: Clarendon day out. Latest Clarendon poetry volume. Interview with "John" a service user. Poetry with Sarah Wardle

## editorial

This autumn issue is full of lovely arts! In this edition we have some interesting and amazing interviews. Marion Janner (Starwards) talks about support dogs and their benefit. There's a book review 'Agnes', and the Clarendon's new poetry book followed by three major arts exhibitions reported by Angela. Mind Champion, Liz Miller talks about her new book "Mood Mapping". Also, some contributions on World Mental Health Day. Rewarding! Rebranding! Equilibrium is now 'Haringey's magazine for wellbeing'.

## contributions

**Wanted:** contributions to Equilibrium! Please email us with your news, views, poems, photos, plus articles. Anonymity guaranteed if required.

## contact us

**Equilibrium**, Clarendon Centre, Clarendon Road, London, N8 ODJ. 02084894860, [equilibriumteam@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:equilibriumteam@hotmail.co.uk). We are in the office on Wednesday mornings 9.45-11.45, but you can leave a message at other times and we'll get back to you.

## the team

**Facilitator:** Polly Mortimer. **Editorial team:** Pumla Kisosonkole, Angela, Siham Beleh, Ian Stewart. **Graphic design:** A.J. Parké. The views expressed in Equilibrium are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editorial team.

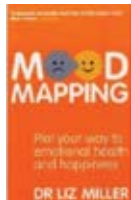
## advertisement

If you wish to advertise in Equilibrium email us using the contact details above.



## MUSIC NOTES

Manu Chao, award-winning multi-lingual singer has recorded an album with psychiatric patients who run an Argentine radio station called Radio Loony. The album Viva la Colifata! Is available free at VivaLaColifata.org, but people are asked to make a donation to help the hospital's pioneering approach to treating mental illness. Alfredo Olivera, the stations director and founder, said: 'The process was very positive, not only because it tackled the social stigma of mental illness but because it helped people leave the hospital and develop their own autonomy.'



## BOOK LAUNCH

Equilibrium went to the launch party of our patron Liz Miller's new book Mood Mapping – plot your way to emotional health and happiness Rodale £12.99. A good do, and peerless meringue, and lots of service users from her Tuesday bipolar group there to support her. The book, which will be reviewed in next issue of Equilibrium, is 'a practical self-help tool that has been designed to help you life low energy levels, overcome mood swings and depression, and take the edge off anxiety and worry. By mapping and tracking your mood you will be able to easily identify how you are feeling – and understand why you feel as you do – and take practical steps to improve your mood and feel healthier and better about life.'



## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

"The sun shone on the hundreds of people that came along to Get Moving and Dance, the dance festival from Time to Change to celebrate World Mental Health Day on Saturday 10th October. Children and adults alike flocked to the dance floors at Regent's Park to learn some new moves and meet lots of new smiling faces. On the main stage, Dave Benson Phillips entertained everyone as he undertook an impromptu dance lesson with Britain's Got Talent's Sophie Mei while choreographers teaching everything from Bollywood to MJ's Thriller got the huge crowds active to help boost their mental wellbeing. At the end of the day everyone was treated to a sneak preview of material from the new album from classic band Blake, whose rare talent left everybody keen for more." From Mind's press release. For more info and photos try [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)



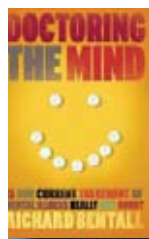
## HARINGEY LIBRARIES: UPDATE

Lots of health and wellbeing courses – stress control and emotional wellbeing, pilates, meditation, book groups, health checks, smoking cessation, film evenings, knitter natter, yoga etc. More details [www.haringey.gov.uk](http://www.haringey.gov.uk) or ring 020 8489 2500. PS. Great cafe in Hornsey library with homemade cake etc.



## CLARENDON STAFFER IN WEST END OPERA!

One of the Clarendon staff Denise Mack, is in Duke Bluebeard's Castle by Bela Bartok at the English National Opera!! She is playing one of Bluebeard's three wives. It's an extremely horrible tale which gets nastier and nastier. See next edition for interview with Denise, and review.



## DOCTORING THE MIND

'It seems that the most powerful stimulus available to a human being... is the warm and empathetic attention of another human being. Arguably, if modern psychiatric staff could just recognise this simple truth and put it into practice, the quality of care they provide would improve dramatically.' From 'Doctoring the Mind – why psychiatric treatments fail' by Richard Bentall. **Review in next issue.**



## URBAN WILDLIFE – QUEEN’S WOOD

The annual wood art experience (true Outsider Art) was true to form and fascinating. As we wandered through Queen’s Wood we stumbled on a bunch of pencils stuck in the crook of a tree, a mysterious door with a spyhole looking in to a burnt room (Sakara Dawson-Marsh), a tempting snake with a wedding hat broadcasting about temptation, giant lightswitches hanging from the trees (Russ Hodgson), paper birds in a string net, a man in a tent ranting slightly and a woman in another tent covered with art works down by the muddy pond.

It’s always a joy to discover all the great pieces in the wood each year – a good prelude to autumn and as ever thought-provoking and exciting. There was a living artwork too – JDSwann – an eager trilby-wearing ornithologist looking for the elusive Wood warbler.

There’s something compelling about art outside – it all becomes much more available and integrative. Here’s to many more shows.

Organised by Rekindle/Tony Peakall. **Polly**

Photos: John Clifford



## WALKING IN THE WOODS: ON PRESCRIPTION

Dr William Bird from Oxfordshire started prescribing walks to patients on prescription from 1996. ‘I was out for a walk one day when I saw loads of empty footpaths alongside the local housing estate. People were sitting in my clinic saying there was no opportunity for exercise but it was there all along. It was just a matter of confidence, of taking that first step. The concept of health walks was born.’

After providing maps, he realised that wasn’t enough. ‘We discovered that three things had to be met if the walks were to succeed: they had to be led, they had to be short and they had to be local.’

