

## Auf Wiedersehen Pet By Christian Rudie

I've had a mental illness for about 14yrs or so although I'm not exactly sure. I started to become ill at university and although I managed to complete my degree I spent two months in hospital the first time. I've never been told my diagnosis. I've had to connect various conversations with my doctor and psychiatrist with glances at my doctors notes which tell me that when I was first ill it was a "psychotic illness" then later it was referred to as "short term schizophrenia" then "schizophrenia".

The first time I was ill was hell, it was undoubtedly the worst thing that's ever happened to me. It was like a disease of the part of the mind that deals with words, images and memories of people. Everything was chaos, a horror story in my brain, everything was twisted around. Afterwards my mind was numb I couldn't reflect on anything in detail.

I had to move home to my parents, where I still live, and they have been great. I consequently lost contact with the friends I hadn't already lost and had to start over again. I've had other episodes over the years but I think the first one was the worst. I think my episodes of illness are a bit like buses at Inverness airport, nothing for ages then suddenly all at once!

I've had to give up any thoughts of a career or continuing studying and I haven't really picked up a book or written anything in 10yrs. But I think I've been really lucky as I have a job and as long as I take my medication, am able to carry on a normal life.

Getting my job has been the one thing above all else that helped me recover from being ill. I found out about it at the jobcentre in Inverness. There was an ad for a car valet to work at "a Castle in Sutherland on an event to launch a new car". I eventually got the place and worked for about 8 weeks. This was a big confidence boost and I have luckily been offered jobs on events since then. I've cleaned cars on events in Spain, Iceland and North Africa amongst other places, and have visited places in the last 10 yrs that I would never otherwise have seen, all with a sponge and a

chamois. I suppose it's a bit like being in the circus moving from one place to the next.

The self employed contract system is also good for me as I can choose when I work around periods when I'm ill. I was very fortunate this year as I started to become ill working in Sienna in March. I had no one to talk to and had to keep it to myself until I got home. My biggest fear is becoming ill on a job as there is nothing anyone back home can do if it happens abroad. All my workmates know I have an illness and they help by giving me a wide berth. I'm not quite sure if they look sympathetic sometimes or just confused, but we are all one big family and have known each other for years so, I just try and make a joke of it to break any awkward silences.

Because of the problem in Italy I've had to give up working abroad for a while. But we also do a lot of work around the Birmingham area and the midlands, so I have been kept pretty busy. I think my job has really boosted my confidence. After a bad period I've realised that it is possible to lead a normal life. I've found if one door shuts another opens no matter how bad things have seemed.

## My Life Today By Keith Murdoch

Sometimes I get up in the night and have tea and a cigarette. But I generally wake about eight and follow a routine. This has hundreds of items in it but the basic ones are; Up, wash, dress, bedmake, bathroom, breakfast, shopping, cooking, housework, etc. If I'm ever short of something to do I mentally go through the list.

Then the Day Centre for a cup of coffee and a cigarette. Next back to the flat for the post and lunch. (Sometimes lunch at the Centre.) The afternoon is taken up with reading, studying and writing. Also drums and painting occasionally. Of course, if I feel ill, I'll have a lie down and sometimes sleep in the afternoon, often with a procyclidine for side-effects of the injection, (Clopixol), which I get fortnightly at the centre. My support worker comes once a week, as does my befriender. I try and use yoga meditation to calm the mind.



ACTION FOR MENTAL HEALTH

# Welcome to our Spring 2011 Newsletter



# Spring

Editor's Welcome:

At last the weather is beginning to improve and Spring is finally in the air. It has felt like a long winter this year! I am very aware we have so much to be thankful for especially when we hear about the terrible tragedies people are coping with in other places around the globe.

I hope all our members and readers find this edition interesting. Do please get in touch if you would like to contribute an article.

## Deadline for Summer 2011 Newsletter: submissions by 1st August 2011

**HUG is a network of people with experience of mental health problems from across the Highlands.**

Membership of HUG is open to anyone who has experienced a mental health problem. Just write, phone, or email us and leave your name and address – it's as easy as that!

