A ROYAL VISIT FOR RF CAMBRIDGE

RF CAMBRIDGE REFRESH GARDEN MAINTENANCE SERVICE
MET PRINCE CHARLES ON A RIGHT ROYAL DAY OUT
Here we go again - it’s the summer edition of No Label Required! We have lots of new things to update you on this time round from royal visits, to the finally approved legacy fund and of course the regular features - look out for the interview with an RF board member too!

A big thank you to all of you who have hosted the Ed Board meetings in the past few months that has allowed us to get this magazine produced. It has been great to visit some of you and we hope to visit more of you when we start work on the next edition.

As ever we will be looking for your articles to publish in the next edition which is due to come out in November/December this year. If you have anything you want to submit for the next edition, then please send it in to us by the 31st October 2011! For this, or if you want us to come and visit you for an Editorial Board workshop or if you have any questions about the magazine then please contact Nellie at Head Office on: 020 7697 3355 or email her at: nellie.guttman@richmondfellowship.org.uk

From all the Ed Board - Happy Reading!

The views expressed in this Magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Richmond Fellowship organisation.
Competition Winners

Congratulations to Lisa Farren from Amadeus House, Adrian Garvey from Hillingdon and Andrea Cinnamond from York FS who were the three lucky iPOD competition winners from the last edition.

Thanks very much to all of you who took the time to enter and give us your feedback – it is great to hear that so many of you like reading the magazine and that the regular features are being enjoyed.

We have looked through all your responses and taken into consideration the things that you want to see more of, and will have some new features in the winter edition.

Remember it is your magazine so if you want to see other articles then send them in! As for the term Service User – as ever we had a very varied response, but the majority of you seem content, so we will be sticking with it... for now!

Agoraphobia

In a nut shell, the purpose of the Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) is to develop Service User Involvement at all levels within RF. The Group advises on strategy and makes recommendations to the Executive Team and the Board about how SUI can be improved.

The Group meets at Head Office in London about every 6 weeks. It is made up of two Board members Rebecca Pritchard (interviewed later!) and Stephanie De La Haye, Directors Kevin Tunnard and Diane French, Assistant Director Tim Arnold, National Service User Involvement Coordinator Mark Thorp, Lisa Haywood, Service User Involvement Consultant and Nellie Guttmann, SUI Support.

There is also a rolling member of the Editorial Board so that messages can be fed back through the magazine and one Service User and one SUI Lead from the North, South and Thames to represent the views from each region.

The Group is there to support and motivate all those who are involved with SUI. If you have any ideas, questions or would like to get in touch then please contact Mark Thorp: on email at: mark.thorp@richmondfellowship.org.uk or call: 07912 294 885

Competition

Double Whammy!

As well as the book review of ‘You Don’t Have to be Famous to Have Manic Depression’ inside (page 9), look out for the interview with Jeremy Thomas in the autumn issue!

Stop Press!

Send us a review of a book you’ve enjoyed and would recommend to readers of NLR, fact or fiction, and the authors of the three winning reviews will each receive a signed copy of Jeremy’s book. The ‘star’ reviewer will be invited to conduct the Jeremy Thomas interview with the support of a member of the Editorial Board.

Why not Cook a Fantastic Three Course Meal

Steve O’Driscoll shows how you can feed yourself a feast for no more than a fiver!!! (page 19)

Service User Advisory Group

Why not Cook a Fantastic Three Course Meal

Steve O’Driscoll shows how you can feed yourself a feast for no more than a fiver!!! (page 19)
In March 2011, Clients from RF’s Cambridge ReFresh Garden Maintenance Service met Prince Charles as he visited a local National Trust site (Anglesey Abbey) where we undertake conservation work.

Tim Fear, the Project Coordinator has been running ReFresh for over 3 years and in the summer received Big Lottery funding for the project to secure the work for a further 3 years.

Prince Charles is the president of the National Trust and he was visiting Anglesey Abbey to give a speech to delegates at the VisitEngland 2011 Tourism Summit. RF Cambridge work in partnership with the National Trust to provide conservation and landscaping opportunities for their ReFresh Garden Maintenance Project. The ReFresh Project is able to do this thanks to a Big Lottery grant which supports Clients who are looking to return to employment and training.

When we arrived everyone was all smiles, from National Trust gardeners to security staff and RF Clients. We were asked to stand in a grassy area quite a distance from the main buildings where the helicopter was to land. The Prince strolled towards us; we watched him coming for quite a time; first and quite a way ahead of him, some of Anglesey’s gardeners removing the ropes that had restricted access to the public, then the security guards and, at last, the Prince followed fairly closely by his entourage of local dignitaries. When he got to us he stopped a while, speaking with each member of the group asking about RF, what we did and what difference the project made. As he left, he told us, possibly a bit tongue-in-cheek, that he would rather stay with us and garden!

So that was it. Or so we thought. What about the newspaper reporters that seem to come from nowhere rushing up at us wondering what he had said, and did we talk about the forthcoming Royal Wedding? The day was capped by a once in a lifetime visit to have a cup of tea with the gardeners in their hidey hole, a never to be repeated opportunity, greatly enjoyed by us without the press present! And then it was back to work on the Treehouse, which will be open to the public this year. Now who would be a good person to open it I wonder?!

ReFresh is part of the RF Cambridge Employment Service. For more information you can contact the Cambridge office on 01223 301 032.

Pam Buckridge
Richmond Fellowship (RF) has been kindly left a legacy from a Service User who sadly passed away. It was requested that this legacy go towards Service User Involvement at RF and so the creation of the Legacy fund for YOU to apply to!

We are looking for applications from Service Users or Service User Groups to fund creative and innovative group activities that RF does not currently already fund. The information and guidance on how to apply can be found on the intranet – ask your SUI Lead and they will be able to give it to you.

The application form is included in this edition of the Magazine (over the page), and once completed should be sent to: Mark Thorp, Richmond Fellowship Head Office, 80 Holloway Road, London, N7 8JG.

All applications will be reviewed by the Service User Advisory Group and you will be contacted on whether or not your application has been successful. You may also be asked to add things to the application or for more information.

If you have any questions about the Legacy fund, would like some more information or would like to talk through an idea, please give Mark a call on 07912 294885.