13 years later through Natural England’s Walking the Way to Health initiative, supporting 4000 walks a week, green exercise is enshrined in government policy and seen as one of the most effective means of improving the nations physical and mental wellbeing.

‘We were once firmly connected with the natural environment, so perhaps it’s no surprise that two surveys of health walks found that the reasons people gave for walking were keeping fit, being in the countryside, watching the seasons change and socialising...’

When people look at trees their heart rate goes down. And if looking at trees can reduce everyday stress, you are reducing the risk of developing diseases like diabetes and depression.’

Plans are afoot to get more people walking woods. VisitWoods is a new project started by the Woodland Trust and supported by the Big Lottery Fund’s changing Spaces programme.

**More info:** [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

## COOLTAN ARTS

### COOLTAN ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

They would love volunteers to provide IT support, office back up, blogging and social media volunteers, publicity and marketing etc. Email [kathrin@cooltanarts.org.uk](mailto:kathrin@cooltanarts.org.uk) or [gin@cooltanarts.org.uk](mailto:gin@cooltanarts.org.uk).



This gorgeous quilt and cushion was commissioned from Studio 306 by a private client - delicately and beautifully made by Alice Konadu. For more details of this project and any other at the Clarendon or Studio 306 ring 020 8489 4860.

# Chewing Gum Man

BEN WILSON



Arts



Chewing Gum Man – Ben Wilson. If you are familiar with Muswell Hill then you have probably noticed “the chewing gum man”. He is engaged in an evolving project over the last five years in which he artfully and painstakingly changes the unsightly chewing gum on the pavements into miniature works of art.

Each painting takes 1,2 or 3 hours to complete but it can take him all day, and you can find them all over London- from Muswell Hill to the Millennium Bridge and the Tate Modern.

Ben Wilson says that it is “ all about environmental issues “ and his idea of free expression in a society that has become increasingly homogenous. Living in Barnet, he is a sculptor as well as an artist and in his teens did an Arts Foundation course at Hornsey College of Art - or Middlesex Poly as it then was.

I particularly like the one outside Boots in Muswell Hill that was inspired by Picasso's Guernica (see front cover), but he also paints love messages, when he has requests and RIP paintings for people who have died. He has even done one at King's Cross in memory of a victim of the London bombing, but he is quick to point out that he never does them unless he is requested to.

Most people -95% - including the local police are usually very supportive but he says that on occasions he has been stopped from working – which he does from 9-5pm Monday to Friday. Ben says it is usually okay, because he doesn't actually paint on the pavement but on the gum itself which gives people the chance to remove it. A technicality – but one that works in his favour. **Ian Stewart**



Top 3 miniatures copyright: Rahid1. Others: Ian Stewart



# Bobby Baker

At the Wellcome Collection

## Diary drawings: Mental illness and me 1997–2008

Bobby Baker's art exhibition was extremely good. She is an established artist who was suffering from borderline personality disorder. She has managed to express her suffering of her illness through art.

"The pictures in this exhibition show some of the public work I've made. The 159 carefully selected drawings that follow tell the private story from 1997 to 2008 of my somewhat lengthy journey to full recovery." First of all I am glad to hear about somebody making a full recovery from mental illness. I hope it will inspire other people to do the same (including me). The pictures are of a high standard and interesting.



© Bobby Baker; photograph © Andrew Whittuck



## Madness & Modernity: Mental illness and the visual arts in Vienna 1900



At the turn of the 20th century, Vienna in Austria was a leading country for modernism. This was a period in which Sigmund Freud pioneered new ideas about the self and psychiatry. This exhibition looks at the influence of psychiatry on early modernism and encourages us to reflect on how we deal with mental illness 100 years on.

The 'Tower of Fools' now stands as a Pathological Anatomical Museum. This hospital held 140 people. There were not treated very nicely by being chained to the walls with only straw mats to sleep on and poor standards of food. Narrenturm Video. There was a video on show by an artist and award winning filmmaker David Bickerstaff who created a film about a mental hospital called Narrenturm. [Angela](#)

**Polly adds:** The film that greeted visitors to the exhibition was extraordinary. Taken on what felt like a handheld camera and projected on to the walls in the round, we were led jagggedly through the corridors of the old asylum in Vienna - the Narrenturm (nicknamed Tower of Fools). We saw rusty beds, dripping taps, heard croaking blackbirds, and footsteps.. It forcefully took us into the belly of the place, the institution, the starkness, the sadness. Even more potent being empty. The original patients in the 18c were chained to the walls and provided only with straw mats.

Images courtesy of the Wellcome Collection

# OPEN UP

## INITIATIVES SCHEME

### What is the Open Up Initiatives Scheme?

The Open Up Initiatives Scheme is our programme of support for people with experience of mental distress who want to challenge mental health discrimination. We work with 16 initiatives over a period of one year (two in each region of England), to help them get their ideas for fighting prejudice off the ground.

### Who Can Apply?

The scheme is open to pretty much anyone! You could be working on your own, or as part of group. You could be from any community. Open Up is keen to support a portfolio of projects run by people from a diverse range of backgrounds. We are particularly keen to receive applications from people with direct experience of mental distress from Black and minority ethnic communities, from the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and other groups that experience multiple discrimination. We are also keen to encourage people from a wide range of age groups to apply. The only three rules are (and these are essential): You must have direct experience of mental distress.

### What Do We Mean By This?

You must identify as having experienced mental distress. We won't ask you to give us proof, or disclose any details, but it is vital that all our initiatives are run by people who have first hand experience of mental health issues. You and everyone in your group, must be over 18. You can work with people who are under 18, but the Initiative must be led by people



Photo by John Clifford

who are over 18 years old. Your Initiative must work in England. Open Up is only funded to work in England so we are unable to support initiatives elsewhere in the UK.

