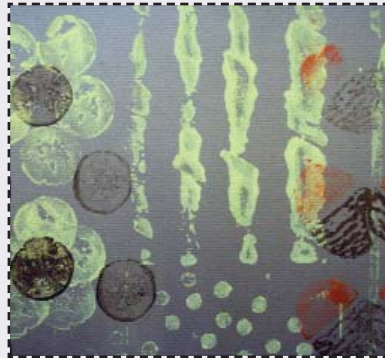


the magazine for RF service users  
issue number 14





# The Inspirational Leaves Art Project



## COVER STORY

The 'inspirational leaves' art project was the brainchild of Anna Lowe, a Richmond Fellowship employment advisor at the Cambridge branch.

Anna: "I had an idea to initiate a project where clients from two services could come together as a team to revitalise their artistic and work-related skills and to produce colourful murals with inspirational quotes for our clients to enjoy".

One example of such a quote is Gandhi's: "you must be the change you wish to see in the world".

Karen is an RF client and was the main facilitator and art director of the project, along with Ewa, an RF client.

Karen: "Anna's tree idea really appealed to me, and I had the idea of incorporating the seasons... We spent the first session on collage

and the second on learning printmaking techniques. This was particularly useful for clients who lacked confidence or who had not done much art before. It was about encouraging people and finding ways for them to express themselves visually. Sometimes people lack confidence with drawing or painting but there are so many other ways to make a mark. It was great for me to experiment too, with gold leaf, stencilling and printing with potatoes, apples, carrots, leaves and textured wallpaper".

Sharon and Alys are RF clients and the artists who created the RF mural, and Sarah and Sheldon are Castle service clients and the artists who created the Castle service mural. Participants ranged enormously in ability and backgrounds.

Sharon: "Karen and Ewa really ignited my passion and enthusiasm for this project. They had so many wonderful ideas".

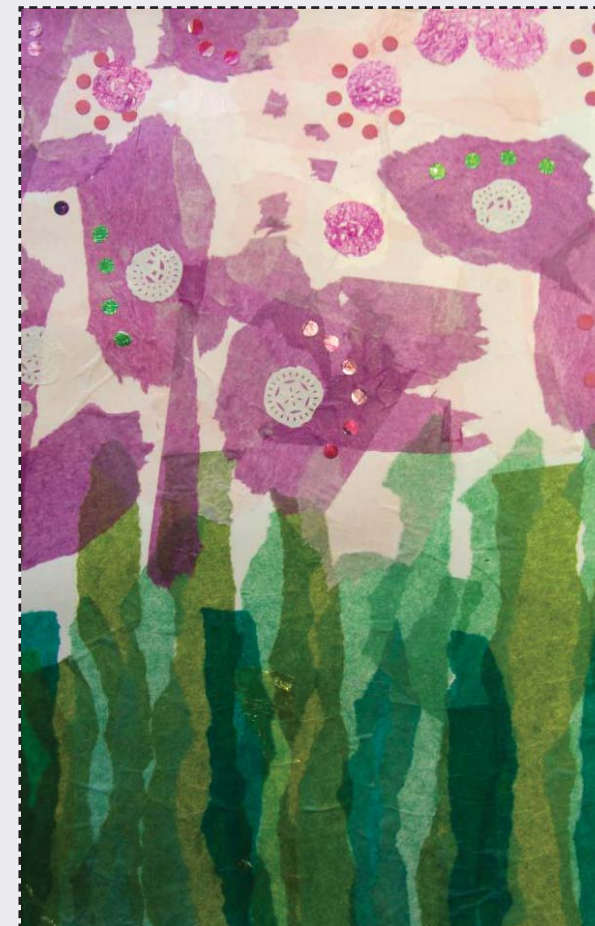
Anna: "confidence and skills grow as a result of interactions and experiences, much like a snowball".

Sharon: "I found working in their environment incredibly empowering".

Sheldon: "I think RF and CS should set up more projects like this one".

