



## Mike Paxton, Ceaseless Campaigner For Our Rights True Friend and Goalkeeper, We Salute You

My original headline for this article was 'Mike Paxton is Dead - Long Live Mike Paxton!'. A strange headline you might think, it comes from the call at the death of kings. I thought it appropriate as Mike was truly a king amongst men, by virtue of his courage, his intelligence and his nobility of character. He faced the horrors of many long, boring and stressful meetings with the mental health establishment to stand up for our rights and make life better for us all. He's done more for the mentally ill of Slough than anyone else I can think of. He was a genuinely nice guy who'd do anything for his friends and did quite a bit for people he never met - he was better than a king.



Many of you may have seen Mike's serious side when he spoke at meetings and his ability to talk all 4 legs off a donkey - those of you who knew him better will also know that he had a great sense of humour and was a triffic laugh. He was my best mate, he was like a brother to me, he was there for me when my paper got banned and when my gearbox blew up. When the world seems dark, dismal, or hopeless, laughter has the greatest power on earth to set things right. We made each other laugh, we supported each other through dark

times and so brought light to our darkness. Mental Health 'Experts' take note - we need more to laugh about.

At Mikes funeral I learned that he helped set up the Stepping Stones drop-in which lasted 20 years, that his achievements in Mental Health went back many years before SMHUG, that he helped set up New Horizons and that he was also a pretty good basketball player and football goalkeeper.

Well you only had to look at Mike to know that he was born to be a goalie.

One of Mike's most important recent achievements happened at a meeting just after we moved out of New Horizons. The management had announced that there was only enough money to run a drop-in for 2 days a week. Mike offered to use SMHUG funds to pay for the other 3 days. Shortly afterwards the management agreed to pay for a 5 day drop-in service. Had Mike not done this we'd probably have a 1 day drop-in service now. What a save! He kept the goal well that day.

After he retired from SMHUG he was still actively campaigning on mental health issues right to the end. I once said only death could retire Mike Paxton... and such was his commitment to our cause. I often dress in black and I'm sure some say that I'm always ready for a funeral... not this one though, it happened many years too soon.

We all 'retire' in the end and by our deeds we are remembered. Mike's deeds stand out like a shining star of hope; showing us what once was, what can be again and that we can make a difference if we do but dare to try.

We won't forget you Mike, you live forever in the hearts and minds of those who knew and loved you.

## Time To Talk To The Horse

In November 2007 we reported on a statement made by then Locality Manager, Gerry 'The Horse' Crawford that our 5 day drop-in service was safe. When Gerry moved to Bracknell I asked Frank Toner and Sue Yeoman whether the new Locality Manager would keep to Gerry's promise. Frank Toner said Gerry's promise would be honoured, Sue Yeoman said the drop-in service

would be written into the new service specification. Now suddenly we have a 4 day drop-in service. Have all these people changed their minds. I've been told that the Thursday closure of Sunrise is a 'Pilot Scheme' which may be only temporary. Mind you though, that's what they said about Income Tax and VAT. It's time to talk to the horse and the whole flippin' stable.



# The Schizophrenic Gene (Last Throw of The Dice?)

By Max Paxton

As a mental health service user for over 35 years and almost recovered, isn't it interesting that with the advent of gene technology that the mad rush is now on looking for the schizophrenic gene?

Well isn't that handy for those of us who've suffered so much, to now have people looking for the perfect excuse to justify and continue their behaviour towards you and me?

We, who have learnt so much by our life experience of how it feels to be at the bottom of societies pile, are facing people looking for a new get out. Not looking at themselves like we've had to

It's so simple that to even these mad scientists, you would think it is obvious. When a child is born I know of no-one who claims that a new born babe is born mad. Of course it isn't. Even if born with learning difficulties or physical disability it's still a bundle of joy! Actually; have you ever noticed that people with learning difficulties respond quite normally to being treated like an adult?

As I've said before, if one thinks holistically, mental illness is a sane response to an insane world. Sensitive people growing up in a stressed world, with a mania with occupation, will have breakdowns. Being cruel by the way doesn't help things much either. For instance experiments with rats in overcrowded conditions prove they will become aggressive. Overcrowded poverty stricken inner city crime and violence are a testimony to this basic exercise. Something has to give. The unnatural way so many live today inevitably means some can't cope any more.

