

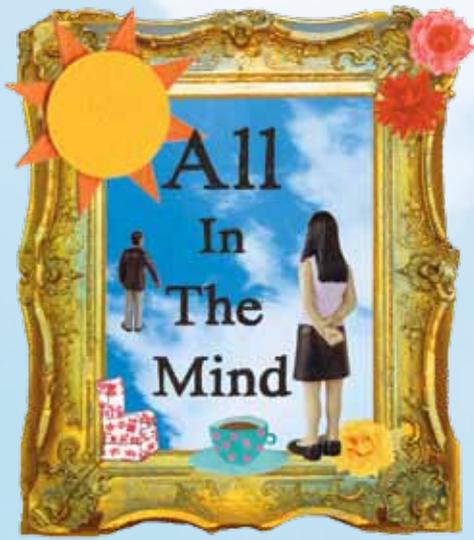
Newsletter: Winter 2010/11

The *All in the Mind* project aims to find ways to improve communication about mental health issues; particularly at the point of crisis.

How can we better structure the information given to people in distress, their families and friends, particularly those experiencing serious mental health issues for the first time?

This newsletter marks the end of our first couple of months at Lynfield Mount Hospital; a time to listen to as many people as possible; to strive to understand how it all works and how to make sense of the place – to ourselves and then to others.

You'll see plenty more of us in the coming months; but it's our turn to say something about what we've been doing and why...



What's it for...

The *All in the Mind* project runs during 2010/2011 and consists of periods of investigation, action and reflection. Our initial focus has been to work at Lynfield Mount Hospital; finding out from staff, patients, their families and friends what forms of communication work most effectively and what would help to provide more effective information.

As we move into 2011, we plan to start working around particular project ideas to create and trial resources and methods.

Declaration

The *All in the Mind* project is anchored in the idea of hope: that mental health crisis is not so much the breakdown of a personal narrative, but part of an ongoing narrative that, if treated early and with sensitivity, will give the best chance of recovery.

Indeed we believe that to focus on personal narrative as a means of communication is a great help to people's understanding of a complex issue. We all like stories!



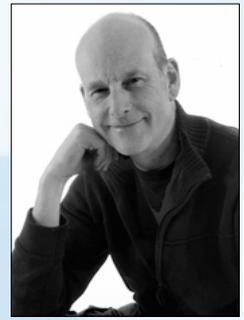
What's been happening so far...

All in the Mind is a partnership project between an established community arts organisation, **Heads Together Productions** and **Bradford District Care Trust** (BDCT). The two-year project has been awarded funding from the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation** and will inform discussions and practice at a regional and national level.

Heads Together has brought together a team of artists, skilled in a range of art-forms (writing, visual art, photography, sound recording...) and experienced in working in a range of community and education settings. Their job is to learn about the issues and to use their creative skills and ideas to work collaboratively in order to achieve positive change, not in the sense of treating individual patients, but in terms of structures, systems and perception.



Peter Spafford



I'm the writer with the All in the Mind project. It was decided early on that I would be the first of the artists to work with service users. Perhaps a pen and paper looks less of a threat than a camera or someone in a leotard!