### What kind of ideas are you looking for?

Your initiative could be a film, radio programme or book to a training session or youth project – the ideas must come from you! The only thing we do ask is that you initiative achieves one of the following three aims:

- 1. Challenging people's preconceptions about people with mental health problems.**
- 2. Challenging mental health discrimination directly, e.g. taking action against discrimination in employment or in services.**
- 3. Raising awareness amongst other people with experience of mental distress - supporting people with experience of mental health problems to identify they have faced in their lives.**

Contact-[www.open-up.org.uk](http://www.open-up.org.uk)/[openup@mind.org.uk](mailto:openup@mind.org.uk).  
Mind, 15-19 Broadway, London E15 4BQ  
020 8519 2122. Copyright Mind.



# Agnes' Jacket

Agnes' Jacket by Gail Hornstein  
Rodale Press 2009



Photo by Paul Schnaittacher

It took a long while to read this book – each morning this August (I was 'between jobs'!) if it was sunny I would take my breakfast into the garden and savour a few pages of Agnes' Jacket. I found it a truly compelling, as well as harrowing, read. The essence of this book is the overwhelming importance of telling one's story and that story being heard. Agnes Richter's jacket was sewn in the late 19th century while she was in an asylum – all over it is text in Deutsche Schrift – a script almost unintelligible to anyone, even experts.

I hadn't been prepared for Gail's individual and personal style. She is consummately professional, yet allows her grumps and grumbles and individual reactions to filter through, thus lifting and rounding the whole experience of reading the book. She ferrets and sherlocks her way through her journey towards understanding and grips the enthralled reader.

Near the end of the book, she visits the Rosetta Stone engraved with ancient hieroglyphics in the British Museum in an attempt to gain inspiration about deciphering the text on the jacket. Many people had tried to decipher the marks until a brilliant polymath Champillon managed to crack the mystery.

'Even brilliant, dedicated scholars can be blinded by incorrect assumptions. Because they rejected the idea that hieroglyphics made sense, Champillon's competitors prevented themselves from figuring out the meaning of ancient Egyptian texts. What if today's biological psychiatrists are stuck in an equally misleading train of thought? What if their PET scans and genetic studies are based on a fundamentally wrong assumption about how to understand mental distress?'

Part 'tec, part humane listener, part psychology prof, combined with her forensic ear for detail and what's important in the fractured lives of those she writes about, makes for a fascinating author. Finally she sees the real jacket. To me this was the most moving part of the book. It was like finding Tutankhamun's treasure.

'My white-gloved hands carefully ease the jacket from the protective paper it's wrapped in. Sliding the storage box to one side, I lay the jacket out on the counter, its sleeves fully extended. Bettina has given me a magnifying glass and I hold it up to the intricate writing on the left arm. The room is silent. I'm holding my breath.'

Everyone needs to tell their story. From Arturo Bispo di Rosario's huge cloak (Equilibrium 2008) covered with his life, to Hungarian apron patterns to protect against unseen forces, to Agnes, from draughty church halls to autobiography, from blogs to balladeers, making sense and recording that sense and having it heard, seen, touched or read is supremely important. Read this book!

Polly



REVIEW

'What if Agnes' Richters jacket and other madness narratives are like this? Her embroidered garment and the diaries and memoirs of other patients



Photo by Lucy Fisher

aren't actually so different; 'text' and 'textile' do come from the same root. These texts have all been woven into patterns we can't make sense of on our own. But what if we had someone fluent in the language of madness to translate what seems beyond understanding to the rest of us?' So she sets out – through the US and Europe – to survivor's groups, Hearing Voices gurus and group members, to the basements of academic libraries, psychiatric day centres (the Clarendon!), to displaced individuals, police advisors and Wiltshire aristocrats. She patiently listens to archival testimonies in the British library sound archive and scales fall from her ears. She is discovering meaning in psychosis, heard voices, mutism and all forms of distress that too many professionals write off as gibberish. Having heard Gail talk (see Equilibrium 34) earlier this year at the Critical Psychiatry conference, I had a good idea about the book and its appeal. But

# World Mental Health Day



## At CONEL

Haringey Therapeutic Network based in Canning Crescent Centre celebrated World Mental Health Day at College of North East London (Conel) in Tottenham. The session started with a talk from Sarah Allner who is a mental health link worker. This was followed by African drumming and then Egyptian belly dancing.

Firstly, the African drumming was absolutely amazing. The teacher Paul Brett was very good. He managed to get everybody to drum together in harmony. The tempo varied from loud to quiet, doing one beat and then many beats and splitting the group into two, so that he could instruct us to do different things.

The teacher enjoyed the drumming so much that he started dancing to the music and a young girl joined him. There were lots of African drums and other percussion instruments, like drum kits, djembe, cowbells, shakers, Brazilian shells. When the drumming started it pulled in some of the students. Some of them joined in and they were playing very professionally, with fantastic melody, rhythm and energy.

Paul has played for 20 years in different bands. He has worked on a freelance basis for 10 years and he used to work in a African band called Yaabafunk.

African drumming is very loud so Paul cannot practice at home, because it would disturb the neighbours. So he practices by renting a studio with other musicians, he was taught by someone called Thebi Lipere and first started in Oval house.

The next event was Egyptian belly dancing. We all had to wear shawls wrapped around our hips. The teacher, Anne White, started off by dancing to her own music, but the young people were still drumming, so she decided to dance to their music. They were drumming very fast so we danced very fast and it was very exciting. The dance teacher showed us a variety of dance moves. I am an experienced belly dancer and teacher complimented me on my moves.

We had a little break, and then danced some more, but this time the teacher told the drummers do it more slowly so that we could dance in a more relaxed way. The session ended with a relaxing cool down.

There was a stall promoting mental health on behalf of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust. A variety of leaflets were available on different subjects e.g. understanding bipolar, understanding schizophrenia and recovery, understanding self-harm and Trichomonas vaginalis which is a STI. I noticed a leaflet about joining the mental health trust to improve mental health and wellbeing in North London. You can visit their website: [www.beh-mht.nhs/foundationtrust](http://www.beh-mht.nhs/foundationtrust) or call **020 8442 5700**.