Sharon: "I would definitely recommend to other RF clients that if you're lucky enough to get the opportunity to be involved in a similar project, put aside your fears and give it a go... you may discover as I did that you have skills you didn't know you had... This project epitomises the whole ethos of RF, it gives clients the opportunity to gently reach outside their comfort zones and to explore their potentially hidden abilities in a supportive and safe place".

**Alys Butler, Sharon Tracey, Ewa Ibanez and Karen Kellet.**  
Edited by Tony Marcoff



## Meet the editorial board

**Cliff Hollingberry**  
co-editor

**Matthew Sparham**  
co-editor

**Charles Coke-Smyth**  
**Karen Clarke**  
**Tony Marcoff**  
**Sean Mortiboys**  
**Mawuko Selormey**

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Richmond Fellowship.

## we're looking for more

**The current Editorial Board for No Label Required are looking for more volunteers to join in helping us produce editions of the magazine.**

As a member of the Ed Board your role would be to seek out suitable material for the magazine; to give fair consideration to all contributions when making editorial decisions; to attend our meetings and make a positive contribution to our editorial discussions; and to produce the most varied and interesting editions possible.

We're also looking for more people to contribute articles to the magazine. Articles can be a report about something newsworthy like a local event or project, a reflection on an issue to do with mental health for example the impact of the changes to people's benefits, or some creative writing such as a poem or a story.

When writing an article, try to keep it to 300 words or less; it can be a bit longer if it's a story or feature. Think about your reader, they may not be as familiar with the topic as you are, so always explain any unusual terms or phrases and give some background. And remember to spell check your work before sending it in.

To find out more about joining the Ed Board or to contribute an article, contact us on **020 76973355** or email: **NoLabelRequired@RichmondFellowship.org.uk**



# LOOKING AT RECO VERY TOGETHER!

## National Service User Forum, November 2014, London

It was an extraordinary day in so many ways: a day of shared wisdom, stories, real lives.

Those who organised and presented the proceedings did an excellent job. After a warm welcome and some humorous icebreaking activities there was an informative talk by Professor Suman Fernando. A pioneer in his views on psychiatry, he has championed the treatment of service users based on a 'recovery as journey' approach which emerged from New Zealand and the USA in the late 80s. Every user is seen as different, an individual, regardless of race, class, background, faith, gender and sexuality.



Professor Fernando mentioned Dr Phillipe Pinel (in France around 1795) as the father of modern psychiatry, a man who put ex-patients in charge of asylums and believed that those with mental health problems were special people who have special insights into life or the nature of things. Suman went on to say that psychiatry needs to evolve in new ways, emphasising the central role of service users in their treatment, participating or being involved rather than being dominated.

After this inspiring talk we heard a presentation about the development of the Service User Charter with the motto 'have your say'. We were able to use keypads to vote on our views as to how the charter should evolve. The strategy is just beginning and aims 'to create an environment and culture where the knowledge, strengths, capabilities, life experiences and skills of staff, volunteers, carers and people who use services are of equal value'. It aims to find what

works for each person, rather than a 'one size fits all' policy.

In both morning and afternoon sessions, three different workshops were on offer: 'how to deal with unhelpful thoughts', 'relaxation and mindfulness', and a 'creative workshop' for art-related activities. All of us found these to be helpful and to the point.

One insight of the 'unhelpful thoughts' group was that we shouldn't worry too much about the past. The past is over and that's why it's called 'the past'. Negative thoughts can become a habit and sometimes need to be challenged.



This tied in with the 'mindfulness' group where we learned to use breathing to slow down and relax. We also learned to do useful things to focus our thoughts, like walking, gardening, listening to music and writing poetry, and to do these things mindfully (more fully aware of the present moment) so as not to be too concerned with worries about the past and future. Two helpful sayings emerged from these sessions: "you can't change the direction of the wind but you can adjust the sails" and "you can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf".

Throughout the day there were breaks for coffee and biscuits and an excellent spread of sandwiches and fruit was laid on for lunch. After lunch, four service users bravely shared their moving stories of recovery and were later given well-deserved certificates in the ceremony that finished off an absorbing and most enjoyable day. A big thank you to all concerned.

