



## ‘You Can’t Be Made Too Comfortable’ - Official Policy ?

For some time the powers that be have been making things less comfortable for us in our drop-ins... We were thrown out of New Horizons, they tried to close Langley Drop-in, at Sunrise they stopped cooking meals for us, tried to make us do the dirty jobs and cut the opening hours when we voted with our feet. I have to tell you now, nothing has changed. Their latest spike for our ‘too comfy’ chairs is Social Inclusion, or as it truly is, Social Conflict.

The community is not waiting to clutch us to its welcoming bosom, it is waiting with a sharp tongue, a suspicious mind and bricks for our windows. Nationally, over 50% of the Mentally Ill have suffered harassment from their neighbours and I include myself in that number.

We are patients of the NHS receiving a therapeutic service from staff who should obey basic medical ethics. As such our confidentiality must be respected. Putting a drop-in into a public place like the West Wing exposes us to the general public like goldfish in a bowl.

They will see we look different, walk different, talk different, will recognise some of us as mentally ill and assume that the rest of us must be mentally ill because we go around with the others. Some of these people may know where we live. Before we know it the kids are shouting at us in the street and throwing stones at our windows.

To summarise, ‘Social Inclusion’ in today’s society is a pipe dream the public do not want. It involves compromising our confidentiality and leaving us exposed to verbal and physical attack. In the drop-in context it is unethical, undemocratic, dangerous, and unwanted by either the Mentally Ill who just want to keep their heads down and remain anonymous or the general public who simply don’t want us in their back yard.

After the promises that have been made on keeping drop-ins open there is only one way left to get rid of them and not be branded a liar. They could be made so uncomfortable that we stop going to them and they could then be shut down due to ‘lack of demand’.

It is ridiculous to think that we can be forced to take part in structured activities by making drop-ins less comfortable. If this had any chance of success we would be seeing huge increases in attendance at structured groups already but we have seen the opposite. Recovery can be a slow process and cannot be rushed to meet government targets. Many of us who enter the day service system for the first time have just come out of hospital or have been living a reclusive lifestyle. We can just about cope with being in a room with staff and like minded individuals who might just understand what we’re going through. What we don’t need is a service in a public building where we can’t talk about our experiences

in case someone overhears them, where our mere appearance may result in dirty looks, harsh words and further repercussions from a society that doesn’t believe in social inclusion and a community that doesn’t care.

The local paper that wrote a front page article on objections to the Upton Hospital Psychiatric Unit could well do the same about a drop-in where the mentally ill mix with the general public.

I accept that there are some people who may wish to do training courses, seek employment and do other things which may involve them with the general public; they have that right, I wish them luck. What I object to is forced social inclusion from day 1. We should start in a safe place and then when we’re ready we should have the choice of what do next. Meeting the public can be a traumatic experience and WE - not the NHS, The Council, or The Government - should decide when we do it.

Furthermore, as many fans of ‘The Rebels’ may know, the West Wing (former Arbor Vale School) is the proposed site for Slough Town’s new football stadium. Full story on page 2.

### Strange Bird Visits Sunrise



### SMHUG - The Last Buffet Full Story on Page 4



# Sad Last Thoughts on Recovery

Dear Readers

When the American organisations idea of 'Recovery' was first mooted I was all for it. I spoke up at conferences and local meetings supporting the idea. For older members of the system like me who remember our first incarcerations in big old Victorian 'bins'; I wished someone had said to me then, once back in the then new idea of 'care in the community', "How's your Recovery going M?" Then it was very much, "This is how it is for you M. This is your life now". You see why I was so enamoured with that question is that someone is really saying to you and making you think "Hey, this person thinks I can actually get better". The point is 'Recovery' was now mine to work on and to deal with. However no sooner do I have MH services and Users have something of their own then people came along seize and hijack the whole idea to suit their own jobs and agendas or tick boxes.