CORNERSTONES BLACKPOOL

OPEN DAY 14TH JULY 2011

What a great day! We had a fantastic turn-out, over 100 people came and enjoyed. The activities ranged from slimming class low calorie tasters to lively Bollywood and Line dancing.

The event was well attended by other agencies including the C.M.H.T and the council. We invited agencies to have a promotional stand to give others a chance to see what they do and to see where they fit in with ourselves as part of mental health and well-being.

Our Service User volunteers worked their socks off and we are very grateful and proud of that. We had a cake cutting ceremony with our longest standing Service User (Gladys) and our newest (Catherine).

Our Richmond Fellowship speakers included Mark Thorp and Nellie Guttman from the Service User involvement project (London), Darren Bee, B.R.M/L.G.B.T worker (Blackpool) and Ruth Collinge Floating Support and Housing Manager (Blackpool). Shiver and North West Therapies also spoke about their roles.

A great big thank you and round of applause for our star speakers of the day - the Service Users! We had some very moving, and on occasion, humorous accounts of the trials and triumphs on the journeys of Charmaine Thomson, David Martin and Tanya Sharman. They were very professional speakers and they did us proud.

We rounded off the day with by inviting Lynn Howarth (Adult Learning Coordinator) to present the certificates to Service Users who had completed the courses that her team provides, followed by our lovely open day cake and coffee! Well done to all involved.
1. Please tell us what the grant will be used for giving as much detail as possible:

2. Please tell us how you anticipate that this will contribute to one or more of the criteria outlined in the background information:

3. Please tell us how we will know the grant has been used for the activities/purchase in this application (receipts etc):

4. Please tell us how many people will benefit from the activity or purchase:

5. Please tell us how you will ensure that others can hear about and learn from your activities (write up in newsletter, presentation in meetings etc):

6. Costings
   Activity (please specify each item):

   Purchases (please specify each item):

   TOTAL

Contact details for correspondence:

Date:

Please return this form by post or email to:
Mark Thorp, Richmond Fellowship
Head Office, 80 Holloway Road, London, N7 8JG
mark.thorp@richmondfellowship.org.uk
Following on from the National Service User Involvement Best Practice day held in York in February, Cornerstones in Blackpool hosted their very own Service User Involvement Day!

Mark, Chris, Steve and Nellie were all invited to the Service to give information about current opportunities available and to speak to Service Users from Blackpool about their thoughts on Service User Involvement. It was an excellent day and very well organised by Vanessa and Jenny from Cornerstones - thank you and well done!

It was in fact such a success that the team went up to Blackpool again in July and delivered Active Involvement training - another very good day. It is great to hear that Staff and Service Users in Blackpool are so enthusiastic about SUI - keep up the good work!

The next National SUI Best Practice day is happening on the 9th September in Manchester, the final details of the day will be circulated soon.

We will be capping the event at 45 people this time as 60 at the last one was a little too many, so if you do want to attend make sure you reply to the email ASAP as spaces will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis.

Don’t forget though if you can’t make the National one, you can always arrange a local one like Cornerstones – contact Nellie for more information about this (020 7697 3355).

On Monday 21st March residents and Staff from Trinity Street and Woodside completed a sponsored walk around Dewsbury to raise money for comic relief. The walk took 3hrs to complete and everyone did a fantastic job in reaching the finishing line. We raised £101.00 for the charity, everyone had a lovely day and worked hard in raising the money, we would like to thank everyone who attended, sponsored and donated.
In this edition of No Label Required we look at the causes, symptoms, treatment and the complications associated with the disorder agoraphobia.

The symptoms and causes of agoraphobia are similar to panic attacks; they can be very mild in some cases and extremely severe in others. Some of the symptoms of agoraphobia include chest pains, dizziness, hot flushes, nausea, sweating, shaking, a racing heartbeat or even a fear of dying.

Attacks can be brought on when a person is frightened about a situation or that circumstances may lead to a panic attack. A person suffering from agoraphobia may be scared of a difficult or embarrassing situation that they are worried they cannot escape. Some examples include: wide open spaces, crowded places including airports or busy shopping centres, bridges and big social events. In serious cases, the sufferer may be unable to leave their own home as that is the only place that they feel safe and secure.

Complications often associated with agoraphobia are that sufferers often turn to drugs or alcohol and sometimes both to try to alleviate the symptoms. Evidence shows that caffeine, over the counter cold remedies and certain illicit drugs can worsen the problem. People with agoraphobia are often unable to function in the work-place and thus are unable to take a much needed job. This can lead to depression and sometimes suicidal tendencies.

I would just like to say that a few years ago I could not leave my home and the thought of having to interact with other people was too much. I would walk to my destination no matter how far rather than taking a bus as getting on a bus would instantly bring on a panic attack, I also used to feel that people were always staring at me which was not the case. Luckily this does not happen anymore thanks to the help, support and encouragement I have been thankful to receive.

Agoraphobia normally begins in people between the ages of 20 to 40 and is twice as likely to happen to a female, there is no evidence to support why this is as just about every person at some point in their lives will have a panic attack be that mild or severe.

There are a range of treatments available to people diagnosed with agoraphobia, I have listed a few of these below:

- Cognitive Behavioural Treatment (C.B.T.) ie. learning and developing breathing and relaxation techniques
- Anti-depressant medication is probably one of the most common treatments, such as Sertraline, Paroxetine, and Fluoxetine
- C.B.T. and medication are often administered side by side. Another form of treatment which may benefit people is support groups with fellow sufferers or for house-bound sufferers telephone or on-line support groups

To finish off this article I would just like to let people diagnosed with the condition know you are not alone and there is help out there for everyone. Even famous people have suffered with the condition, such as the actor Woody Allen, the actress Kim Basinger, the American aviator Howard Hughes, Daryl Hannah another popular actress and last but not least Charles Darwin.