Tony Marcoff

### Shaping our strategy

**My name is Cyril Bird, I am a service user and volunteer for Richmond Fellowship. I was asked to be involved in the new service user strategy we are creating over the next 3 years. This strategy aims to give service users and volunteers the opportunity to be involved in the RF Group decision making, from top to bottom of the group at all levels.**

I attended a senior team meeting at Head Office and a board away day in regard to the new strategy with other service users; we had to present both meetings with questions to answer. The people at these 2 meetings had to break into several groups to discuss the questions we gave them and then feed back to us. Both the senior team and board made us feel at ease and welcome, they really listened to us, and I knew what we were doing was worthwhile from the positive feedback we had received from both meetings. The new strategy means working with service users and there would have to be changes to their work plan to allow service users to be involved.

So far we have a draft Service User Charter and a draft Service User Strategy, which we took to the National Service User Forum on the 27th November 2014 to be discussed and voted on. You can find out more about the progress of the strategy and let staff know how you want to get involved.

Cyril Bird

## National Service User Forum, July 2014, Birmingham

The day began at 10am with registration and welcome packs handed out.

Beverly Clay started proceedings with a review of business strategy in an address to the whole entourage in the main hall.

A talk followed by a man named Vinnie Rodgers about barriers to recovery and amused us with his light hearted humour having recovered from alcohol and bipolar through which he had become isolated from the community. He has turned his life round completely running services in Birmingham and the West Midlands. A married man of 30 yrs with a family he guides people through their recoveries.

We then went to the first of our groups, 'movement and drama', in which we facilitated movement using blindfolds. Although a little daunting in the first instance this was a fun and enlightening experience. First we did warm up exercises in a group circle for which the venue supported a large studio area. We took time to work in pairs swapping the blindfolds. The tutors then displayed their experience in a dramatic exposé to music.

Lunch was served with quite imaginative and gourmet style sandwich combinations.

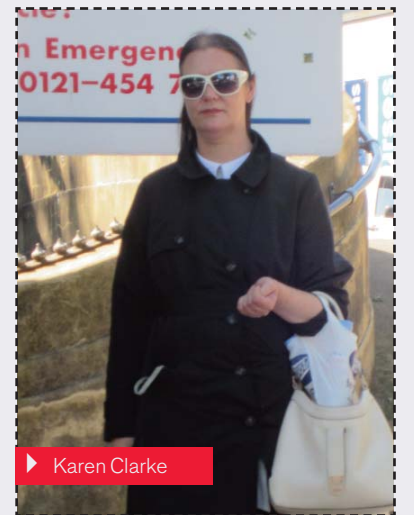
In the second half of the day we attended art therapy, all attempting to shade in a drawing of a cat using pastels. Some results were striking and expressive and many interpretations resulted. Alan, a service user who took the group, instructs four workshops a week. He put a lot of work in to provide everyone with an outline of the cat all the same. There were 12-15 people taking part. He held this workshop once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

The day ended with testimony from several people in recovery and certificates of achievement were given out to these people.

Cliff Hollingbury and Karen Clarke



▶ Cliff Hollingbury



▶ Karen Clarke



▶ Getting stuck in to one of the workshops





## Floatation visit

**A donation of £1000 was kindly given to Croft House from an insurance company LV because of the amazing support that was provided to an individual who has a family member working for LV.**

From this money some people went to the cinema, had a meal and others ventured into a completely new outing: a floatation tank experience. We all went to 'Floatworks' near London Bridge and had a great time there. We were welcomed really well and most of us enjoyed floating on water.

We had our own room with a shower and the floatation tank, which looks like a fancy spaceship or a giant whale.

Once you get in the water, you have the option to switch the light off and close the door of the tank to be completely disconnected from the outside world. Relaxing music is played, and one has the option to select which soundtrack to listen to at the reception.

Over time your body muscles naturally relax and the more one relaxes the more one can feel comfortable floating. The water contains a huge amount of salt, which allows one to float but can bring discomfort if the water has contact with their eyes or the mouth.