Recovery for people often who've experienced some of the most traumatic episodes anyone can have in life, is something one must be given time to work through and have the freedom to do in ones own time; people will re-engage when ready. The governments Recovery Document Model to which local Authorities up and down the country are working to, all reads great for those who want and can 'move on', Day Centres are now only working and being set up for those who a lot of commentators now call 'Great Britain plc'. For instance and I Quote from out local Day Service Contact Dec 2004; 'Up to 15 registered service

users will use the service for a social benefit. This will be closely monitored so that a drop in service does not develop' and 'achieve a move on rate of at least 90% of service users where possible, within 2 years of entering the service to reintegrate into the community', So nice isn't it that people: for instance who Doctors have told (statistically if you have schizophrenia only 5% currently work) "you need as stress free environment as possible to aid your recovery". The flaw in the Government Recovery Document Model is that many have tried and failed to fit into the Great Britain plc idea. (Personally after my initial breakdown in 1971 after Polytechnic I'd already tried all this; working for over 20 years, getting married, taking on my wife's 3 children from a previous marriage and finally ending up jobless, divorced, in hospital, discharged twice, homeless in a year and my latest doctor telling me I'm now physically 'burnt out'. "You've worked so hard you will never work again").

So for people like me, given our Local Authorities Day Care policy belatedly discovered under the 'Freedom of Information Act' and kept hidden from our User Group (and mentioned as a stakeholder in the local Day Services contract) for over 3 years where am I and people who will never fit into Great Britain plc 'move on' to? Answer: Isolated and back to our flats and bedsits! And then probably totally depressed, back in hospital to start the whole cycle again. Local Government Officers in L.I.T. meetings have the nerve to say to us that they want to see 'outcomes'. Well for a start you cannot demand

an outcome of someone with a mental health problem to suit you. Besides just look at us; life as it's set up has dealt us our outcome for all to see, thank you very much. Just leave us alone, please; to 'Recover' in our own time with our friends. Government provides Day Centres for old People and other Disabilities and yet pressure us to move on to jobs that even our well companions and friends can't find, or live on as wages are now so low, unfortunately having been encouraged and depressed by the latest wave of inward migration. Perhaps as a last thought you might all like to consider this, why is it local government have no problem with people: who many are working so hard to emulate anyway, who sit on the Costas with sun, sea, sex, sand and sangria often through ill gotten and dubious gains and in many professional's own words say about us 'doing nothing'? Yet have a big problem with us, most of whom given a level playing field would work, but who effectively have nothing, except that in our doctors own words we are "long term ill". They never say about those types, "We need to move these people on!" Of course the one thing we do have in common with them is both groups are often and usually drugged up to the eyeballs! Well there you have my 'Recovery'; now once again Conditional to the demands of others, who purport to care for us, but in the end just wish to impose their will on us. The fundamental question therefore facing us and society as a whole, "care or control?" "Great Britain plc" or the 'United' Kingdom?

Peter Grebe-Striebling  
February 2008

## News From Slough Town FC

As I'm sure you are aware Slough Town Football Club have been attempting for many years to secure a new home in Slough for the club. The club is pleased to announce that at a cabinet meeting last week Slough Borough Council agreed in principle with the club's plans to build a new stadium on the former Arbour Vale School (West Wing) in Stoke Road. This decision will allow Slough Town and its partners to develop their proposals over the next 3 months.

There is still along way to go before the club can start celebrating but the council's decision was received as a very positive step by club officials and supporters alike. It is proposed that the site will be developed and will include housing, hotel, car park and stadium. The stadium will include facilities (bar, conferencing etc) and will also provide a home for the Slough Amateur Boxing Club.

From Slough Town FC's website: [http://www.sloughtownfc.net/news/article.php?news\\_id=31](http://www.sloughtownfc.net/news/article.php?news_id=31)

## A Time to Come

We have done for Racism  
We have done for Criticism  
We have done to cause Pollution  
We have done to cause Confusion  
if we don't look after the Lowest in Society. Not enough Money for the old the young & the poor, the physically and mentally ill.  
But for war there is always more!

At this point in the story we have a choice to make. God is watching while we cause so much pain. We either walk the path of love or be crippled by our hate. All wrapped up in our own illusions.

People can't take the pressures of life, the pointless meetings, benefiting no-one. Paying bills & buying status. We make time to debate religion. We make time to conquer nations. When will there be a time to love?

All you Prime Ministers  
All you Presidents  
All you Kings  
All you Queens  
All you Heads of Departments  
All you Consultants

When will there be a time to share all the riches of the world.

By John The Forunner & Steve Land

## Sayings of Daisaku Ikeda Buddhist Philosopher

It is human nature to desire recognition and to want to look better than what we are. When that desire seizes control of us, it is easy to lose sight of who we are and what our real purpose is. Spiritual corruption begins from there. The best thing is to be true to one's heart.