They also had stress cards and stress balls that were handed out for free. This organisation reaches out to different communities and tries to destigmatise mental health. It also bridges the gap between local communities and the Mental Health Trust.

Sarah Allner, the link worker, helps students out on a practical level and works with students' tutors. She gives advice on mental health e.g. stress and psychosis. This service has been running since 2004.

Some students need help with housing, immigration benefits and emotional support. If the student has a problem relating to drugs they will be referred to an organisation called DASH. In some cases the student may be sent to a counselling service.

The college also looks after the students' sexual health. A sexual health nurse comes to the college for teenage pregnancies, Chlamydia testing, contraception advice and VD e.g. gonorrhoea.

This World Mental Health Day celebration was a success. I enjoyed the African drumming and the Egyptian belly dancing. There was a fantastic atmosphere and everything ran smoothly. Well Done!

**Angela**

## At The Clarendon Centre



Kyda Chiweda - Joint Commissioner for Mental Health

A World Mental Health Day event took place at the Clarendon centre on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October to promote awareness within the community and work currently being undertaken by the centre in the area of social inclusion.

After an introduction by manager of the centre, Gavin Eastley, a number of events took place to stimulate discussion. A panel which sought to promote dialogue between panel members and participants consisted of Dr Helen Pelendredes - a local GP, Mark Francis - a staff member, Zoe Vincent, Dorian Cole, Councillor Catherine Harris and Kuda Chiweda, joint commissioner for mental health – NHS Haringey.

Prior to this the Journeyman Arts Theatre Company performed three thought-provoking sketches about accessing mental health care. Paul Bailey took part. Sharon Jones, assisted by Theresa Hayes, set the whole event up which also featured the launch of the Clarendon Poetry book "No Label", and there were readings by Marilyn Myrie, Michelle Montgomery and Elizabeth Judah.

NAFSIYAT, an inter-cultural therapy centre in North London, also took part representing the work they undertake with people from diverse ethnic backgrounds providing therapy in different languages.

Time out for relaxation and head massage sessions were provided by Ruth Prudden and Mumtaz Lalani whilst Sharon O'Brien and her team handled the catering providing a hot lunch with a vegetarian alternative.

Finally there were exhibitions of ceramics, jewellery and printmaking on display the work of Clarendon members.



Photos by Ian Stewart

Ian Stewart

# Insane in the Brain

Sadler's Wells at the Peacock Theatre

## Bounce Street Dance Company



Insane in the Brain is a street dance version of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" based on the play by Dale Wasserman and the novel by Ken Kesey.

Bounce was established in Autumn 1997. Rot, their first real show was premiered in October 1998 in Stockholm. Since then, Bounce Street dance Company has created nine full-length productions.

Insane in the Brain has become one of their biggest successes, and more than 100,000 people have seen the show. It has also been awarded several prestigious prizes. Insane in the Brain had its premiere in 2006.

At the start of the show, dance moves under the instructions of the female nurse, Mildred Ratched, are performed by Sabina Dalfjall, a quite calculat-

ing and cold character. talks to patients about blaming their parents on their mental state; Mc Murphy played by Frederick Rydman makes sure the patients follow the orders given by the nurse.

After a lot of dance and melodic movements, once the nurse leaves, the two male nurses maltreat the patients. The music is fantastic, it goes with the acting but it is also sad and moving at the same time. The beds are brought in, followed by some contemporary music. The patients sleep in a line, spaced up. Once at the time, they dance to some groovy music, mostly on their beds, the dance movements are quite creative and very meaningful. After the night dance, they all back in stage with a very slow melody dance, under the nurse's guidance with some ballet dance movements by the patients. Whilst the two males nurses are performing various beautiful dance moves to some pop music, Mildred (the female nurse) orders them to leave, and then she takes over showing evocative steps movements, switching from soft music followed by more rapid dancing.

Once they get hold of the keys, they all sneak out of the institution and managed to perform in the street; they all feel free for some time. During the performance, the dancers perform around and among the audience. All of the performers dance to different types of music, whilst the male nurses are break dancing...

A beautiful and fantastic ballet, full of amazing artists! A must see!

**Siham Beleh**



## JOURNALISM THE BASICS

**I did a 10 week journalism course recently at City Lit, which is a college for adults. The course was called 'Journalism the Basics' and concessionary rates are available.**

I found the course very interesting and absolutely fabulous. The tutor was extremely established in the world of journalism. She had worked on different magazines and newspapers. The classes were always well organised and well planned. She also encouraged us to do extra homework. The class had a comfortable atmosphere and we were encouraged to help each other. Surprisingly everybody had already made up their minds about what area they wanted to write about e.g films, the environment, women's health, fashion, and I wanted to write about children and young people because I feel that this generation of children have too many problems. I would like to write about possible solutions to these problems.

A lot of young children for example have unhealthy diets, so they are more likely to grow into unhealthy adults. I was born in the sixties, I was brought up with meat and two veg at dinner time. We learnt about interviewing skills, writing headlines and voxpops (popular interview of the public) The course involved a lot of working with the other members of the class like interviewing each other and doing articles together. Three of us did an article on the Euro – which was quite interesting. We learned about filler stories which are short stories in brief. I received a certificate of attendance at the end of the course. **Angela**



## Spotlight

**Hornsey Library, Crouch End** has a new IAPT (Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies) room in the library and they are stocking up on Equilibrium. OXFAM bookshops throughout Haringey now stock Equilibrium.

New **bibliotherapy groups** are springing up throughout the borough. Paul is at Hornsey Library every Monday afternoon from 2-4 and has started another group at Mind in Stapleton Hall Rd. No need to have read anything beforehand – just drop in and take part or observe. Get into reading – it's good for the soul.