Again, it has been proved, experiments with the wildest animals, like wolves, have shown they will respond tamely to love.

We, who think we are so advanced and civilised, stigmatize & treat so badly sensitive people who've succumbed; just because our cultural story emphasizes competition, survival of the fittest, and to the winner go all the spoils. One learns early; whatever you do; don't become one of life's 'losers'.

Of course in this game, someone will be a 'loser'; and you even then get mocked and scorned for being one. A double whammy!

The point of this article then, is that the 'scientists' are looking for this gene so we can be made 'losers' permanently. Strange isn't it how life's winners need us so badly to make themselves feel so good, right and pious.

I accept that enduring psychosomatic problems can cause physical imbalances in the brain. Harboring feelings of hatred can also be extremely physically damaging in the long term. Businessmen getting ulcers; a classic lifestyle condition too.

We all remember a time when we we're not 'mad'. I will never accept I was born that way now I've almost recovered my insanity; but sadly left 'burnt out' by my struggle with the monstrosity of it all.

MAX

## Sunrise Club's Thursday Closing What is to Be Done?

Well we're told it's a pilot scheme - so if we don't go down the café in large enough numbers the scheme may be deemed to have failed and perhaps normal drop-in service will be resumed.

Other than that we can suggest another scheme less staff intensive than the coffee/shopping one and run it on say Tuesday or Friday. One thing we must remember is that if we don't make suggestions on what we want to do then the staff have no choice but to experiment and guess and they don't always get it right. I was at the meeting when Laura asked for suggestions and there was stony silence including me.

I'm not sure how busy Sunrise is on a Friday but if the Thursday and Friday schedules were swapped over this would leave a Sunrise drop-in service from Monday to Thursday with a

choice of the excellent Langley drop-in or Bowling etc on Fridays.

Hence the 5 day drop-in service would remain intact as would the community activities and all members would have the service they need.

I have a few comments on the café shopping idea but if enough of you want to do it then far be it from me to try and stop you.

1. It constitutes a 400% increase in the price of coffee compared to Sunrise prices.
2. It promotes fast food and drink which if bought on a daily basis can cause hardship and debt.
3. Unlike the cooking group on Monday it does not promote independence, you may become dependent on fast food shops.
4. If I went alone to a coffee shop and sat there quietly drinking
- 5.

my coffee I could probably pass for an ordinary customer. In a crowd of my fellow psychiatric survivors the conversation might turn to medication or other psychiatric matters and people would be looking round and saying to each other 'hello, the loonies are in town'. Once they know who you are you might see them again and get more abuse. The alternative is to try to shut up and act normal, this is stressful, it's like being in a state of siege, not pleasant. Even if you can manage that, it only takes one of your colleagues who's having a bad day to say something wacky and you all get tarred with the same brush.

Shopping: we know how to shop don't we? If we can't shop then how've we been eating all these years?

# Readers Letters

Dear Ed,

One must now be aware of new buzz-words & latest trends in society all the time.

Observing for many years the latest fashionable phrases around mental health, one that leapt to prominence in the 1990s (after years of getting used to established psychiatric diagnoses and labels) all of a sudden we had 'personality disorders'. When I first heard it, my first thought was; this is ridiculous; any kid will tell you, your personality is what you're born with & what makes you attractive to others as a person & individual (or not). It's your thinking in a confusing world that can distort and make you seem what you are not - not?

Go to say LIT meetings as a user rep & the same clever people invent, in vogue 'management speak' phrases to look smart like 'off the radar'. Poor souls, obviously thinking there's some kind of Stealth Technology at work.

The latest flame is that users must come to meetings and be 'positive'. Anything other than 'positive' is now not brooked or countenanced. (A colleague has just been stopped, without being spoken to, after attending just one local Acute Care Forum meeting, having been invited to come along; for being too 'negative' and for 'having an agenda' ?? My stars!! This does seem like an almost desperate last throw of the dice to silence any opposition. After all if you're 'negative' according to 'positive' espousers you must be 'wrong' - not?

Our clever classless and free peers are obviously so 'right' and 'positive' they just can't figure out why they are getting 'negative' and 'wrong' responses so often.

"Physics my dear." It says basically; 'Exert a force one way & one is met by an equal opposing force, back.'