No matter how wonderful our dreams, how noble our ideals, or how high our hopes, ultimately we need courage to make them a reality. Without action, it's as if they never existed.

A person who cannot genuinely empathize with others can never excel as a leader. So much of what ails society today is the result of too many people in leadership positions who do not or cannot identify with the plight of their fellow men and women. It is in enduring pain and struggles that the earth of our humanity is cultivated. And it is from this earth that a capacity to be genuinely concerned for the welfare of others blossoms.

## Life is Pants By Mr Jolly

Oh why do I feel pants today  
If ants felt pants what would they say  
Life is just so dull and grey  
Am I having fun ... Nay

Life's a bowl of bullshit  
I feel it in my head  
Walking like a zombie  
I'm just a bit undead

Staggering through my life  
Living day by day  
If I was religious  
I guess I'd go and pray

Pray that one day this will end  
That one day I'll know bliss  
That life will have some purpose  
And I'll know just what it is



Rumours of My Death...  
Have been... Exaggerated...

## Fascinating Facts

1. 'Babe' was played by over 48 pigs.
2. Mosquitoes have 47 teeth.
3. Ants never sleep.
4. The largest pumpkin weighed 377 lbs.
5. The largest cabbage weighed 144 lbs.
6. The hundred billionth Crayola crayon was Perriwinkle Blue.
7. An iguana can stay under water for 28 minutes.
8. Emus can't walk backwards.
9. A group of unicorns is called a blessing.
10. A group of ravens is called a murder.
11. 12 or more cows is called a flink.
12. A baby oyster is called a spat.
13. Chickens can't swallow while they are upside down.
14. The average garden variety caterpillar has 248 muscles in its head.
15. Pinocchio was made of pine.
16. Singapore only has one train station.
17. The parking meter was invented in North Dakota.
18. Napoleon made his battle plans in a sandbox.



## Anything Odd About This Picture ?



The surroundings of SADSAD are well known for their wide variety of wildlife. We've had deer, grouse, foxes, wagtails, kestrels, various cat like creatures and the strange bird I saw on page 1 turned out to be a jay.

One of the more unusual sightings was the giraffe, it was apparently very shy and would leap over the golf club fence before anyone could get a photo.

I was following some birds on the roof with my camera when suddenly they flew up into the air and Gerald, as I like to call him, popped his head up from behind the building.

Rumour has it that herds of majestic wildebeest gallop across the back field but only when no-one's looking.

## SMHUG - The Last Buffet

On the 5th of June SMHUG held it's Annual General Meeting and an Extraordinary General Meeting where the decision was made to dissolve the group.

Peter Grebe-Striebling, retiring acting chair, delivered his annual chair's report where he thanked all those who had been involved with SMHUG and others, including this publication, who had helped SMHUG in the past.

His speech ended with a rousing quote from William Blake:

"I shall not cease from mental fight, nor shall my sword rest in my hand,

'til we have built Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land."

SMHUG's funds amounted to £9000 and it was decided they would be distributed as follows:

1. A payment recently received from Slough Borough Council of approximately £3,000 to be returned;
2. A cheque for £1,000 to be made to Sunrise Members Fund, specifically to be used to increase user involvement and capacity for social inclusion, in an account acceptable to all members of Sunrise;
3. A payment of £1,000 to be made to the Slough Manic Depression

Fellowship BiPolar Self Help Group;

4. A payment of £3,000 to be made to the SPACE Counselling Service in Slough on the provision that it is used solely for the counselling of mental health service users;

5. The balance remaining after closure of the SMHUG account to be moved to BMHUG (as and when their bank account is available), ring-fenced for use by Slough service users only to increase mental health user involvement in Slough.

Some of those present were quite surprised at SMHUG's achievements listed in the May issue - you never know what you got 'til it's gone.

## Are You Getting It Every Month ?

You'd like it more often? Wouldn't we all... But for now SMH News comes out every month. You can pick up a copy at Sunrise Club, New Horizons, or Langley drop-in. The Man With No Fax Number will give you one if you can find him.

If you want to be really sure you can email [subscriptions@sloughmental.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@sloughmental.co.uk) and we'll will send you the email version every month. Read the latest issue and any previous issues at [www.sloughmental.com](http://www.sloughmental.com).

Have you got a story, a poem, an interesting photo, something I haven't thought of ? Email it to [editor@sloughmental.co.uk](mailto:editor@sloughmental.co.uk) and see your name in print maybe (unless you wish to remain anonymous). .