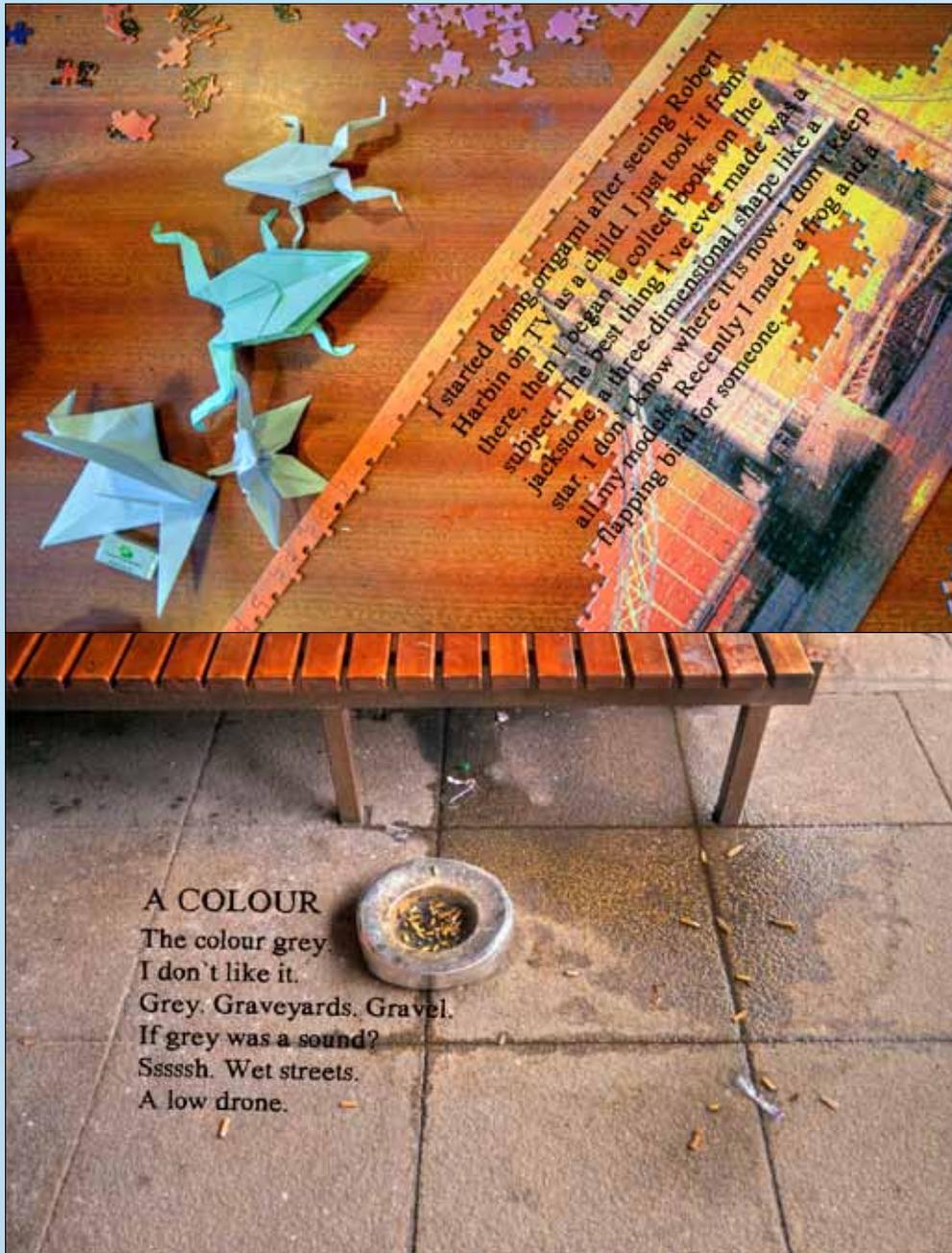
Since October, I have been visiting all three wards – Oakburn, Ashbrook and Maplebeck – on Thursday mornings. I have based myself in the Art Room and either worked one-to-one or in small groups with service users. Sometimes I have gone walkabout to meet people and talk to them about writing or life in general.

When I work in other settings, for instance a school, I prepare quite carefully for a given writing session. Here it's different. As you know, attention-spans are quite short, moods can vary from one moment to the next. So I tend to work very much in the moment, trying to respond to what is on people's minds. On the other hand, some people have wanted very direct and concrete starting-points, which I have provided. For example, 'write about a place/animal/person you know'. I have tended to scribe for people, take away the writing, type it up at home, then bring it back the next week to show, amend, and discuss with the writer.

One question I have been asking is: **what is the hospital for?** This might sound a stupid question, but there have been some interesting responses. It formed the springboard for one of the several Link group discussions I have attended on Thursday afternoons. I have enjoyed the mixture of people who come to these groups; patients, representatives of outside agencies, and staff.

I've taken every opportunity to introduce myself, and the project, to staff whilst on my travels around the wards. From my experience of working as an artist in other contexts, I know it takes time for a project and its workers to become part of the scenery. We prove how much we're worth by being here and 'doing stuff'.

I'm excited about the coming year and looking forward to achieving a great deal at Lynfield Mount.



A COLOUR

The colour grey.
I don't like it.
Grey. Graveyards. Gravel.
If grey was a sound?
Sssssh. Wet streets.
A low drone.



cups & chairs



Adrian Sinclair



It's interesting for me to be back in a psychiatric hospital; but this time with a fob to get in and out!

I have been a patient at St Luke's in Huddersfield – (I know but I can't use that term 'service-user', makes me think of plumbing!)

I still remember trying to make sense of a hospital where you definitely weren't encouraged to sit around in your dressing gown and where people spoke a strange language: a 'ward-round' wasn't really when the doctor came round to your bed to check on how you were. I remember how my wife struggled to know what to do and my young children had no idea...

I also happen to be Creative Director of Heads Together Productions; for the last 25 years we have been trying to help organisations communicate better; to use creative means, to layer information rather than just trying to use more and more words, to use authored narrative (the words of people who are part of the story themselves). So it seemed a natural progression to work with mental health services; particularly when I realised that it wasn't just me – that it was difficult for many people to make sense of mental illness or distress or whatever the hell you might try and call it.

I'm managing the *All in the Mind* project. I've been really impressed with people's open-ness and desire to improve things, I've recorded a series of interviews and stories that I think will be very useful for the next part of the project: starting to create materials to help communication.

Leaflets, booklets, storyboards, images, dvds... anything is possible. But for me, it is a simple starting point. What would have helped make sense of things when I was un-well... and what would have helped to make sense to my children.



Lizzie Coombes



I've been working as a photographer since 1989. The two key strands of my work are photographing people and spaces.