Steve O’Driscoll

A POEM BY KELLY MADISON - 2011

Pele Tower is a place of hope
A place that you can call home
It’s here I have found my inner courage
And lay to rest my haunting ghosts.
With care and love there is security.
My life of chaos, unravelled into a life to live.
My life’s journey is now embarked on.
And from this day I am free
I’ll live my life with head held high
With pride for who I am
My name is Kelly
I now see beyond my past
And I can now feel my feelings
I can hear care, love and support
I think about how far I have come
And I believe that my life will be good
This is a rare and wonderful thing; a mental health book that manages to be enjoyable and funny but is highly informative too.

It is written by two people - a manic depressive and his long term G P and friend. As Jeremy Thomas (the M.D) says at the beginning he felt that “it was way past time to demystify and de-stigmatise manic depression in the UK” I think they’ve managed this and have also managed to create a book dealing with mental health issues which is fun and interesting. A bit of sugar with the pill makes it go down a lot easier, and so it is with this book.

To absorb facts when they are mixed in with personal experiences and humour is to make them somehow stick in your head more. The book was published in 2006 so everything is pretty up to date (for a mental health book). It is basically about people who have suffered the extremes of the illness and who have now got enough insight to deal with all its anti-social and personally destructive symptoms and have the desire to try and change and do something about it. It is split into three distinct sections.

The first section is called ‘The Manic Dialogues’. This is a series of taped conversations between Jeremy and his G P/friend, Tony Hughes. They hole themselves up in a friend’s flat in Brighton and carry out a ‘bare all’ revelation of Jeremy’s very flamboyant journey through manic depression before he realised he had to take his lithium and give up heavy drinking. Some of his escapades are outrageous and he certainly had a rollercoaster ride through life. Both men have engaging senses of humour and mixed in there are many nuggets of knowledge and facts about manic depression, dealing with it and life itself. I think everyone who reads it will lodge something in their mind that is useful to them.

The next section is nine life stories of manic depressives. These are all very different - one man tells of three failed marriages and losing jobs until he found solace in trekking overland on horseback from Spain to Cornwall to raise awareness of mental health. Another man forges a high powered career in television until crashing due to the unrealistic self confidence brought on by mania. Another character lost touch with reality and hijacked a train to get him from A to B, amongst other things. All the stories are in their own words and are often quite moving. Some seemed to have made great recoveries but all had managed to reach some reconciliation with their predicament.

The final section is an interesting and rather unorthodox mix of facts, advice and information. It gives useful information on mental illnesses, organisations, medications etc in a no-nonsense, non biased way with an extra large section on manic depression - all very readable. It also gives an up to the minute rundown on street drugs. It looks at such feelings as anger and anxiety and tips to control such feelings.

From a more abstract angle it deals with concepts like acceptance, hope and self esteem in a quite profound thought provoking way. I was very impressed by this interesting, informative book - I recommend it to anyone who wants to change and needs a few handles to grip on to, or someone who feels the need for some inspiration to get them started. This book could be a good friend to anyone embarking on the road to recovery or management of their condition. Two things that have stuck in my mind are one from Jeremy himself on trying to keep going when times are hard... “Try and do four things a day - two of which you don’t like doing - so that you feel good about yourself.” Sound advice I think. The other is a quote from Reinhold Niebuhr;

“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Written by Barbara Taylor, edited by Lynne Firmager

"You Don't Have To Be Famous To Have Manic Depression" by Jeremy Thomas and Dr Tony Hughes, forward By Stephen Fry.

**FILM REVIEWS**

**Sucker Punch**

This is a compelling tale of five girls; Amber, Blondie, Rocket, Sweetpea and Babydoll, as they escape the realities of their gruelling existence by psychically journeying to a fantasy world in which they can make a difference in a way that they couldn't in their real one.

We follow the girls as their flights of fancy reveal to them clues of how they could escape. Can they defeat the monsters that haunt them in both spheres or will they die trying?

**Battle: Los Angeles**

In this action packed adventure the city of LA suffers a devastating surprise attack by a vastly superior race of genocidal aliens.

In the race against time before the Earth is obliterated, Aaron Eckhart (Batman) and Michele Rodriguez (Fast and Furious) lead a small band of soldiers on a quest to rescue civilians and to determine their enemy's weakness before it is too late.

With exciting battle scenes and the element of suspense maintained throughout this sci fi/action combination has something for everyone! You'll be on the edge of your seat from start to finish.

Matthew Sparham

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**HOPSCOTCH IN MY HEAD**

They're playing hopscotch in my head again, I don't know who they are But I see the jumping feet And hear the voices. Not part of me this leaping game I've never played. They make me tired these untireable feet, Because they don't know when to stop. Over and over they go, Skipping about, without a care. Oblivious to me these uninvited strangers. I did not ask them in, And they seem not to hear when I say go. They melt into the recesses of my mind When they are good and ready, Ever watchful for another spree, another time.

- Jane Pursglove

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**To the Editorial Board,**

My name is Jane Pursglove. I am 59 years old and am at present a Client at Windsor Road. I have been here just over 2 years and my goal is to go back home to live with Roger - my husband of 39 years.

Last night, for the first time, I came across your magazine 'No Label Required' and I was interested to read it. I would very much like to have a couple of my poems printed in the magazine as I joined a poetry group recently and they seem to have been well received.

I have a collection of over 100 poems, most of which were written around 20 years ago, spanning a wide range of subjects including things relating to mental health. My dream would be to one day get them published, but finances currently dictate this would not be possible.

Anyway, a couple of years ago, Roger chose around 30 of them and as a surprise had them produced in a little booklet through a friend of a friend. There were about 30 copies and these have now all been given out to family and friends.

The booklet is entitled 'Hopscotch in my Head'. However, because of the poetry group and having shared them with others after all these years, I have been encouraged to somehow share them on a wider scale.

– Jane Pursglove
Out and About in Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes is what is qualified as a “New town”. It was built in the 1970’s to house young families from inner cities such as London.

The building started around the small village that still bears its name. Hence, the architecture is modern – but the buildings still have class! Central Milton Keynes is, as it’s referred to, unlike other cities, compacted into a smaller area. Yes we do have concrete cows which were constructed by a famous local artist called Bill Billings. Some more of his creations are scattered around the town.

Starting with the main shopping mall and moving outwards, there is Midsummer Boulevard which houses the major department and chain stores. People travel a considerable distance just to visit this building.