Most of us felt more relaxed and were able to switch off from our day to day busyness. One tenant mentioned "it is a good thing if you suffer from anxiety and have the opportunity for such experience." Some of us slept really well the next day and would love to go back again.

**Samy Ouzeau**

## Ceramic art work in the community

**Rushmoor and Hart Floating Support organised an art therapy session for service users.**

The aim of the session was for people to be able to express themselves through art and to relieve anxieties by going to new places.



After the event, some stated that they appreciated the opportunity to meet people in a similar situation to themselves.

One service user who attended wrote how he felt after the session: "The human mind is naturally creative; even preparing a meal is the mind expressing its innate creativity."

However if this creativity is not sufficiently expressed (bearing in mind everyone's mind is different), then anxiety can be the outcome. When the mind is full of the wrong stuff and needs an outlet (perhaps more than one), art is one such outlet.



Art allows the mind to open up and lesson the affects of anxiety, paranoia and worry.

Simply, the human brain is made to be used, not misused, and being outward-looking by creativity, allowing the mind expression, is certainly one way to live our natural state of joy which can be so hard to achieve."

## Chichester banner

**In January 2014 a service user described all the wonderful things she made and created by sewing, knitting, crocheting and embroidering.**



She said she would love to be able to share these skills and meet others so a group was put together of service users who were interested in getting creative. They designed and made a beautiful banner for Richmond

Fellowship so it could be used at lots of different events and demonstrate the skills and talents they had. The group said that spending time together to work on the piece helped them to reach out and make friendships and feel part of something. One service user has since gone on to run their own sewing group.

Richmond Fellowship Chichester Outreach would like to say a big 'thank you' to those involved as we have been able to use the banner for promotions and events and show everyone else how amazing and inspired our clients are.

## Garden project

**"The Learning Place garden was built as part of the new project to house community learning in Portsmouth. It's a small space with wooden decking and a decent sized lawn with a small shed. During the winter months one of the fence panels came down and flattened a patch of grass, killing the seed under it.**

Community learning wanted to start a project surrounding mental health for Mental Health Awareness Week so I thought why not try a garden project. I also noticed there wasn't a lot of land for people to do gardening in North End. Due to lack of funds the garden would have to be self-funded, so we raised money for some seeds and other garden accessories through baking cakes during MHAW and we also got a large donation of garden accessories and plants from Sainsbury's in Farlington.

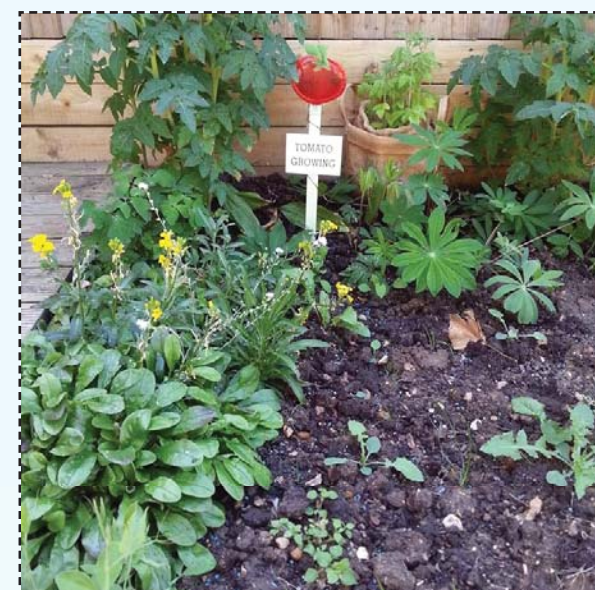
As we work closely with Richmond Fellowship we wanted them especially to take up the volunteering sessions to help promote positive wellbeing. The guys did a wonderful job and we had a regular slot on a Friday afternoon doing weeding, bulb planting and general garden maintenance. The Learning Place would especially like to thank Stuart, Marian and David for their hard work and we hope to keep the project going throughout the year."