## Marion Janner – From the Horse's Mouth

Two things happened earlier this year. Star Wards published TalkWell, a fun training resource for staff about the art of conversation on a ward. And I was back for my traditional Easter break on Lordship ward. (Holiday, partial sectioning, I don't think we need to quibble about words.) The ward was transformed, in particular because the staff were now zealously wanting to talk with us. It could be interpreted from the above that this was largely thanks to Star Wards. That would be a long-shot claim by us, mainly because the publishing came after the hospitalising. This unswerving let's talk about it approach made it very awkward for me during my stay. When I was feeling stressed (eg because room service seemed slow for a hotel), it was quite a struggle to justify to myself acting on any self-destructive compulsions when I knew that staff would definitely be instantly available for a soothing conversation.



## Equalstraining -

Are offering short course places to tackle work, benefits, volunteering and confidence issues for mental health and psychological service users. As professional disabled people, including people with mental health issues, we have faced similar challenges. **Find out more: nora.kirkwood@equalstraining.com.** Travel, childcare and lunch provided. Funders: LBH and DoH.



## Mental health in the Media awards

Coming up in November.

Nominations include:

- Terry Pratchett: Living with Alzheimers (BBC2)
- Insanity of war: unreported world about the devastating psychological trauma experienced by people in Sierra Leone in the ten years after the brutal civil war. (C4).
- Chosen: Three men speak out about the abuse they suffered at an English preparatory school and the devastating after effects of the grooming and the abuse. (More4)
- Gone: Newsround (BBC1) A documentary on four children who have each lost someone they loved.
- Two radio plays which were reviewed in Equilibrium over the last year: Nina Black and The Do's and Don't's of the Mentally Interesting by Seaneen Molloy.



## Poetry

**Two useful projects: Poetry in the Waiting room:** which puts poems on cards and supplies them free to doctors waiting rooms. Great idea and you can take the cards home.

[pitwr@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:pitwr@blueyonder.co.uk) / [www.poemsinthewaitingroom.org](http://www.poemsinthewaitingroom.org).

And the long established **Survivors Poetry** is up to strength with a good edition of Poetry Express. Available as a free download from: [www.survivorspoetry.com](http://www.survivorspoetry.com)



## HATS OFF...

To Jan Pienkowski – children's book illustrator (Meg and Mog) and artist – who told Kirsty Lang on Desert Island Discs all about his bipolar disorder, now recovered from. His trick was to work with it not against it. And to Marcus Trescothick – erstwhile England cricket captain and now Somerset captain – for bravery in giving the Champions League a go, and then bravery at realising it was best to stick to his ground rules and withdraw when his anxiety disorder returned.

# Support Dogs

Siham talked to Marion Janner about her new brainwave - **support dogs for those in distress.**



Photo: Christian Simbadei/ Guardian

## How people can benefit from pet dogs as therapy for service users?

There are two main ways in which mentally ill people can benefit from dogs, beyond the usual joys of pet companionship. The service you refer to, Pets as Therapy, is a fantastic charity which finds and 'vets' (as in checks out OKness of) dogs and their humans who want to visit old people's homes, hospitals and other places where people are living away from home.

The effects of visiting dogs are completely amazing. One of the most amazing stories I've heard was about how Portuguese hospitals are letting inpatients who are very agitated, angry or distressed be with a dog to help them regain their emotional equilibrium. How much better is this than being filled with chemicals, locked in a room or other heavy-duty ways of responding to people who are in a very bad state? Especially as the results of dog comforting are incredible, with even furious patients who have been behaving aggressively managing to turn their energy and attention to the dogs, converting anger to pleasure and destructiveness to caringness.

The other big way that dogs can support those of us with mental health problems is by bigging-up their role as our day-to-day companions. Your questions may have been prompted by reading something about my 'support dog' Buddy. Buddy

came to live with me just before my partner Sylvia and I had a civil partnership ceremony on our 20th anniversary. A month later, Buddy was still with me but Sylvia had announced out of the blue that she wanted to leave me and had indeed left. The depression I'd been experiencing totally exploded at that point and I had my first hospitalisation, brightened by regular visits from Buddy. (She's very independent although sometimes confuses the W7 bus with the W3. No. Her dogminders brought her.)

Fast-forwarding a year, I met an amazing woman, Helen Blackwell, and her dog Katie at a Mind conference. I was fascinated that Katy was wearing a neon yellow support jacket just like a guide dog, and Helen explained that Katie was her 'support dog'. She needed Katie with her when she was out and about to help her emotional stability and this struck me as a fantastic idea – and just what I need! Apparently there's not yet a scheme for 'assistance dogs' for mentally ill people in the UK although it's commonplace in the US, and Helen had got the jacket from America.

Some months later, and after Helen had tragically died, I found the incomparable Terri at Lonewolf Dogwear. ([www.lonewolfdogwear.com](http://www.lonewolfdogwear.com)) and Buddy was duly kitted out in her made-to-measure jacket. Like Helen, I also carry a letter from my GP explaining that Buddy is my assistance dog, in case I need to prove this in shops or restau-

rants. In practice, although shop assistants often come up to me and apologetically explain that dogs aren't allowed there, when I point to Buddy's jacket they always say it's fine. (Apart from my local sushi bar. And out of respect and concern for Buddy, I wouldn't take her into a restaurant where she or one of her pals could end up on someone's plate. Not mine as I'm a kosher vegetarian.)

#### **What did you learn about the service in America?**

Very little other than that there are loads of cities which have their own assistance dog schemes. I suppose one thing I did pick up is that American dogs seem to have an ability to open the fridge, differentiate between a jar of pickles and a bottle of medication, bring the pickles to their human and squeeze a little ketchup onto the side of the plate. OK, not quite, but they are often required to be very dextrous and clever. When Buddy's in high pursuit of a squirrel and I'm calling her back, I'm lucky if she'll even turn her head towards me as she races onwards.

#### **What sort of training a dog needs to deal with people suffering from mental health issues?**

Nipping back to America, some schemes there differentiate between 'assistance dogs' (with the pickles' skills) and 'companion dogs' (of the independent-minded variety). I imagine that assistance dogs have to have training in good citizenship, (only barking when barked to, no sniffing of humans above their shin level, voting in elections, knowing all the verses to God Save the Queen etc.) and pickling skills. Whereas companion dogs need to be safe and congenial company but they don't have to have advanced or even mediocre cognitive capacity.