There are also smaller independent businesses spreading out from the main exhibition space (which holds major events throughout the year); there is also a famous market place that is slightly different each day for those on a lower income, as they can buy ‘as new’ items for a bargain price.

This trend is repeated in Midsummer Place, a completely new building that boasts the likes of a Lego shop for the little ones, Sports Soccer for the sporty types and Debenhams for the more sophisticated folk. All clothing tastes are catered for from the likes of Nike to Punky Fish.

Need a pit stop? You’re spoilt for choice from Pret A Manger to McDonalds.

Something for the weekend? MK theatre has the reputation of being one of the finest around with regular performances from all the top companies. The theatre district that bears its name offers a wide range of top notch restaurants at reasonable prices eg Pizza Hut and Lloyds Number One are particularly recommended.

For those of a more physical bent there’s skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing and ten pin bowling in the newest addition to Central Milton Keynes being the Xscape building. The Xscape also boasts a 19 screen, high tech cinema with all the latest Hollywood, British and Bollywood releases. There are also things that can occupy you while you wait, such as bars, restaurants, an arcade, an internet café and shops to fulfil your designer clothes needs.

At the end of the day Milton Keynes boasts a flourishing night life (depending on your music tastes) with DJs dropping beats to keep you dancing into the wee hours of the morning.

Matthew Sparham
This Service User interactive event was organised by Service Users from across the Thames region and held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London.

It was free to all Thames region Service Users and included lunch and refreshments throughout the day. The activities on offer were an interesting mix including Herbs for Health, yoga, drama and photography workshops.

The photography workshop was run by Mark Cremmen and Laurie Newman from Art Matters studio in Surrey. It gave people an opportunity to learn how to take digital self portraits and was very popular! “...I was instructed how to take high quality photos thanks to a straightforward system anyone could use with a laptop.” – Matthew Sparham (Service User, Repton House). All those who took part will be receiving prints of the photographs they took.

Herbs for Health was run by Staff and Service Users from Queen's Park and Old Moat Garden Centres (also in Surrey) and taught people about some of the uses of herbs in cooking and their health giving properties. At the end of the day the guys very kindly gave away many of the plants they had brought with them so a big thank you to them all!

The drama workshop was also very well attended and was run by Noel McDermott, a drama therapist from London. The session I attended was all about non verbal communication and was fascinating. It is amazing how much we convey without words, through body language and expression. Matthew also commented on how Noel showed Service Users simple techniques to build confidence and communication skills. I’m sure we all found these sessions very helpful.

I also particularly enjoyed the yoga workshop I attended, which was most useful, despite my having to hop up every now and again to snap photos of the guys in action! I was really taken with how calm and centred I felt after the session and will certainly be looking for a yoga class to attend in my local area, to help me manage stress and anxiety. (continued on next page...)
A BIT ABOUT QUEENS PARK AND OLD MOAT

Queens Park and The Old Moat Horticultural Services are branching out and delivering short courses for people with mental health problems in Surrey.

They currently have the following courses running:

- A women’s only survival course (following on from a successful men’s only survival course and due to popular demand from the women)
- Wilderness Skills, Mid Surrey
- Wildlife and Wellbeing project in East Surrey - this includes topics such as insect identification, making a bug hotel, wildflower walks and pond dipping and much more. It is being run in conjunction with Surrey Wildlife Trust
- All about herbs - describes herbs and their culinary and medicinal uses and this is delivered in partnership with the WEA
- Horticulture QCF certificate level one - in partnership with East Surrey College which is a new course due to start in September

As well as all of the above the local Advertiser Group of papers asked if The Old Moat Garden Centre would like to write a tip of the month column for them. One of our volunteers, Robin has taken this on and now writes “Old Moat Jottings” which is circulated around East and Mid Surrey in the midweek Advertiser.

If you would like any further information regarding any of the courses give us a call on: 01372 731 971.

It was a really enjoyable day and I learned a lot from it. Matthew said “This was a well organised and staged event which all that attended both enjoyed and found enlightening. I can’t wait until next year!” So a big well done and thank you to all the Staff and Service Users involved in organising and delivering the workshops, and thanks also to the lovely staff at the venue who were most attentive and helpful.

Lynne Firmager
IS CHANGE BAD?

It’s been a dynamic year for Wigan Dimensions with significant changes to the Service.

Wigan and Richmond Fellowship have been faced with providing services that are more relevant to our Service Users, supporting individuals to connect with their wider communities, increasing networks, whilst continuing to provide elements of the Service that individuals have valued over many years; spaces for individuals to meet up with their friends and peers, to offer mutual support without fear of stigma, a sanctuary.

Over the past 18 months the buildings that once provide segregated space have been closed, and venues and opportunities sought in the community. Service Users are increasingly accessing mainstream sports and leisure, education and training opportunities, and Service Users are now exploring volunteering and employment opportunities. Wigan Dimensions have developed a strong Self Help Group and a number of Service User Lead Groups, and we are working alongside Bubble Enterprise to explore the option of Service Users developing their own ‘drop-in ventures’.

The Team have worked hard to build supportive networks and to positively challenge the stigmatising attitudes within the community. Despite the many positive outcomes it is important to stress that change is not easy, it is true to say that many Service Users have felt anxious and at times aggrieved. Groups of Service Users have mustered their voices, have been actively involved in local consultation and listening events, canvassed local MPs, campaigned tirelessly to influence the direction of change, been actively involved in developing new programmes, or training to develop and lead their own groups.

It is with thanks to Service Users, the Team and our supporters in the community that we continue to strive to make Recovery Reality in Wigan.

Nicky Berry

The most important thing in my recovery was the Centre. I needed that base. Where it’s all community based now, if I’d have been that ill, I don’t think I would have made it. I needed that drop in, that safe space where the Staff were.

We have friendship groups where we all meet up but I couldn’t be ill in that space. I’m all one for looking to the future and the community stuff is great and it gets people moving on but I’ve also seen the devastation left by not having a Centre.

Stephen Reilly

The last 6 months is the best I’ve had for years because I’m constantly well and I don’t go into depression. And as the weeks and months go by I feel more and more well.