Highland Community Care Forum  
Highland House  
20 Longman Road  
Inverness  
IV1 1RY  
Tel: (01463) 723560  
E-mail: hug@hccf.org.uk  
Website: www.hug.uk.net

**Note:** The views expressed by our members in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of HUG.

## Contents

### Regular Articles:

Feature on HUG Member	2
Graham's Update	3-4
Linda's Update	11

### Features:

Being Down	5
Standing Stones	7
Moniack Mhor Creative Writing	8
Detour	9
Bipolar - not me ...	10
I Went Out Today	10
Auf Weidersehen Pet	12
My Life Today	12

### Poetry:

No Deal	4
The Candle & The Flame	5

### News & Info:

Look Ok ... Feel Crap?	2
Book Review	6
Insanity Of Banning Smoking	6
Health Information Project	6
Introducing Dance Movement Psychotherapy	7
Green Gym, A New Start This Spring?	8
Leaving Letter	11



**HUG at  
Highland Community Care Forum**

Highland House, 20 Longman Road, Inverness, IV1 1RY. • Tel: 01463 723559 • Fax: 01463 718818  
hug@hccf.org.uk • www.hug.uk.net

Highland Community Care Forum is a Company limited by guarantee. Registered in Scotland No. 136997 Scottish Charity Number SC(NO):020501  
Registered Office: MacLeod and MacCallum, 28 Queensgate, Inverness, IV1 1YN



## Feature on HUG Member John McLeod

### How long have you been involved in HUG?

I think it must be four or five years now. I met Graham at Stepping Stones, a mental health drop in centre in Thurso, when he came to hold a branch meeting. I had been nominated on to the management committee of Caithness Mental Health Support group as a user representative. I was asked by Graham if I wanted to become a HUG member. I have contributed to the work of HUG by participating in the making of the educational DVDs. The first one I have done was the Stigma discussion. This was organised in a slightly different way to the previous ones. We had a group of thirteen HUG members. We sat in a circle and initially had an informal chat about our experiences of stigma. I am looking forward to seeing the finished DVD.

### What do you like to do in your spare time?

I am a very creative person. I express my artistic abilities through the medium of writing and driftwood art. My inspiration often comes from the landscape, the coastline and seasons. Winter can be a difficult time to get through. I am affected by Seasonal Affective Disorder so I am delighted when the days begin to lengthen and we get more sunlight. When the snowdrops appear they seem to offer hope and the promise of spring.

### If you were granted a wish what would it be?

I really don't like injustice, intolerance and inequality. So I guess my wish would be that all people would be treated with fairness, dignity and respect. I admire the work of Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Liberty.

### Who have you most admired in your lifetime?

My heroes are Nelson Mandela, John Lennon and Mahatma Gandhi. I would like to see a peaceful world with no conflict. I can but dream!



We have relaunched [lookokfeelcrap.org](http://lookokfeelcrap.org), the website for young adults from Depression Alliance Scotland. Please feel free to pass it on to anyone you know who may be interested.

### Visit our new online community!

[lookokfeelcrap.org](http://lookokfeelcrap.org) has been redesigned to include an online community! As well as finding out about depression and recovery, you can now use the site to:

- Chat to others in the forum. This is available 24/7
- Come along to our monthly live chat
- Submit your story, quotes and creative work
- Comment on other peoples' submissions.
- Set goals on the site. These can be large like "I want to go to Australia" or small "I want to walk for 10 minutes every day". Other people can comment on these goals and offer encouragement.

Hope to see you on the site soon!

## Linda's Update

We held our postcard launch at Eden Court on January 28th to celebrate the completion of the project. Forty people attended and took cards to distribute far and wide. The project was funded by Comic Relief. Thank you to everyone who gave their time and contributed in so many different ways. We thoroughly enjoyed the delightful fiddle music provided by Irene from the Inverness Feis and her young companion. Their uplifting tunes really made the occasion into something even more special. Thank you!

The two new DVDs are almost finished. One is a discussion about Stigma and the other is called "Getting on with it.....living life with a mental

health problem." Laura and Jo have provided wonderful original artwork for the covers.

We have all been busy working towards the future of HUG. Read Graham's pieces for more information. We have had training to use the new on-line database. This will be very useful to ensure we record our work accurately and more comprehensively.

I want to thank all our volunteers and members who contribute their time and efforts for HUG this is greatly appreciated. All good wishes to enjoy the coming warmer months

## Leaving letter from Heidi Tweedie

Dear HUG members,

As some of you may already know I have decided not to return to my role as Communications Development Worker at HUG. I have been on maternity leave since April last year and am enjoying the new challenges of motherhood.