#### **What breed of dog is required for service users?**

I'm tempted to reply: "Ones that are easy on the eye." But I think it's mainly a question of having a dog with the right temperament and outlook on life rather than any one breed being better or worse. There's a risk that a very tiny, fluffy dog could feel vulnerable if you worked at a candy-floss bagging company. And that swimmers in the local lake could feel vulnerable if you were accompanied by a slathering Alsatian.

#### **What relationship do you have with your dog? Is it difficult for you to be away from your dog?**

Two more lovely questions! Thanks! From the first day Buddy moved in, a dazed and dazzling 6 month old puppy, everyone stressed how important it is that it's clear who's in charge. Buddy is very lenient in this role and sometimes gives me an afternoon off.

I'm only half-joking! Buddy is a wonderfully happy and placid dog, and 'obedience' training is incompatible with my few remaining shards of idealistic Marxism. Like many dogs' non-biological parents, I regard and treat Buddy as my youngest child. (If she were over 29, she'd be my oldest child.) But she gets less ice-cream than her human siblings.

Yes, it's incredibly difficult for me to be away from Buddy. It only happens when I'm abroad – or in hospital. (Hello to any Equilibrium readers who are highly influential in St Ann's and/or BEH. Pets on wards are evidence-basedly very beneficial on mental health wards.) There's a rumour that one evening when my neighbours brought Buddy to visit me at St Ann's, I asked them to 'forget' to take Buddy back with them. And that I had a deeply comforting night snuggled up with Buddy in bed. Readers can make up their own minds on how likely that would be.

#### **What does your dog do for you?**

I've got borderline personality disorder ([www.mentalising.com](http://www.mentalising.com)) which is less fun than it sounds. One of the many downers of having BPD is that I struggle with self-harming and suicidality. And impulsivity. If I'm out and about with Buddy, it greatly reduces the likelihood of me doing something self-destructive, as I have to get Buddy safely home. So by keeping Buddy safe, I keep myself safer. And of course at less stressful times, it's just jollier being with Buddy than being by myself. (In psychoanalytical jargon, I think she could be referred to as an unusually hairy and alive transitional object.)

#### **What organisations provide the dog?**

I don't know about in America, but because there's no scheme in the UK, we can choose whichever dog we'd like. (Gosh. That sounds so weird and spoilt! But you know what I mean.)

#### **How this service is financed?**

No scheme, no finance! That's not to say it's exactly cheap looking after a dog, especially a Jewish princess like Buddy. (It's quite well-known that in traditional Judaism, religious identity or 'status' is passed on by the mother. But did you know that this extends to her canine offspring? They are post-Canaan canines. In translation, I'm Jewish, Buddy's Jewish. I urge her to eat, eat and she's a Princess. OK, the matrilineal dog inheritance thingy isn't actually an official Jewish by-law. But it should be.)

**Siham Beleh**

# Walking in the Mind at the Hayward Gallery



Walking in the Mind is an art exhibition of work from ten contemporary artists, exploring their own minds. One of the artists Thomas Hirschorn says: 'My work is conceived as a mental space...

It wants to create the conditions for the activity of thinking. I want my work to walk into the mind of the spectator - I want to create, with my work, a dialogue or a confrontation in the mind of the other person.'

The exhibition piece that caught my attention was done by Chiharu Shiota. There were some white large dresses behind black tangled wool. I feel the tangled web represents the tangled web of career women having to look after children, working full time and fertility problems. The white colour represents the innocence of knowing what was going to happen to the decline of the family unit. The terminology 'housewife' is very dated and the maternal women is trapped. This piece is called 'After the Dream'. To me the dream represents the

job and what comes afterwards, the family being neglected and problems with fertility.

Yayoi Kusama had an exhibition piece called Dots Obsession. There were very large red balloons with white dots. I found this unusual and I am surprised that I did not see a sign saying 'No Pins and Needles Allowed!' Yoshitomo Nara's exhibition was a dolls house which looked nice on the outside but was very untidy on the inside. It reminded me of the 'The Unmade Bed' by an artist called Tracey Emin. This was a creation of Yoshitomo Nara's student room.

I liked Kusama's artwork which was a rabbit with gold jewellery on its front feet. (lucky rabbit)! Thomas Hirschorn did male metal sculptures and a cave made of cardboard and brown parcel tape, I got a little lost trying to find my way out. I was impressed with this exhibition because the artwork was so diverse, interesting, original and of a high standard. **Angela**

**Correction: in our last issue we referred to Yayoi Kusama as Yayio. Apologies.**

## Literacy Standards

It is reckoned that some 500,000 children at the old 11+ level are unable to read or write in this country. (Express 4/9). The newspaper which strongly makes this allegation lays it down to the government in power (it has been attributed to Labour). Which lays the age old argument open – is it because children are not used to the exercise, or that the educational system has let them down?

Be it as it may on paper, when wishing to do streamlined things like get a job to keep body and soul together, or even further studies, one is then computer classified a 'dunce'. And yet the child with education may well be the one not favoured in transferable skills so that computer literacy is another language to him/her.

Computer literacy and school subjects literacy are not necessarily equitable and the one does not preclude the other, but where does progress, humanly speaking, lie? Is it the same brain power driving all activity so that blanket appellations can then fit one/fit all?



# Liz Miller



**Interview with Liz Miller patron of Equilibrium. Liz Miller- Qualified GP, Surgeon, Psychologist and Occupational Health physician. She was the Mind Champion of the year 2008 and recently wrote a book "Mood Mapping". Moodmapping, Rochdale Press, £12.99**

## **How did you feel when you were chosen?**

First of all I was completely taken by surprise! I had not expected to win. Second I was humbled by it. Because I did not think that anyone had noticed what I was doing, and to get voted for by so many people was humbling. I was touched by it and grateful

## **What did you do during your year as Champion?**

I have spoken at conferences and mental health events as well as been invited to a couple of receptions at the House of Commons. I have also been asked to write articles for mental health publications.