Selina Nicholson – Engagement Officer

"It was a bonding atmosphere being able to work as a team, there was a feeling of togetherness and I've never worked in a group like that. It was a good experience and Selina made me feel very welcome.

It was hard work – the digging especially – and a lot of weeding but I did manage to plant some bluebells and I'd like to go back soon and do some tidying up and weeding. I also got to know Sandy who also works there and I know he will let me go on through the building to do some more work if I drop by".

**Stuart Morgan**









# GET TO GRIPS WITH THE EFFECTS?

## Coming Off Clozapine and other psychiatric drugs

I am currently a service user at Richmond Fellowship and a resident at Repton House.

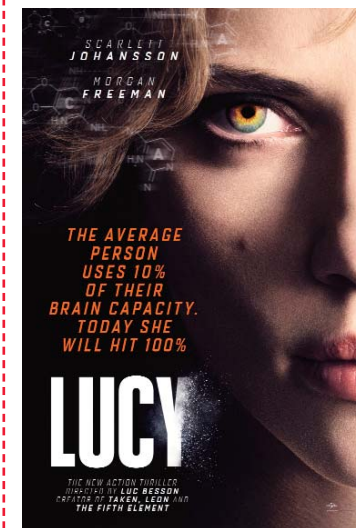
It was recently decided that I should remove clozarole tablets from my evening medications, this was a joint decision made by myself and my CPN after my two year course of the med was failing to produce a healthy outcome. The drug was getting increasingly stronger and it was time for me to quit.

Now I've read that around 50% of people who have also taken the antipsychotic drug for between 6 months and 5 years have been successful in quitting. Battling with drug withdrawals, controlling anxiety and coping with the fear of reduction, the mental health teams can only advise a person's drug dosage; it is down to the individual to get to grips with its effects.

If any of you other service users face coming off of medication or reduction and are curious, I know how it feels. Do you have any questions about living life with a change in anti-psychotic drugs? Have you had any problems reducing your medications and feel your voice has not been heard? Would you like to see anything done differently by the mental health teams that would benefit you on your road to recovery? Maybe you have an understanding of some of these matters and would like to tell me a bit about your experiences with drug reductions. Feel free to have your say, so please contact me "charper" on the RF Forum.

Ciaren Harper

# REVIEW, REVIEW, REVIEW...



## The Equalizer

Based on an 80s TV show of the same name, this film finds Denzel Washington in the title role of a mild mannered man who becomes to think he is obliged to right the wrongs he sees happening around him.

This path of retribution begins when he befriends a street walker. We follow him as he embarks on this path. However, questions remain unanswered. Such as, where does he get his ideas from? What is his past? Is he ex-military?

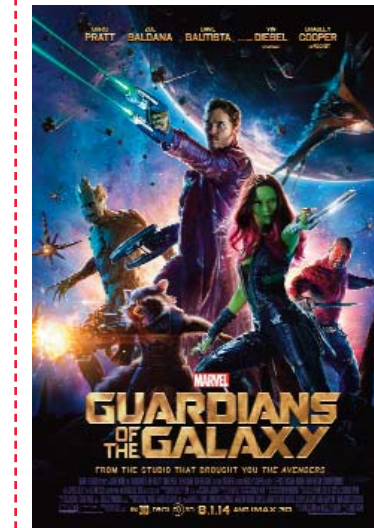
Although the beginning is a little slow, the film has the perfect blend of character building, story telling and actions which results in us being gripped to the end; although the ending could use a little work.

## Lucy

It has long been known that we only use a small fraction of our brain; and this is the premise of this latest offering from Luc Besson.

The title role features Scarlett Johansson who unwittingly ingests a drug designed to unlock the brain's full potential. Much like another movie called 'Limitless', the drug greatly boosts Lucy's ability to deal with problems as she is pursued by a narcotics gang. Her progress is monitored by Morgan Freeman, a professor in neurobiology as her abilities reach gargantuan proportions.

This is an entertaining, compelling and memorable action adventure that will keep the audience engrossed throughout; although the ending is a little far-fetched.