Over the last few years at HUG I have really enjoyed working alongside HUG members and have missed that work while I've been on maternity leave, but it seems like a good time to move on and concentrate on smaller freelance projects so I can spend more time with my family.

I hope to see you in the future as I'm still involved with Mental Health in the Highlands, including this year's Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, and I will be keeping links with HUG and other groups.

Thank you all for your support throughout my time at HUG, especially to those who contributed to the DVD projects and the newsletters. I really enjoyed my time at HUG and gained so much from HUG members sharing their knowledge, experience and expertise.

Very best wishes for the future,

Heidi

## Bipolar – not me...

By Aileen McGinty

"I have epilepsy and a diagnosis of bipolar". So went my answer to a doctor last week when, following a car accident, she asked about any illnesses I had.

"What's that thing you said to the doctor? The bipolar thing?" asked my eleven year old child later that evening. She's still waiting for an answer.

Despite the fact that I have done lots of education and anti-stigma work around mental health, despite the fact my children have grown up knowing that that is something I do and they are actively interested in it, despite all this, I have been unable to answer her.

It's not, I don't think, that I am embarrassed about it – after all epilepsy has a certain stigma to it too and that has never bothered me. No, I think it's because deep down I don't accept ownership of the bipolar label. It's all in the subtlety. "I have a diagnosis of ...." Someone else has made that judgment and I don't know if it is an accurate description of me or not.

Over the years I have worked with a variety of 'service user' groups but always felt slightly uncomfortable describing myself as a 'service user'. Other terms are no better....consumer, survivor, expert by experience. I see myself more as a 'service avoider'. At one time I thought it might be amusing to form a Highland Avoiders Group but that would make us HAG, not nearly such an attractive name as HUG!

Why do I avoid services? Good question. In the past I have received some excellent care from services. I have also received some astonishingly poor care too, but surprisingly I don't think that has anything to do with the avoidance.

Objectively, I can see where the diagnosis comes from and yes I tick all the right boxes. I look back on my life and think 'what was I thinking of?!' about many decisions. I see the hardship I have put other people through and I feel extremely guilty about that. And yet I still don't take ownership.

I know of others who ponder the same questions I do – who is the real me? If I take medication consistently, I end up thinking that perhaps it is covering up the real me. What is wrong with doing that if it spares me occasionally getting into of trouble, having upheaval in my life and having to try to make amends in so many places? Who are the 'professionals' to make such a diagnosis anyway? Maybe that's just my character and in many ways it has served me well – I am educated to post-graduate level, have a successful career and generally have achieved a tremendous amount in my life. I

have seen others accept their diagnosis and faithfully follow the advice of professionals and I admit, I have thought to myself 'what a waste'. I know of other people, with similar backgrounds to myself and similar opportunities who are now 'patients' of the mental health system, who seem to have been defined by others and accepted their restrictions on life without question. To me they seem as if they have little hope for the future, and I know from talking with many of them, that that is how they feel. I know there are many success stories from the medical model but still I wonder if I had taken medication religiously since day one would I have attained any of the wonderful experiences of my life? Perhaps, but I don't believe I would.

There isn't an answer and nobody can say for certain. For my part though, it's too big a risk to take. I'll just go on as I have to date unless or until something happens to change that. I'll accept that I have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder but I remain unsure whether I really do or not. I will continue as far as I can avoiding services and managing the extremes of my life myself – although of course, it is not a course to be recommended. It has worked for me as well as any other option proposed by anyone.

## I Went Out Today

By Jackie

I made it out today. All organised, no need to fret, but of course the ritual has started—oops too late!

Come on I say to myself, there's no danger so keep it together for goodness sake. Remember deep breathes, slow your thoughts down. Then my mind starts to race like a computer gone wild.

Linda phones to make sure I'm ok. I love the sound of the safe voice that slows down the rushing of my mind. Yep I'm ready, everything's fine I'm going to get my hair done. (Pouring sweat).

My lift will be out for me so don't worry you're not on your own.

I'm sitting down on the edge of the bed saying to myself "you can do this" come on, come on, if not for yourself to prove to the world I am still alive!

I'm writing this down with an urgency, to tell you, the reader, how I feel. Maybe you understand these feelings and fears. I seem to go round and round in circles. Either I'm a failure or I'm too lucky, so I can't win either way. Only I can change my circles, with the help of trustworthy HUG.