INTERVIEW



Photo by Lucy Fisher

## **What did you gain from being chosen? Who did you meet?**

The most important thing that has happened is that I have the opportunity to have a book "Mood Mapping" published. The book is about managing your mental health using healthy strategies and using Mood Mapping to help monitor your moods. Thanks to the award, I was able to find a publisher with very little difficulty, Rodales which are part of MacMillan. This has been the most important part, because I hope that by writing about what people can do to improve their own mental health and use Mood Mapping to monitor their progress, that this will help people stay well. I am sure that everyone agrees preventing mental health problems has to

be goal for the future, and I believe that managing moods is a step in that direction. Mood Mapping aims to help people who have mood problems manage those moods better.

## **How do you manage work and all the other things you do?**

I don't do that much these days! I hope I do what is important and what matters to me, rather doing too much for money or other reason. I work part time, and try to do just enough work to keep the wolf from the door and stick to what I like doing. I would rather cut down my spending than work at a job I didn't enjoy. Of course not everyone has that choice. I don't have children and I do understand they are expensive! I write as well as running a couple of groups. By keeping to those things that I enjoy, it doesn't seem like work!

## **Are you involved with different charities?**

I am involved with Stand to Reason, I do less now with the Doctors' Support Network but more with the Suspended Doctors' group that is involved with doctors who have run into trouble with the General Medical Council. These kind of tribunals put a huge strain on someone's mental health. I want to work much more with psychology and mental health and I am hoping that once the book is published, I will find more opportunities to do so.

## **Can you tell me about your book "Mood Mapping"?**

Mood Mapping is a way to plot your mood using how much energy you have and how positive or negative you feel. This gives you four basic moods, Action, Anxiety, Depression and Calm. We always have a mood, even if we are not always aware of it, and this gives you a way to plot that mood and monitor your progress by following it on the Map. The book is about Mood Mapping, moods, and strategies to map your mood. There is also a chapter on how moods affect relationships.

Moods depend on your surroundings, your physical health, your relationships, what you know, and "Who you are". By managing these five keys you can help yourself feel better. And that it is what life is about - finding different ways to be happy!

Angela

## Clarendon Poetry 2nd Volume



## Whitstable Trip



**There is some excitement at the Clarendon Day Centre as the second book of poems by members and staff is published.** Containing new poems along with poems from the first book it is entitled "no Label" and reflects on everything from the importance of having Clarendon as a centre to issues with war and peace and some devotional poetry too. It also provides a forum for the photographic work produced by members and staff and will be welcomed as positive feedback for all those interested in the centre and poetry in general. The poems are varied and express many different emotional and creative impulses and I cannot mention them all here so perhaps you will feel that you have to read it yourself and hear the voice of Clarendon centre.

As one contributor writes:  
**I feel like a child with tales to tell  
That no one else should know,  
So shh! Don't say a word,  
Or I will have to go.**  
*Secrets - by Jenny Wells*

Or in another:  
**Poetry shatters the war of words  
In rhyme of silence  
We free ourselves  
From chains of silver.**  
*Music - by Stuart Black*

Or in a more reflective mood:  
**If I could bottle one day,  
I would lay it down in the cool vaults  
Of my memory to open when I am old.  
Aged and triple distilled, uncork the sunshine -  
Blue shining skies, mottled with cloudy vapour trails,  
Paddling pools, rocks, seaweed and a hint of fish.  
And you would stay a laughing eight-year-old boy  
Hunting crabs in rock pools forever.**  
*One Day Forever by Mark Francis*

Finally, I like the poem by Cate Ablett - *The Recluse*:  
**I think I'll become a recluse  
Wrap myself in a blanket of thoughts  
And leave life to get on by itself.**

The photo illustrations are used to good effect and are atmospheric particularly Charlie Tyack's contributions on pages 14 & 57. However with such a good selection - both of poetry and illustrations - it seems a little unfair to rely on just one opinion so I hope you will read the poetry book and decide which are your favourites. Support the Clarendon.

**Ian Stewart.**

(Available from Mark Francis at the Clarendon, see p.3)

## Interview with Charlie - Trip to Whitstable

### What kind of a resort is Whitstable?

Whitstable is a pleasant seaside resort that offers a lot to the daytripper. There are several beaches for paddling and swimming, as well as a range of watersport options. The harbour area has restaurants, pubs and fishmongers, all offering freshly caught seafood. There are also lots of shops offering retail therapy to those so inclined.

### Where is Whitstable in the UK?

Whitstable is in Kent, southeast of London.  
How many staff and users went on the trip?  
Two staff went with 13 members.  
What was the journey like?  
It went well - the journey there took about two hours and it took a bit longer to get back but in general the journeys went smoothly. We travelled by minibus, with Mick at the wheel.

### What did you do there?

We dropped people off and then we had to go and find a long stay car park that the bus would actually fit into, which turned out to be a long way from the main seafront. We walked down to the seafront, which took about an hour, and had a look around. Then we had to go and collect the bus and bring it back to the seafront.

### What kind of things could you do there?

There are several fishmongers, offering all sorts of fresh seafood, including oysters. The sea has lots of shallows for swimming and paddling. You could enjoy an ice cream, a dressed crab, or both, though preferably not simultaneously.  
What did you like about the trip?  
The opportunity to get out of London for a while, and see somewhere new.

### Why would you like to go again?

It's a pleasant place to go and relax, and take in the sea air.

Thank you very much from **Angela.**



## A Knowable World

**Review: Sarah Wardle.**  
**"A Knowable World".**  
**Bloodaxe Books. £7.95.**

Sarah Wardle's collection of poems—"A Knowable World" present a world of uncertainties and inabilities as a world that is comprehensible to you. Her understanding of the bipolar sufferer through her thoughts, feelings and emotions are recognisable to anyone who has experienced mental distress. She articulates with the confidence of personal experience and allows an empathy with that world that invites the reader to be a witness to the experience that all too often is taboo in our society.