## Dracula Untold

As the title suggests, this film concerns the origin story of the progenitor of the vampire race known as Vlad the Impaler, including details that had previously been overlooked. We follow the character as he changes from a leader of men to the one who inspired the legend.

This is not, however, a vampire film in the usual sense. This is not 'horror' (blood, gore); instead concentrating on the mythology.

This is a well scripted and acted film, with the onus being on the supernatural elements of the story. The main theme is of a sane man who embraced darkness for personal reasons. All in all, an entertaining and edifying experience.

## Guardians of the Galaxy

This latest offering from Marvel studios is a thoroughly enjoyable romp set in the near future. It tells the tale of a motley bunch of misfits who are brought together by chance to thwart the plans of a dark overlord to destroy the galaxy. The characters and plot are extremely engaging and there are some laugh-out-loud moments.

The central character is a lovable rogue whom the audience cares about and wants to succeed in his quest to keep a weapon of mass destruction from falling into the wrong hands. It also features Karen Gillan of 'Doctor Who' fame as a convincing villainess.

Whether or not you have read the original comic, this is a highly entertaining experience for the whole family to enjoy.

**HAVE A REVIEW?**  
Why not visit the RF website forum and let us know!



# Get going with a poem

Knitting for charity is so much fun  
We so much like to help everyone  
Friends we are, in our very merry way  
It's so nice to be together on our special day!

Blankets for the homeless is our aim  
We feel for the needy, such a shame  
Our 'get going group' doing so well  
Bottle our enthusiasm, we could sell!

Many helpers, producing knitted squares  
All the help given, everyone cares  
Mum and neighbours, all doing their bit  
The needy ones, hope their world we have lit

Winter is over for another year  
Carry on through summer, prevent a tear  
'get going group', we never forget  
Through the cold, cold winter not a regret!

All in all, we are so pleased  
Trying to help, our moment we seized  
I'll close our poem, sleep well tonight  
Many in our world, another day, another fight

God bless the needy  
'Get going' group

*The 'Get Going' group, based in Suffolk, was established to provide social support to service users both past and present, enabling people to meet up with their friends and maintain a strong social support network.*

Get Going group  
Suffolk



## Vacant Lots

Standing on the mudflats listening  
Rivulets of water glistening  
Moanings of seagulls are heard  
Lugworms and crabs stirred  
Observing winged creatures in flight  
A very profound sight of overspill on the mudflats  
Take this mesmerising day  
As a thorough remedy to stay  
Arriving with a smart suitcase  
Unrelenting in this choice of base  
An outpost of cries  
Enveloped in a shroud of lies  
Before returning to the city  
Regarding me with a measure of pity  
I swear to reacquire my life  
And wriggle from struggle and strife

Kate Baron  
Southend Community Bridge Builders

## A Vision of the world

Someone who can inspire us all is Clive Morrison, poet and photographer. Born in London in 1966, he was diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis) in 1993 and immediately took life by the horns, travelled the world, and recorded his experiences in uplifting poems and photographs. These have now been collected into a book, 'Poetry in your pocket', raising funds for charity.

The photographs are quite stunning, with scenes from the Grand Canyon, Ayers Rock and the Great Wall of China. His book has a spiritual quality. The wonders of the natural world have inspired him and he gives it all back to us as rays of light in difficult, darkening times.

Silent river flows  
Coloured rocks in time  
exposed  
Eternal moments  
This book is full of 'eternal moments'.  
Tony Marcoff

Although now paralysed from the shoulders down, his light has continued to shine throughout his troubles, and his courage may bring us hope in an uncertain future. There are some translucent short poems, and some verses of life-wisdom, often poignant. Above is one of his haiku-like poems:

*I've had a lot of ECT and am on copious amounts of medication. I know my memory is fading and I hope it is just the ECT or the medication and not anything else.*

## Fading Memory

Why  
Do I cry  
With frustration  
When I  
Can't remember  
My name

Or asked  
For the date  
I think and sweat  
Until, at length,  
It's too late.

Will I  
Still cry  
When the daughter  
I adore  
Is a stranger  
To me  
Evermore?