Oh and by the way I MADE IT OUT TODAY!

## Graham's Update

### Hello From Graham

As you might have gathered life has been very busy here at HUG for the last few months, unfortunately we haven't been so focussed on our everyday work as usual; we have been looking at draft contracts and trying to work out a shape for a sustainable future. In time all this work will pay off and we will hopefully be in an even better position to act as a voice for people with mental health problems in the Highlands.

Some of the things we have been doing are:

### REPORTS

Homelessness – this report has been discussed with the housing department at Highland Council, we are going to present it at an annual conference on housing and with a group of organisations concerned with homelessness. It has also been placed on the international initiative for mental health leadership website and will be going on our own website soon. We are very happy to e.mail anyone a copy.

Autism and Mental Health – this report was jointly produced with ARGH (the autism rights group Highland) It should be distributed in the near future. Initial consultation with NHS Highland is that it would be a useful report for health professionals who may come in to contact with people on the autistic spectrum to see.

Poverty- this has only just gone out for consultation and is in draft form still but we know the concerns so many of you have over welfare reform changes so it seems that we are producing it at an important time.

Current Issues – this is a collection of the issues that you have all been raising recently and again is still out for consultation. It says things that many of you will be very familiar with. We are concerned about benefits changes, we still worry about stigma, transport can be very important. We are very keen that people recognise the importance of the network of drop in centres across highland and of the tag units. Some of us have had a great service from the mental health teams and many of us are very

worried about what will happen to our services in these times of cuts.

We still have to start writing up our reports on reducing the suicide rate, the information we would like if we were admitted to hospital and on what helps with wellbeing.

### FRIDAY FORUM.

This group continues to meet on occasional Fridays – it has met a number of officials and researchers as well as responding to all sorts of consultation documents.

A highlight was a recent visit from Catalonia to ask for members ideas on what would help in the new Catalonia anti stigma campaign.

If you don't get invited to the meetings and want to be –let us know and we will change our database so that we can let you know dates.

### CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

This continues to meet on the first Thursday of the month at 2.00 in the HUG offices. If you want to come along or be put on the mailing list do let us know.

### LOCAL ACTIVITY

We have some money to improve our activity in local areas but while we decide how to use it, if any of you are interested in attending your local implementation or service development group do let us know. Equally if you want to highlight issues raised in recent reports with local officials or politicians let us know this too and we will see if we can help.

### FUTURE ISSUES

We are working with the Highland LGBT forum to look at issues to do with mental health that this community faces. If any of you have a personal perspective to add to this do feel free to contact us.

## HUG and it's future By Graham

Some of you will have heard rumours about the future of HUG and may have been quite alarmed.

This short article should tell you where we stand.

HUG is a project of Highland Community Care Forum (HCCF)

HCCF supports HUG, People First (the same as HUG but for people with learning disabilities) the Carers Connect project and a network of local community care forums and local involvement work.

What has happened is that at the end of our present contract with NHS Highland and Highland Council:

- HUG and People First are going to receive the same amount of funding as they used to and are in the process of renegotiating their contract with NHS Highland and Highland council.
- The Carers work that HCCF provided has gone out to 'tender' which means that other organisations can put in a tender to do this work. Carers Connect are preparing their own tender to continue doing their work.
- The Local Community Care Forum and involvement work that was paid to HCCF by the statutory funders is no longer going to be funded.

HUG has been supported for the last 15 years by HCCF. This means that all the background work like premises, employment conditions for staff, policies, administration and finance have been done for us by them.

Because of the changes HCCF will no longer be able to support us in this way.

This has been discussed amongst staff, the HUG interim management and the HUG Round Table as well as in People First and the HCCF board of directors.

We intend to create a new organisation with a board of directors that will keep both HUG and People First running and able to do the work we have done for so long.

HUG would have an advisory group that set its strategic direction and its voice but the board would take ultimate responsibility for our good governance and what we do.

The same would apply to People first.

We will be consulting our IMG and the People first advisory group throughout and the next stage is to work out what sort of organisation we will create. This will almost certainly be a charitable body.

At the same time we need to work out our budgets to see what we can do with our money, our staffing structure and possibly find new premises.

We have until June (and possibly beyond) to do this and have had some of our normal work hours freed up to concentrate on this.

I will be coming round the branches in April and May to explain what is happening and what the likely outcomes will be. And – although this time is stressful and busy and confusing; in the words of one of our Round Table members, at the last meeting, it is also a time of opportunity and new beginnings.