Stepping back from painful experience her language is such that the reader can plot her course to sanity in each poem that is, in a way, an acceptance of her condition that does not deny the humanity of her expression. In "Solitude" she writes:

"It is in words that I have found patience,  
locked on a ward with language's silence.  
Left by a radiator with one's own thoughts,  
Sunrise and car tail lights become one's  
prompts".

Her view of the world matters to all those whose own ability to communicate these experiences often founders on the stigma led arguments that we are somehow unable to shed true light on the experiences of those who have suffered mental distress, and in "Subject" she writes:

"The more you look, the more each Van  
Gogh sunflower  
betrays his escalation into mania.  
The fullness of the spheres, which spin with  
relish,  
are at odds with scarecrows, which no longer  
flourish."

Her surprising buoyancy and grasp of her situation gives encouragement to fellow sufferers and makes this an unforgettable read.

**Ian Stewart**



## Interview with 'John'

### **Pumla talks to John.**

Don't allow yourself to fall ill!  
The remedies are worse for the mind than the illness! At least in illness there is suffering somewhere which alerts one to "all not being well in the state of Denmark" (Hamlet)!!

He had a friend who was at school with members of GENESIS (the pop stars) whilst at school and his friend went on to be MD of a bread company; he had older parents; went to a Kibbutz in Israel (learnt to milk cows!); enjoyed weather learnt what hard work meant – 5.30am rise, what irrigation was about, did orange picking and learnt that dining room work was not just about laying tables – one had to do summat towards maintaining the good state of same!

But what could he realistically do on his return to the UK?! How about an Open University course in Humanities?! He got a Third Class Degree - this, after 6 years of hard labour! A bell rang: "You're not an Academic" !!

His centre of balance was rocked. So, from a rebelling hippy young man with a visit also to the Taj Mahal under his belt, do we expect him to suffer from loss of confidence, wondering if his brain is capable of higher (University level) education?

His secret is TM – not Time and Motion, but Transcendental Meditation. He could write a jingle about a 20 minute prescription: one in the morning and one in the evening.

### **Pumla**

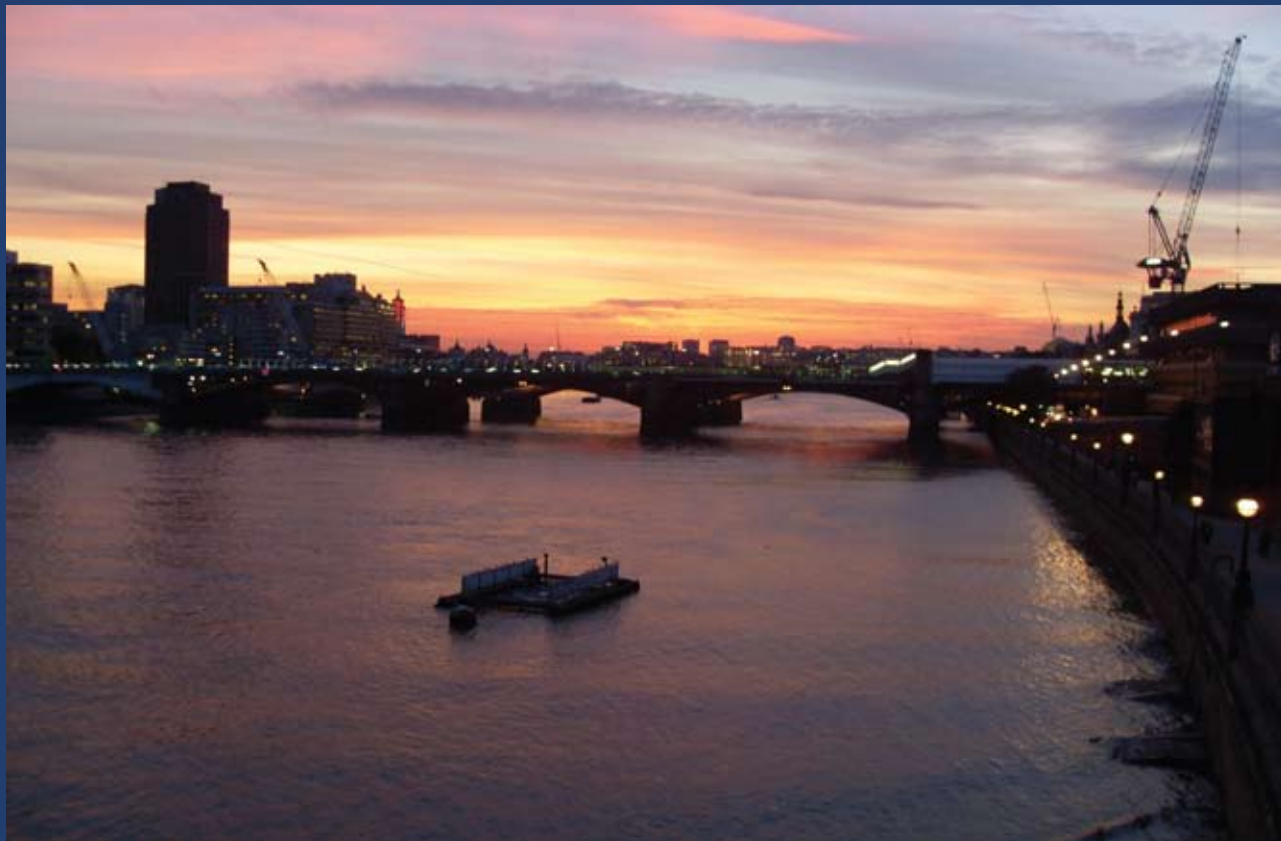


Photo by John Clifford



Niagra - Anthony Parké 2009

Oil on Canvas, 30"x24"

For enquiries: [ajparke7@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ajparke7@yahoo.co.uk)