I’ve met Fred the tutor, with his groups. He’s very understanding and listens to you, which is very important and he motivates you. We have the men’s group on a Tuesday afternoon and then we have a walking group on a Friday. We talk on the walks and you’re getting fresh air, you’re getting exercise, you’re communicating.

Now I’m very contented, settled. And I can even say I feel happy. I thought I’d never be able to say that.

“I feel the Staff are always very professional, friendly and caring towards me. I have managed to make bonds with the Staff but I am fearful that the bonds will be broken when the Centres close”

“I have found members equally friendly and I feel it would be a shame if I lost contact with some of the members once the Centres close”

“I think the environment is comfortable and have enjoyed relaxation sessions and Active Involvement. I just feel that the breaking down of the Centres will affect my mental health which is relatively OK at the moment”
Alan Hampson
Since the changes there have been more opportunities to engage and relate to other members. The new system is more organised, giving Service Users more feeling of belonging. Staff having a more user friendly approach seeking out more isolated Service Users and spending time engaging them in activities on offer.

Personal Experiences
Old system used for many years, going to drop-in in the Centre at Atherton just to read the paper for an hour then go home unsatisfied. Now my mental health and well being is improved 100% as is psychological thinking much improved.

“I have enjoyed doing more activities, cookery and yoga, healthy eating at Ashton and holistics”

“I have been going to Atherton on the train by myself which I could not do before. Confidence building has made me feel better in myself. I like the gardening too”

“The friendship group is like a family, it makes you stay well. We give and get good support from each other but need to be able to talk to the Staff and have a laugh”

“The gardening is great, fresh air and exercise make me feel better and it’s relaxing”

Alastair Field - The Photography Club
The Photography Group started in April 2011, it is led by a group of Service Users and facilitated by members of Staff and co facilitated by myself, a Service User. We initially met in a local Community Centre but quickly realised that we needed to be out and about to take more interesting photos. Cath and Fred supported us to go into Manchester using public transport. For some of us this was scary but we all managed and had a fantastic day. It was an achievement!

We also go to local beauty spots to take pictures, I especially like wildlife ones and scenery. We are making a calendar with the pictures we have taken which we hope to sell to increase our funds and get better equipment.

The group has allowed us to become good friends and we meet outside the group to develop our pictures and to go to one of the member’s boat.

I feel more confident since I started to facilitate this group. We were all worried about what would happen when the Centre closed but it has been great. We are doing more than we thought we could do and having a good time. I am planning to go to college, to do a photography course in September.

Rose Smith
The Self Harm Support Group helps me to reduce my isolation and being in a supportive environment anything can be discussed. The support helps me to stay safe.

When the Atherton drop-in closed at the end of August 2010, I as a Service User was very upset and scared about all the changes that where taking place within the Service. At the beginning of the new timetable I became very poorly and agoraphobic again, and it was not until December last year and a lot of one to one support from my link worker that I was able to go into the community and access the new. I now attend the women’s group, self harm group and the aqua aerobics group. I feel more confident and can access these activities which all take place in the community, because of this I am taking part in social inclusion.
RF SERVICE USERS GO BACK TO COLLEGE

My name is Matthew; I am an RF Service User from Milton Keynes. I am currently studying for a degree at Northampton University.

You thought college was beyond you, because of your mental health problem? I have been ill since having a nervous breakdown when I was 19. I am now 37.

Maybe I should tell you the route I took. I undertook a part time A-level at my local sixth form college; where I had all the support I needed from specially trained professionals, who helped me with the likes of study skills etc.

I applied to college though UCAS, where I received some offers. As I was a mature student, concessions were made. I subsequently attended interviews; and as a result of which I accepted an offer from Northampton.

I cannot tell a lie, it has been a bumpy ride.

When I first started the art course I had no confidence. I'd never been to college before, I had no motivation.

Staff encouraged me to go and at first they came with me, then I grew in confidence and started to go on my own.

This course taught me about my artistic self. I'm glad I went on the course because I met people in similar situations to myself and have made some great friends. I'm so proud of myself as I never missed a class and to top it off I won an award for Stepping Stones Student of the Year 2011.

However, as before, all the help I needed was there – in the guise of a dedicated mental health advisor and other specialist professionals. The key is to find a subject that's right for you. Unsure? Try an Adult Education Course. Your local RF should be able to help you with such matters.

Next, you need to do your research. In particular, you need to reference the prospectuses of the various institutions in order to satisfy your requirements. Over 25? As with me, this will be taken into account; and you’ll be judged by different criteria. Disabled? This need not be a barrier either; thanks to the Disability Discrimination Act.

If you want to launch yourself anew or are simply looking to pursue a passion; college could be for you. The key is not to get daunted by it.

Matthew Sparham

When I won the award I felt so proud of myself, I never thought I could achieve anything like this.

The course built my confidence, so in September I am going to do a Stepping Stones cooking course, I am looking forward to doing just as well in this.

Zoe Crane - RF Windsor Road
HOUNSLOW BBQ

Its summer time (sort of!) and that means BBQ season! Yay!

RF Hounslow held their summer BBQ and Diversity day on the 17th June and although the weather wasn’t perfect we managed to have a wonderful time in between showers! They day featured Zumba dancing, a viewing of the ‘The Blue Horizons’ DVD, Dhol drumming and a wide range of delicious food.

People attended from different Services and everyone was encouraged to wear something to the event that represented themselves in some way. In my case that was simple; having my trusty camera slung around my neck is usually enough to identify me as the NLR picture editor!

Others wore traditional dress reflecting their cultural or national backgrounds and what a diverse bunch we all are! As you can see from the photos a fantastic time was had by all with everybody dancing the afternoon away! Well done to all Service Users and Staff who helped to organise such a successful day. Lynne Firmager

HOUNSLOW DIVERSITY DAY

Hounslow’s Diversity Day 2011

Objective of the day was to celebrate each of our differences and embrace them.

United Clients and Staff on the day.

Noisy Dhol Players, were fantastic.

Balas dancing lesson was really good fun.

Observed the day - it was perfect for me.

Observed and understood a range of different cultures in practice.

As able to make some brand new friends.

Dance mat exercise was really enjoyable.

Have learned a lot about difference cultures and accepting our differences.

Video called Blue Horizons were played, created by fellow RF Clients from Liverpool.