Rod O'Donoghue  
Sudbury, Suffolk

## Oh great and noble

Oh great and noble  
Love is your name  
You save my soul  
And never said goodbye  
Oh great lord never  
Set me free until  
We meet in heaven

Oh noble god  
Justice is your name  
My love for you  
Will never change  
You give me hope  
Through the darkness night  
And take my hand in flight

Oh loving god  
Take my hand  
Show me the way to the promised land  
Where we will meet you  
One day soon I hope  
Until that day comes  
You'll be the one I call

Robert Woodcroft  
Bletchley Employment Service



# We make a splash for World Mental Health Day

It was World Mental Health Day in October and our services up and down the country did their bit to highlight the importance of good mental health.



1. Blackpool Employment Service celebrated with an evening at Sandcastle Waterpark which raised awareness of mental health issues and the stigma around them, supported employers in understanding mental health within the workplace, and offered anyone with any questions about their own mental health to come and meet support groups - all while having lots of fun
2. Tiger Court staff came to work in fancy dress
3. Our teams in Liverpool ran an information stand and showcased our time bank and some of its activities, all as part of the city's World Mental Health Day festival
4. For Take Notice Day, Stockport Home Support held an information stall
5. Our Surrey hubs held tea and cakes to mark the day
6. Employment Services and Wellbeing staff in Cambridgeshire took part in events including running information stands at an Employment Fair in Wisbech and at a market place event in Cambridge
7. Our teams from East Surrey staged a Feeling Good Day in a local shopping centre – they gave information and advice about employment, wellbeing and activities in the community, handed out free mint tea and cake and held a memento-making workshop
8. A Take Time to Talk art workshop was run by Face2Face Dorset at Bournemouth University with etching and badge-making, as well as information about mental health problems and support
9. The mayor of Sudbury signed our mental health pledge board as part of activities run by Suffolk Recovery
10. Head office staff took part in a bake-off and meditation session





# In my humble opinion



**In my humble opinion, I was a bit disappointed by the results of The Scottish Referendum. Whilst I admit it's discouraging that Scotland might not want to be 'part of the team', a visit to Glasgow in the build up to the referendum changed my mind.**

I was impressed with the energy of the people. The vitality to me was little to do with independence, in the bind of our modern corporate world, but instead a matter of organisation, the 'mess stuff up' vote. If Scotland did gain independence it was not about emotive cliques of nuclear weapons, war in Afghanistan and Iraq (the focus of many banners), or the chains of enslavement by Westminster. The chains today are the businesses, the economy: Greggs on the high street, Pizza Express, Costa. The positivity of the referendum was in the opportunity to scrutinise the whole administrative structure of the UK. To re-examine closeness with Manchester or Liverpool as one

Glaswegian reflects. To look again at the micro-climates: cities, regions, countrysides so different from cosmopolitan London.

The passion of the young population would have been channelled into a re-examination, a fresh energy, new employment prospects and a ripple through the whole economy. The 'how to make Scotland great again' is almost superficial. The knock on effect is surely instead a surge in business across the corporate world, having to employ people to rework their spreadsheets, re-check their project plans, re-engage what people really want. How it all works. I'm ignorant of the real risks, pensions, economic stability, etc. but I for one was prepared to support the Scots as part of a proud nation that could itself re-assert its British-ness. As Ibn Khaldun remarks, "springs flow only if they are dug out and the water drawn..."

**Charles Coke-Smyth**

## HAVE AN OPINION?

Why not visit the RF website forum and let us know!

## CALLING ALL RF SERVICE USERS

Do you have any news or views about RF events you have been involved in? Do you have any stories or ideas you would like to share?

Why not send us your artwork, or anything else you think may be of interest or help to our readers.

Visit the service user online forum at: [www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/forum](http://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/forum)  
Alternatively please send them by post to:

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or email the No Label  
Required team at:  
**NoLabelRequired@**

**RichmondFellowship.org.uk**

Don't forget to include your  
name and service name!

**Thanks and we look forward  
to hearing from you!**

**The Editorial Board**