If any of you want to discuss this more do feel free to phone me.

### No Deal By Jules Clare

You have battered me  
 You have given me a bad deal  
 You have fried my soul  
 You broke the sacred seal  
 You have boiled my mind  
 With invigorated zeal  
 You have sautéed my dreams  
 Left me on an uneven keel  
 You have ground my bones  
 Made me feel like a heel  
 You have hashed my love  
 You have treated me like a meal  
 You have burnt my emotions  
 You have used a powerful reel  
 You have stemmed my wishes  
 You have made me beg and kneel  
 You have mixed me up  
 Emotional layers peeled  
 You have chopped me to bits  
 Like a broken wooden wheel  
 Now you ask me for more  
 I say no deal

## Moniack Recipe for Salmon En Croute

Four salmon steaks  
 A sheet of puff pastry  
 Feta cheese  
 Tarragon  
 Parsley



Chop the salmon into one inch cubes.  
 Chop the feta, tarragon and parsley.  
 Place it on the rolled out pastry and wrap the pastry around it.  
 Brush the pastry with egg yolk  
 Cook in an oven at 180C for 35 – 40 minutes  
 Then it should be done- Serves four to five people.

**(The next writing weekend is from June 3 – June 6. There are 12 spaces which are allocated on a first come first served basis. If you are interested in creative writing and don't get mailings about it do let us know – we have had problems with our database and don't have everyone's up to date information.)**

### Detour By Judith

The concept of a detour from the 'Road of Recovery' is a very apt description of the last six months of my life. The dictionary definition of 'detour' is a roundabout route taken to avoid something, or 'to visit somewhere along the way'. I did both. There was a lot going on in my life and the journey on the road of recovery was taxing, both mentally and physically. Insidiously old coping mechanisms started to take over from new strategies. I stopped my medication. I resorted to bulimia and self medication with alcohol. I felt overwhelmed with my commitments and my emotions were overpowering me. The pressure of change and changing, which the journey of recovery demands, made me look for an easy fix – old destructive habits. Finally my last resort was to impose isolation on my life. Along with this isolation I had an idea- just supposing I lost my ego! "Oh yeah", I can hear you mutter "Why didn't I think of that? Ha, Ha!" But is that as strange as it sounds?

My emotions and moods fluctuate at a very disturbing and erratic 'regularity' and they cause me huge mental anguish and pain. Regulating them by using cognitive and dialectical behaviour therapy skills was and is exhausting, frustrating and excruciating, especially as I was trying to function socially and physically within normal limits too! If I had no emotion, no attachments and no self then I would be free of pain. I would not have to resort to old coping mechanisms and would not have to learn new strategies. I would dispose of material objects and anything that brought back memories. I would just exist. I persuaded myself that to become egoless I should detach my being from the mind. I have children, I have a responsibility to them but they do not belong to me was the type of thinking I adopted to avoid pain. I am not the content of my mind. I am not the voice in my head. It took me six months of meaningless, depressing and a boring existence to realise that not only would I not feel pain if I lost my ego but that I would also be free of joy, love, compassion and most of all HOPE. It is only NOW that I realise that I did not lose my ego at all. What I lost was the positive aspects of 'myself' and what I was left with were the negative. My psychiatrist claimed that only the Buddha could live without ego and that an egoless existence was not the human condition. Does that mean that the Buddha is not human?

In therapy I had been taught that awareness was a great asset and it is. Conscious awareness brings clarity and reality to ones life, puts things into perspective, brings compassion and allows one to be non-judgemental. Thinking without awareness is, I feel, the main dilemma of human existence. There is nothing wrong with having an ego or a sense of self as long as it is not a sense of self identifying with material things or an ego that becomes over inflated. I do not want to live without my emotions. I need to learn to regulate them within the accepted bounds of society and so they do not cause me too much pain. Last week I sat in a Bridal shop watching my daughter try on wedding dresses. She looked so stunning that the tears fell down my cheeks. It was not a single emotion but had many facets- 'loss' of my daughter, my getting old, the memory of my own wedding, her beauty and womanhood, and an overwhelming thanks that I was there that day at my daughters invitation witnessing it all and I wouldn't have missed those emotions for the world!