Everyone danced the day away.

Educated card to racism DVD was played.

Satisfied that we raised awareness of mental health issues and its sufferers.

Loved the Belly Dancing and had the opportunity to join in.

Tasty foods from all different countries were on the menu for lunch.

All of RF t-shirts/bags/banners decorated the hall.

Diversity Presentation completed by Clients of Hounslow CSS was really informative.

All Clients were made welcomed and involved throughout the day and in its planning.

Planning for the next Diversity Day Event in 2012!

Created by Gary O’Flynn (Hounslow CSS) and Donnette Brown (Dafforne Road)
Thanet Day Services is now one year old and this week we received our 100th Service User referral. It’s been a busy and rewarding year and we’d like to thank everyone who’s helped us, especially the Service Users who have given their time to contribute to the Service Development and Advisory Group.

About us
We offer a Community Based Day Service and run a number of weekly groups and sessions. We specialise in working with Service Users to help them identify their personal goals and form personal action plans.

The Day Service operates throughout the Thanet area covering the three seaside towns Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs. All our events are publicised monthly via a local Service newsletter.

Partnership approach
We believe it is in the best interests of Service Users for the Thanet Day Service to form strong partnerships with other local providers and organisations. This helps make the best use of collective resources for the benefit of Service Users.

On July the 5th we celebrated seven years of service at Eamont Terrace in Hartlepool.

It was a fantastic day and we had great weather. We invited people from other Services, our families and other agencies; it was a great turn out.

One highlight of the day was the musical talents of our Tenants and Staff who practiced for weeks to sing and play ‘The House of the Rising Sun’ by the Animals. Edika Lee was lead singer followed by Nick Walton and Staff member Fintan Wardell playing the guitar. We were helped along the way by the talented Andy Bengal from Marine Avenue, who delighted us with his musical abilities throughout the day.

It was a great afternoon and everybody tucked into cup cakes and food, we even had our own personalised birthday cake with a picture of Sparky for the icing!

We hope to celebrate many more years of success here at Eamont Terrace.

Picture: Andrew Coulson lives at Eamont Terrace. Andrew made this model of Sparky and gave it to the Service, we are proud to have it on show in our communal lounge. To celebrate Eamont Terrace’s birthday we had a photo cake of the model which everyone loved!
RECIPE FOR A FANTASTIC THREE COURSE MEAL

PERFECT WELSH RAREBIT
4 slices of your favourite bread
25g butter
225g grated cheddar cheese
4 tbsp of your favourite beer
1 tsp English mustard
A dash of worcestershire sauce
Salt and pepper to taste

Stir together all the ingredients in a pan on medium heat, until the mixture is thick and smooth.
Remove from heat just as it reaches the boil.
Toast 4 slices of your favourite bread and apply the mixture to the toast.
Sprinkle a pinch of cayenne pepper on top and cook under the grill until golden brown.
Enjoy!

VEGETARIAN TAGLIATELLE
8 tablespoons of olive oil
2 yellow peppers chopped
1 red pepper chopped
2 red onions sliced
1 courgette chopped
Half a tsp chilli powder
1 tbsp fresh thyme
400g fresh egg tagliatelle

Place oil in a large frying pan and fry the chopped peppers, onions and courgette for about 8 mins taking care not to over-cook.
Add the fresh thyme and chilli powder. Meanwhile boil a large pan of salted water and add the tagliatelle.
When the pasta is cooked to taste, drain and place back in the pan. Add the sauce mixture to the tagliatelle and stir the contents well, then serve.
Great with warm crusty bread!

BANANA, BREAD & CUSTARD PUDDING
1 carton of ready to serve custard (500g)
1 tsp brown sugar
4 slices of bread
Strawberry jam
2 bananas

Apply the jam to the four slices of bread, then cut into quarters.
Layer the triangles in a small oven proof dish with the sliced banana in-between.
Pour over the custard over and cook in a 170°C pre-heated oven for 20-25 mins.
When cooked, sprinkle the brown sugar over the top and grill for a couple of mins until golden.

Steve O’Driscoll

“Helping out and using the drop-ins and outings keeps me active going out and meeting other Clients with the same mental ill health issues but all with different symptoms. There’s loads of people suffering in different ways, it’s not only me...”

Our plans for the future
We want to focus on measuring our outcomes so that we can improve our services and offer even better value for money. We’d also like to develop more user led groups and activities and see this as central to the Richmond Fellowship Recovery model.

Celebrating our first year
Thanet Day Service celebrated its first operating year in conjunction with Health Promotion’s ‘New Year New You’ initiative. Despite the snow the event was well attended and one Service User created a fantastic banner using her computer. Items made in our craft group were also on display alongside some photographs of day trips and other events through the last year. We ordered stress balls and pens from Richmond Fellowship Head Office and then for the icing on the cake (literally) we managed to get some cupcakes iced with a big red and black number 1 on top, which or course just went like hot cakes!
All our events are publicised monthly via a local newsletter and you can follow us on the web:
Facebook search: ‘live it well’
Twitter: twitter.com/liveitwelluk
Blog: http://thanetlpmg.blogspot.com/
I started as a board member for RF Employment Training in about 2002, and joined the new Board at the time the two parts of RF came together.

My background is in the voluntary sector working with refugees, young homeless people and people who face multiple exclusion, including rough sleepers. I have had stints working as a Strategic Commissioning Manager for Supporting People in local authorities and have also held policy and consultancy roles including a year at the National Housing Federation and three years at the Central Government Department for Communities and Local Government as a specialist adviser on youth homelessness and rough sleeping.

What is your role as a board member? And what is your motivation for being a Board member at RF?
As a board member my role is to provide a governance and scrutiny function to ensure we get the best outcomes for the organisation’s current and future beneficiaries.

Or, in non-jargon language, as a board member I have a responsibility to ensure we do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right people...
In practice, this means asking difficult questions and reading a lot of information to ensure the right decisions are made.

“At the end of the day RF only exists to support and serve its Service Users, so what we achieve together is absolutely essential”

That’s why the SUAG is so important as it gives us the structure to ensure we can hear views and ideas from current Service Users who will have different and valuable insights.