For the 'All in the Mind' project I have taken my camera onto the wards twice. I was very clear that I wasn't photographing people (although at some stage that would be really interesting if the right thing to do), but the space. Walking around the wards I was looking for the ephemeral moments of 'being human' revealing themselves. The momentary appropriations of an otherwise neutral and often blank space, the sense that people had just left the photograph. My eye has been drawn to the cups on the radiator, the chair waiting

in the corridor, the half-finished jigsaw, and the cigarette butts outside.

I have been looking at conveying the wards and all those within it with a degree of sensitivity and poignancy. I also want the work to have an element of ordinariness about it, not scary and something other that should be hidden away, as mental health tends to be. It needs to have beauty in that ordinariness and hope. I have begun to combine the pictures with the writing that Peter has been working on. All these are ideas and thoughts rather than finished pieces.

I am working on creating a notice board in the Visitors Centre that can contain the work made so far, like a large sketchbook on the wall. This will be interactive, with space for people to put up their thoughts and ideas. Please take time if you can to have a look at this and add your voice.

What's next...

As 2011 progresses... the work continues.

Peter, Lizzie and Adrian will carry on popping up on the wards; working with the Link group on Thursdays; attending meetings etc

We are also hoping to create an *All in the Mind* Project Notice Board in the Visitors' Centre – kind of like an interactive, continually-changing newsletter of what we are doing.

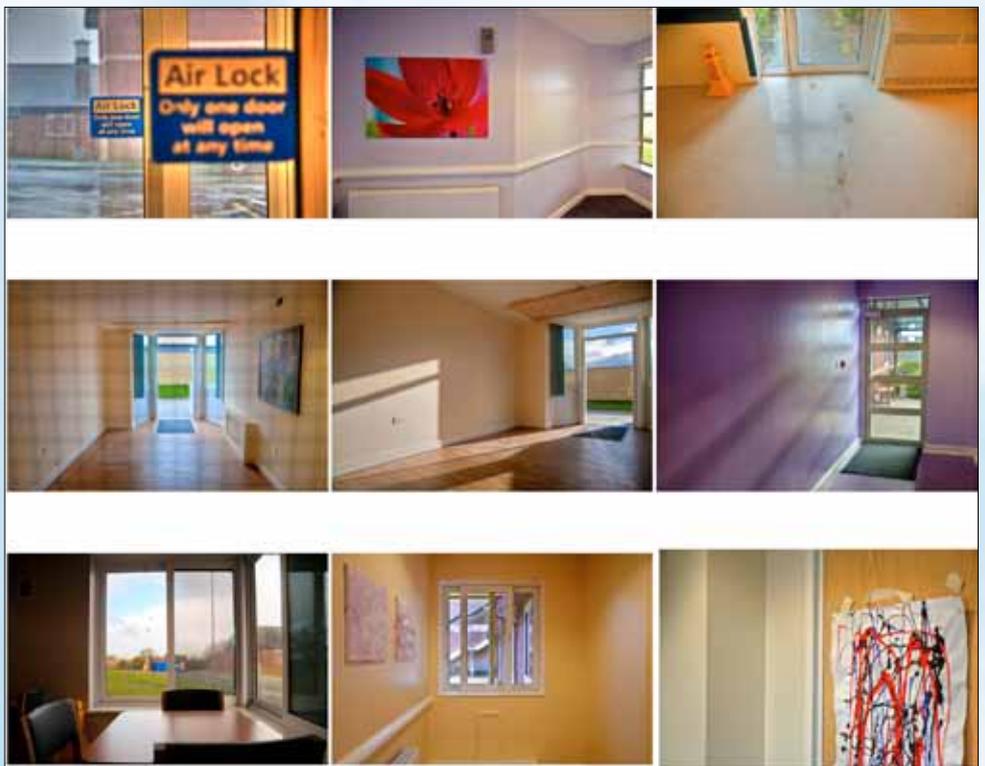
We're planning to bring other artists into the project: a visual artist; a dancer; an architect... to give their insight into the way the work might progress.

And we'll start doing more focussed work – trialling different areas of work that have developed from our initial work – all with the over-arching theme of improving communication:

- **Changing the physical environment**
- **Using narrative (personal stories) to aid communication**
- **Developing a range of activities in the hospital**

At all points our aim is to work with and support the range of fantastic work going on at Lynfield Mount and see if there are ways we can help enhance it.

The direction of the project, its working practices and ethics, is being overseen by a steering group made up of staff from Bradford District Care Trust and Heads Together, including people who themselves have been service-users and carers.



MY ART

I live to paint and draw. It's my, what do you call it, vocation. If they took away my art materials I'd kill myself. If they shut me in a room with nothing.... I started when I was a baby. My mum died. At school they called me an orphan, among other nicknames, so I used to go to the library to draw. My dad's an artist. They should keep the Art Room unlocked at all times.

We are relying on people volunteering to be involved with the All in the Mind project...

If you are interested then please contact:

Adrian Sinclair Heads Together
Tel: 07973 172 433
Email: adrian@headstogether.org
www.headstogether.org

Allison Harrison BDCT
Tel: 01274 322 961
Email: alison.harrison@bdct.nhs.uk

creativity with purpose

heads together