## Green Gym, a new start this Spring? By Alastair

Spring is coming and will be amongst us again. Suddenly the sun seems brighter, the days longer and the temperature slowly rising. I always follow the spring months with local wild flowers from first the snowdrop, to celandine, to daffodil to bluebell.

Have you ever thought about this spring getting involved in looking after your local community garden, green space, woodland, and local wildlife area? Inverness has many green spaces close to the city area e.g. Merkinch local nature reserve, Dunain Community Woodland to the Corbett Centre Garden.

The BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) Green Gym is a local volunteer group and charity, that's open to anyone that meets once a week in Inverness and once a week in Dingwall. Don't worry it's not that kind of gym: no loud pop music, no mirrors or no intimidating machines here!! It's more about getting out in the fresh air, gentle exercise, a bit of gardening and conservation work, meeting new people and learning new skills such as Drystone dyking or walling and learning about managing wildlife habitats, to identifying wild flowers and birds.

I found the group friendly and welcoming at a time when I was new to the Inverness area and my job was coming to an end and I had a lot of time on my hands. A chance to meet a wide variety of people, different ages and abilities. Also at the end of the day you get that tired but relaxed feeling after exercise, doing something worthwhile to look after your local green space and making new friends or maybe having a laugh or two.

You can commit from an hour to a few hours a week, to whole days, to Action Breaks these are working holidays to areas like Shetland & the Western Isles (normally about 10 days long with time to explore the area), to becoming a full time volunteer and leading volunteer groups. All tools, waterproofs, training, travel expenses, tea, coffee, fresh fruit, and biscuits are provided.

For more info contact:  
Ullie Wenzel, Green Gym Co-ordinator  
30 Millbank Road  
Munloch  
Inverness  
IV8 8ND  
Tel: 01463 811560  
Email: [inverness@btcv.org.uk](mailto:inverness@btcv.org.uk) or  
[gg-inverness@btcv.org.uk](mailto:gg-inverness@btcv.org.uk)

## Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Course By Margaret Macdonald

I was privileged enough to be invited to Moniack for a second time, the first time being last summer. I will always remember that occasion as being the time when I overcame so many fears i.e. eating around other people, socialising, cooking, reading aloud my writing.

Taking part and becoming familiar with HUG members that I had only met before at the HUG office or meetings, was good, they were a great bunch.

I took part in creative writing for a whole year, meeting once a month. It was very creative and thought provoking. I always felt willing and able to contribute. I even found it possible to express some of my internal anguish in my writing which in the past I would have done with self harm instead.

Going to the monthly creative writing session I found thought provoking, amusing and emotional but I always found myself able to contribute. I never ceased to be surprised when people liked my writing.

Collectively there was a large group this time. We had three days and three nights with full accommodation and our own room. This meant I could retreat into my own space if necessary. I found the workshops light and refreshing and was amazed at the quality I was hearing read out by each and every individual present. The workshops were well attended and the creativity was immense. They were run by authors who became familiar to us and were friendly and welcoming.

Aside from the workshops we socialised in the evenings over dinner. The entire group helped to prepare the meals from the well stocked kitchen. I even took part in the cooking and learnt a new recipe 'salmon en croute'. The socialising was like a ceilidh; there were musical instruments, singing, and poetry washed down by glasses of wine, which was very pleasant.

On Sunday night we held a Burns night. We cooked and toasted the haggis and we celebrated Burns with another evening of musical instruments. People was very talented and there were even Gaelic songs. It was a cold winter's night and there was a big log fire. It couldn't have been more fun.

Thanks to Comic Relief, the Book Trust and Moniack Mhor.

## Being Down By Frank Talk

*This was mainly written while I was depressed.*

It started yesterday or the day before. I felt high on Christmas Day after my daughter's phone call. Then there was a sag in mood afterwards. Now, listen to me, I am hyper aware of these things, but I also go by the 'one swallow doesn't make a crumpet' sort of thing. But then it happened again on Boxing day. A bigger sag, though still a temporal one. I still managed to go to work yesterday with few worries. I stood there in my little sorting room. Suddenly my mood was in my boots, and I knew that depression had fallen. Like the recent snow, there had been some hint of it, but it still caught me unprepared. Two little signs, and I never read them. And now here it is like a big white dump. Only it's not white, it's not even black, it's brown, if you want to know. Muddy brown and lumpy if you ask me.