Motivations – I think the work RF does is important and I enjoy the sort of thinking my role requires me to do. The other people on the board are also good to work with – we come from a range of backgrounds and experiences and learn from each other.

What challenges do you face in your role?
Ensuring I make the time to read the papers, ask questions and fully participate in the board meetings and extra activities requires some discipline as I have a very busy full time job!

It can be challenging, too, when we don’t always agree with each other. However, this is healthy and we do respect each others’ different opinions. I think the decisions we do take are better as a result of the debates we have.

What does Service User Involvement mean to you, how important is SUI in RF’s decision making and what changes would you make to SUI?
I think Service User Involvement is at the heart of what RF is all about. At the end of the day RF only exists to support and serve its Service Users, so what we achieve together is absolutely essential; I believe we should strive to work with Service Users rather than doing things ‘to’ or ‘for’ people (although doing things ‘for’ people may sometimes be necessary to keep them safe and well at times when their health may mean they need a bit more care).

There are different levels of Service User involvement, but essentially it is being in control of your own support and care, and influencing and directing the services you use wherever possible.

I’m a carer in another part of my life, and have experience of the health service sometimes trying to make decisions without really involving the people directly affected. Not being involved can mean you feel less confident – so as a carer I always act as an advocate to ensure decisions are explained, questioned and our views and preferences for care options are taken into consideration.

Service Users are the best people to tell us if RF is meeting the aspirations and needs of the people we are here for, so it really matters to have structures and opportunities for Service Users to be involved in making decisions about the organisation – at local, regional and national levels.
I think we are at an exciting time in terms of Service User involvement at RF. A lot of work has been done to develop structures and invest in ways for Service Users to be meaningfully involved. I want to see how these bed down and become integral into how we work and think across the organisation... ask me again in another 12 months!

What would you like to change but can’t?
Wow, there is a long list! (From world peace to the current cuts agenda...) I could get a bit despondent if I focused on all the things I’d change if I were in charge!

I think it’s important to focus on learning from what has happened in your own life, and look forwards rather than regret things that can’t be changed.

I always try to concentrate on and strive for what I can influence but it’s important not to give up because you think you may not be able to make a difference (immediately) – it’s always important to make your voice heard! Whether that’s through visiting Greenham Common (I spent a few weekends there as a teenager!) and attending marches, voting (I think everyone should!), or telling your landlord or care provider what you need or want. And keep telling them!

Where do you see the future of Service User Involvement at RF?
I hope RF will become like a stick of rock with ‘Service User involvement’ written through the core, so we don’t think about it separately, but it’s more like second nature. SUI should be inherent to the way we work alongside Service Users - with all the diversity of opinions and experiences that entails, and a good understanding of why decisions were made and confidence that people did have a chance to express their views and influence things.

How do you see the cuts, NHS reform and personalisation affecting RF Service delivery and Service Users?
I’m not sure the future is very rosy or promising at the moment. This is a personal view – and not RF’s policy or position – but I fear reducing resources will see a return to the days of services being decided according to whether individuals are seen as deserving or non deserving which could result in some individuals being increasingly excluded from society and recovery opportunities.

I think this means that having a way of hearing Service Users’ experiences and voices is even more important.

If you had to make austerity measures, what would you prioritise?
Getting rid of our useless nuclear ‘deterrent’ which costs a huge amount, and is nothing but a status symbol for politicians... we wouldn’t use it and it makes us more, not less, vulnerable! I’d also increase taxes for people – either individuals or households - earning over £100k per annum - to help make up the deficit through cuts, rather than increasing income through taxes.

How important do you think Service User Involvement is in someone’s recovery?
Very important. When we interviewed people to join the SUAG everyone said how SUI had been really key to them rebuilding confidence and regaining skills... I have always believed this, but am even more certain, having listened to the experts.

What if any messages do you have for our Service Users?
Your ideas, opinions and experiences are really important to RF – so please share them with us; we do appreciate the time and effort so many of you make to do this.

We also know that things don’t always work perfectly - so if you don’t get the response you expect please don’t give up... let your local SUI lead (or manager) know if you haven’t had feedback about your suggestion or – ultimately – let the SUAG know if things aren’t working locally. We aren’t part of the formal complaints procedure, but we are interested in knowing what you think about SUI opportunities and impacts within RF.

What do you think of the term Service User?
I’m ambivalent. I don’t think “customer” works. In some Services where accommodation is at the heart I think the term ‘resident’ works; in my current organisation we use both the terms ‘Service User’ and ‘Client’. What really matters is having a respectful and professional relationship with the people we work with and for.

What do you think of No Label Required?
I’ve enjoyed reading it and seeing what’s going on across RF. The production values are good, and I’d like to see it thrive. I think it would be great to hear about people’s views of local and central government policies and how these are helping - or not - the people using RF’s services.

Your house is on fire and you can save one thing, what is it and why?
Assuming my husband can make it out for himself... definitely the cats, because they are my dependents, they can be very rewarding and they are daft enough to hide under the bed rather than run through the cat flap– and the rest is ‘stuff’ which can probably be replaced.


**LEO**
Interest rates are growing for you!
No, I don’t mean on your bank account. People will be very interested in you as a person. My advice is to carry a large notebook and pen to add all those new contact details.

**SCORPIO**
They say an apple a day keeps the doctor away. I guess that’s why you haven’t seen a lot of doctors lately. Top tip: eat loads of junk food this month and you will certainly see that doctor you have not seen for ages.

**Taurus**
You may find that today you have put your socks on inside out. The arrival of Pluto into your sign suggests nothing but bad luck will follow any attempt to rectify the problem. You’ll just have to lump it I’m afraid.

**AQUARIUS**
Mercury rising means this is not a good period for DIY. I would advise caution when assembling flat-pack furniture. Did you order a wardrobe? Because like it or not, that’s what you’ve got.

**CAPRICORN**
That black cat that crossed your path today? Pure coincidence, honestly. Mind that ladder though! Lucky foodstuff of the day: custard. Eat as much of it as you can!

**PISCES**
Saturn, the planet of acute embarrassment, enters your sign today; meaning today is not the day for adventurous underwear. That’s all I can say, the stars are not clear on the details, which is probably just as well.