All is not lost however. There is a third force in the universe known as

'neutral'. The trinity is thus complete. The world, indeed the cosmos dances in endless interplays of all 3 forces and we give them all sorts of names - e.g. ice, water steam.

Your mission today Jim, should you decide to accept - Investigate this neutral force and discern what it is and how it works.

Mr Neutron, Langley



Greetings,

I have read your articles on User Groups, what to call them and how we don't have a good name to call ourselves. I have some suggestions: many nations use stars in their flags and in an odd way so do we. If you go to Ward 10 you will notice the orange star on the wall. Suppose we adopt that star and call ourselves stars - a positive image don't you think? Better than users?

Ok? Next step, we are a tribe... some tribes are joined by the place where they live and the colour of their skin - our tribe is joined by the place where we live and the colour of our minds.

Tribes without chiefs wander the plains like drunken water buffalo not knowing where they go.

Chiefs without tribes may speak for themselves but until they speak for the tribe they may not be listened to.

When the tribe and the chiefs are one and the chiefs speak with the voice of many then shall the tribe prosper. How shall the tribe and the chiefs be one? The chiefs shall take votes so they shall know the will of the tribe.

One last thing - new group name: Tribal Council of The Stars

Chief Crazy Horse

## I Love You Mike

Mike Paxton died the other day alone on his sofa. I was proud to know Mike, there was something we all lost that day, something to do with God, he was close to God, he told the truth and not everybody listened to his knowledge. I did. He loved Jimi Hendrix and sang some of his songs to me. I met Jimi in the sixties and he would have loved Mike. 'Business man here you take my wine and I can't get no relief'. But you and I Mike, we've been through that, and that is not our fate, because none of them could ever level on the line like you Mike. Rest in Peace.

John The Forunner

Dear Sir,

I wish to complain in the strongest terms about the lack of cute fluffy animals in recent issues. On the subject of what's a good name for 'Mental Health Service Users', I'd like to suggest the name 'Hats' (based on the Mad Hatter). We could promote this name by dressing in mad hatter costume while demonstrating etc. Those who are to shy for that could wear hats that pull right over the head, with holes for the eyes.

Anne Elk (Miss)

## Not Fit For Purpose

I heard a high ranking executive bravely say that ward 10 was not fit for purpose. A breath or two later as the Frank Toner show was about to wind up to it's final crescendo I witnessed stats being brought down from above, descriptions of East German Camps being denied, even that the problem involving stopping past patients visiting their friends was already in divine hands before the Runner intervened. Try being dosed up on some antidepressants and the rest and spending 3 months there it's a tougher pill to swallow. Some say this publication frightens the users, I reckon it frightens more of the keepers.

John The Forunner

## Fascinating Facts

A dog was the first in space and a sheep, a duck and a rooster the first to fly in a hot air balloon

Playing-cards were known in Persia and India as far back as the 12th century.  
A pack then consisted of 48 instead of 52 cards

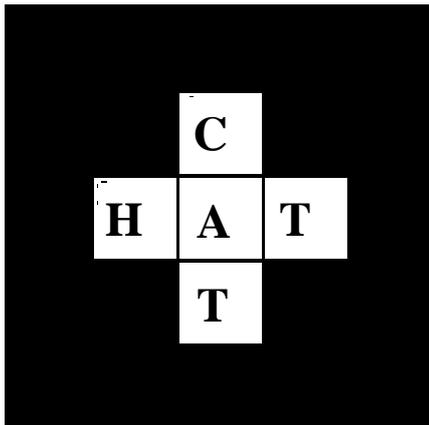
Excavations from Egyptian tombs dating to 5,000 BC show that the ancient Egyptian kids played with toy hedgehogs.

The first written account of the Loch Ness Monster, or Nessie, was made in 565AD.

Slough was recently declared the most risky place in Britain for road accidents  
So let's be careful out there.



### Very Quick Crossword Solution



### UFO in Black Park

Unidentified Floating Object



A trigger-spray bottle of  
cleaning fluid perhaps?

### Prayer of The Duke of Wellington

Lord give me Courage  
to change what can be changed.  
Give me Serenity  
to accept what cannot be changed.  
And give me the Wisdom  
to know the difference.



**Have A Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year ...  
Or We'll Send The Reindeers Round**