So what's it like to be depressed? A doctor once said to me 'don't know which pencil to use?' I said yeah, that's an acute perception, that and the idea of toying with different approaches to suicide. But he was right. You can't make decisions, and every time you can't make one, you feel like a failure. That's what your life becomes, serial failure. It all builds up until you feel hopeless. There you are, 'hopeless', a word associated with depression. I'm conforming to stereotypes already!

So what do I do? I survive, I get through the day. I watch Eastenders and I drink lots of wine with my dinner. Don't chide me for drinking. The doctors and the shrinks politely tut tut. 'It's a depressant', they say. All I know is that it takes the edge of things. Makes me feel more animated. I start to potter about making a compilation CD for a friend. I drink some more. I forget to kill myself. Now that can't be a bad thing, can it? I live to fight another day.

At the start of each day I am usually back at the bottom of the mountain. The day is the mountain. On good days I try to take a few steps up. This might mean trying to write something, or simply clearing the dishes. I feel marginally better if I have tried to do something. Then there are bottom of the pit days where I do almost nothing. The only aim is to survive. The next day I will have to do it all over again, starting again from the bottom of the hill.

Now, a week or two later, I'm less depressed. I'm managing to go to work again, and do the odd run. I'm writing a short story with a lot of humour in it. I still get a bit stressed out when the world demands too much of me. You will pass me in the street and not know of my recent depression. I look a lot like everyone else. I don't wear a badge. I don't share my troubles with many other people, and I wouldn't wish depression on anyone.

## The Candle & The Flame By Nicola Finnis

There once was a candle  
That stood tall and straight  
Then along came a flame  
Together they were great

The candle was so happy  
And shone like a star  
Together they loved being so bright  
And wanted to go so far.

They flickered and danced  
And never wanted to part  
They knew they were destined  
To be together from the start.

Along came the wind  
And it started to blow,  
The flame said to the candle  
'I don't want to go!'

The wind took a deep breath  
The candle started to shake  
The flame from the candle  
The wind surely did take.

The candle once shone  
Very bright from the start  
The candle's alone now  
And lives scared in the dark.

We all need a flame to be happy and bright  
If there is no flame then there is no light.

## Book Review The Journey Home

One of our members, Lorraine Nicolson, has produced a wonderful book called *The Journey Home*. It tells the story of Lorraine's recovery from mental illness through her own poetry, artwork and photography. The sumptuous A4 sized art book has been reproduced to an exceptionally high standard. It is a truly beautiful book. It even smells great!

Each poem is twinned with a piece of art or photograph. The image may not be directly related to the poem, but rather is complimentary to it. Lorraine's journey to recovery was a long one, and is told over ten chapters totalling 158 pages. *The Journey Home* is full of creative expression and is far from depressing. It is radiantly colourful and quite literally, this book is a work of art.

*The Journey Home* is published by Tooth Books and costs £20.00.

## Insanity of banning smoking in psychiatric hospitals By George McGregor

All Scottish health boards are in the process of banning smoking outright in their psychiatric hospitals.

Psychiatric inpatients have different needs than inpatients in general hospitals. Many are detained against their will; often having lengthy, repeated admissions with no prospect of a medical cure for their ailment. The vast majority are dependent on tobacco to soothe the considerable stress in their lives; this being greatly exacerbated by having to cope sharing an imposed environment with others who are extremely disturbed. Without a smoke they will be at far greater risk of violence and abuse never mind trying to maintain a semblance of peace among the detainees; leading to the inevitable increase in dispensing of powerful sedatives.

If this needless smoking ban is implemented the usual nightmare of detention in a psychiatric ward will be come a living hell not just for smokers but for everyone else concerned. To say the least the situation will be incendiary.

## Health Information Project at Inverness CAB

The Citizens Advice Bureau in Inverness and Lanarkshire recently launched a pilot project for delivering health information to the general public.

Citizens Advice Scotland, NHS24 and NHS Education for Scotland are working in partnership to provide health information in a high street setting.

The CAB will be mainly using the new NHS Inform website ([www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)) to deliver reliable, quality assured health information, in addition to signposting to other support groups or services.

CAB advisers are not trained to give health advice, but can assist with identifying relevant health information for individuals, to enable them to access appropriate support or manage their wellbeing more effectively.