**ARIES**
Many astrologers interpret itchy feet as a signal of an upcoming journey. I’d err on the safe side though and pop to the chemist. It could just as easily be athlete’s foot.

**TAU RUS**
You may find that today you have put your socks on inside out. The arrival of Pluto into your sign suggests nothing but bad luck will follow any attempt to rectify the problem. You’ll just have to lump it I’m afraid.

**GEMINI**
At some point this month the stars are telling me you will have an axe to grind with someone close to you. The advice I can give you is to be sure to wear safety goggles and protective clothing.

**LIBRA**
Don’t worry if you have not got everything you ever wished for. Always remember that you came into this world with nothing and you’ve still got most of it left!

**CANCER**
A word to the wise; never hug a python. Or more to the point never let a python hug you. No good will come of it, mark my words. Lucky number of the day 888833767321.

**VIRGO**
Your sign is telling me that you are very understanding of other people’s problems and that sometimes they take advantage of you. You are always putting things off for them, so I guess that explains why you never get anything done!

**SAGITARIUS**
Good luck today you can look a gift horse in the mouth and thus you will be able to tell how many cavities it has. Your sign is also telling me your losing streak is about to cease so my advice is to keep on gambling.

**LIBRA**
Don’t worry if you have not got everything you ever wished for. Always remember that you came into this world with nothing and you’ve still got most of it left!!

**CANCER**
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**GEMINI**
At some point this month the stars are telling me you will have an axe to grind with someone close to you. The advice I can give you is to be sure to wear safety goggles and protective clothing.
My name is Paula and I have been a regular member of the 115 day centre since 2007. After being given labels of ‘disabled’ and ‘mentally ill’, regularly since 2006 when I first became unwell, I have since adopted them as part of my identity.

However, I dislike labels, and was quite fond of your title ‘No Label Required’ when I first read, with interest, your Richmond Fellowship Service User publication.

‘It may be useful to have the option of joining in social groups within the community but let it be the choice of the individual’

I am grateful to be able to use my Services, as I find the friendship I have found there to be nurturing, generally. It is also nice to have somewhere to go when I feel a need to be with other people who have experienced what I have been through and so are more understanding than most.

I like the Staff members at 115, who I have gotten to know a little. However when the traffic light system was introduced, my trust has been somewhat undermined. For those of you who do not know, the traffic light system is a policy wherein members of 115 (and other day centres) are given the labels (no labels required?!) of Red, Amber and Green, which were assigned to them by the management, based on the management's assumptions and judgements of what individuals (Service Users) needed from the Service.

In some cases, members were excluded from attending the services previously available and the drop-in times were dramatically reduced. Members were told that they could be assisted in finding alternative activities in the community. It may be useful to have the option of joining in social groups within the community but let it be the choice of the individual, do not enforce things upon people who are already part of a vulnerable and oppressed group.

As you can imagine this caused much distress among members and we fought against its implementation by enlisting the help of the Joint Forum. The Joint Forum is an organisation available to you all, wherein you will become informed in issues relating to mental health and have the opportunity to campaign on behalf of yourselves or vulnerable people who may not be able to stand up for themselves. With thanks to the Joint Forum, our views were then eventually taken into consideration and part of the services were restored. Unfortunately Staff failed to acknowledge the distress this had caused.

Getting back to the traffic light system, it was introduced to our Day Service without consultation, which means that we were not asked about our needs or what we wanted from the Service, the management made these decisions on our behalf. This was very oppressive practise and I hope the managers have since learnt from this. Consultation is imperative if you are going to meet the needs of those using your Service.

Thankfully most of our service at 115 has been restored and we as members are settling in again. I hope that future policies will include members ad involve consultation prior to the delivery of any changes to the service.

Paula Parker

AUTUMN AT GLENMAR

And now I am awakening
From a sleep of twenty years
A pure hell of despair and depression
I take stock of the situation once again.

Now slowly waking
From a twenty-year-long period of depression
I pick up the threads of my life again.

Every morning I wake with a tingle of excitement
Wondering what pleasures and thrills to-day will bring.

Only 50 yards or so from the gate
A slender tree of red and gold leaves
I comment to Lynn dear,
(Lynn, a senior carer here at Glenmar rest home)
How beautiful the autumn colours are.

I also comment to Lynn; “autumn is surely the most beautiful season of the year”, and she agrees.

Piled up in the gutter, at the edge of the pavement,
a rift, a pile, a positive drench of leaves.

And so on we walk,
along to Lynn’s car parked at the kerbside,
Four of the residents of Glenmar and Lynn
Off for a morning coffee in Hastings old town
On this beautiful, colourful, autumn morning.

Robert Allen - Independent Steps
In this edition of No Label Required I would like to draw your attention to car drivers and cyclists.

We are constantly being encouraged to be ‘green’ and to reduce our carbon footprint, so why on earth are motor vehicles being manufactured with larger and more powerful engines? Surely it would make more sense to reduce the size of the cars’ engines, thereby making it more economical to run and reducing emissions?

The thing that annoys me the most is that year in year out cars are being produced that are capable of greater and greater speeds. WHY?! Surely everyone is aware that the speed limit is 70 MPH! A pointless exercise I think, don’t you?

My last rant about car drivers is that at some point all car drivers pull on to the pavement when parking to allow other cars to pass them, making FOOTPATHS inaccessible to mothers with children in prams or buggies. If we reverse this situation, I don’t think drivers would be happy if pedestrians started walking down the middle of the road, do you?

To move on to cyclists, I have lost count of the number of times I have come close to injury due to some two-wheeled terror going through a red traffic signal!

Lastly, isn’t it amazing that when a human being gets behind the wheel of a car they turn into a person who is never at fault while everybody else in the vicinity is? I have been called things I have had to look up in the dictionary, and the hand gestures are unbelievable! I also thought you had to be bitten by a wolf to change that much, didn’t you? ANON

I was always under the impression that a red light meant STOP not GO! Or is it just me? I have also had to run for cover when walking down the FOOTPATH to avoid being taken off my feet entirely. Could we please keep bicycles on the road where they belong and not on the pavement; after all in this day and age we do have such things as CYCLE LANES!

Oh – and Mystic Peg!