CAB is ideally placed to take on this role, as advisers already deal with a vast number of clients who have health problems. CAB assists people by helping them navigate their way through the complex benefit and appeal process – many of these benefits are health related. CAB also works with debt, employment, housing and other welfare issues. There is a lot of evidence to show that there is a connection between ill health and poor housing, poverty, debts, both for mental wellbeing and long term health conditions.

The CAB already runs some specific health projects. The MacMillan and CAB in Partnership for those affected by cancer and IASS, the Independent Support and Advice Service, for individuals who wish to make a complaint about NHS treatments or find out more about their rights to NHS services.

If you would like more information you can contact Charlotte Barton, Health Information Officer at Inverness CAB on 01463 237664 or call into the bureau at 103, Academy Street, Inverness.

## Introducing Dance Movement Psychotherapy Ruby Worth and Ann Kelly

"Dance is the most likely activity to promote joy"

Two weeks ago I was introduced to Graham Morgan, who had just popped into Eden Court and met Ann Kelly, a fantastic spark of a woman who I have come to know through her participation in my Dance Movement Psychotherapy Group. Graham invited Ann and I to write about Dance Movement Psychotherapy (DMP) for this HUG newsletter which we were happy to do. Ann is contributing her personal experience of coming to the group and a description of a typical session and I will begin with outlining three aspects of DMP.

Dance Movement Psychotherapy is based on the premise that our minds and bodies are innately connected and by exploring and developing how we move we gain insight into our thoughts and feelings too. This is not so unfamiliar a concept, you may have heard some of these expressions before: I am carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders, feeling weak in the knees, dragging my feet; I am head over heels in love, light hearted, s/he took my breath away. Expressions like these draw attention to how emotions are being felt and communicated through the body. In DMP we can become aware of how our feelings and thoughts are expressing themselves non verbally. We can also explore movements that can create new experiences, like jumping for joy!

Gaining new physical skills and resources are also part of DMP. Through the body and its movement we explore: integration, grounding, relaxation, coordination and extending ranges of movement. Developing range offer's new experiences and with choice can come a renewal of energy and a feeling of vitality.

Empathising with others through sharing in their movements is a further aspect of DMP. Being a part of a group offers opportunities to develop added confidence and build new relationships. DMP is often playful and very creative, it is also an opportunity to come together with others and have some fun!

Here is Ann's experience:

The Dance Therapy Group is one of the highlights of my week. I am often quite tired and lethargic at the start of the session but by the end I feel full of energy and have a feeling of wellbeing. We all certainly leave Eden Court with smiles on our faces! We warm up at the start of the session and the main part is where we explore our own and each other's movements.

Various types of music add to our enjoyment. Gaining more confidence and less inhibition I think we have all benefited allot from DMP. I enjoy the people in my group, we have become friends and we have allot of fun dancing together. After warming down we sit and share how the hour has gone and how we are feeling. Invariably we feel better. I personally believe I am more positive and relaxed after the hour, which goes very quickly. We all agree we benefit from the sessions often relieving feelings of depression and anxiety. As another group begins, I hope that many people will be able to benefit from the great feeling of dance and music. I certainly am one of the lucky ones!

Ann Kelly (February 2011)

For further information email :  
[rworth@eden-court.co.uk](mailto:rworth@eden-court.co.uk)



## Standing Stones By Damian MacGregor-Lane

Hazel Twig was a girl living in Druidic times, she was known as Twiggy to her friends. Twiggy wore tweed and tartan plaids with a Celtic brooch and she lived near Stonehenge.

In the springtime it was planting season in the fields and Twiggy and her family had to go out and plant corn and wheat in the big field behind the clutch of wooden houses near Stonehenge. She would work out in the field planting seeds all day with her big brother doing the furrowing of the soil then all she needed to do was to put the seeds in the furrows and cover them with soil.

But by night time the two of them were quite tired out. Her mother and father usually had the hard job of steering the horse and cart with sacks of corn into the field. Luckily it was lighter going home.

Twiggy had a doll. It was made with twigs and straw. Its clothing was off cuts of tweed and tartan from when the tailor had made Twiggy`s plaids.

On the summer solstice the midsummer sun comes up in alignment with Stonehenge. At that time, early in the morning, Twiggy and her people wait to see the sun rise standing near Stonehenge away from where the Druids do their seasonal walk and sacrifice of small animals.

Twiggy waited for a long time to watch the sun come up and was amazed by the beauty of Stonehenge in all its splendour. After watching the sun rise the festivities began with plenty of food going around for some years.