



Hello ...

it would be lovely to think that we could rely on a good old English summer to give us blue skies, the sound of birdsong and the opportunity to spend lazy days bathed in sunshine. Chances are we'll get rain, hayfever, a wasp in our soft drink and a phone call about something urgent. If we pin all of our hopes on the sun arriving, we're probably going to finish up a bit frustrated and fed up. This issue of *More Hackney* covers some things that you can do to help your health and wellbeing without having to hope for sun. We've got a low cost spa (did you know Hackney had one?) and stuff you can do at your library that doesn't cost a thing. We've also got another instalment of Hackney resident Nikki Llewellyn's journey with a mental health anti-stigma campaign and an opportunity for you to join us for some training. Who needs sunshine?

Mark Brown, editor

Hackney's holistic spa

Did you know that Hackney has a dedicated healthy living centre, Shoreditch Spa? Kerry Hudson explains more



Opened in 2009, The Shoreditch Spa offers a range of affordable services to help with your health and wellbeing from their base in Pitfield Street.

The Shoreditch Spa is part of the Shoreditch Trust, and offers free and low cost services for people with mental health problems. The Spa can offer a free twelve week programme. This can include complimentary therapies such as hypnotherapy, aromatherapy and holistic massage, counselling, group therapies like stress management, group CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy), textiles and cooking workshops. There is also an offsite activity-based group called the friendship group where previous trips have included canal boat rides, Kew gardens, various exhibitions, the London Aquarium, German Markets at the South Bank, picnics and swimming.

The Spa has food and

nutrition experts who offer individual and group nutrition and cooking sessions. There are also exercise opportunities like yoga, pilates, an offsite gym and a walking group that prides itself on friendliness and relaxation as well as a good workout. Timetables are based on the individual. A member may start with two sessions per week, and build up to as many as feels comfortable. Sessions can change to allow variety and get the most out of the Spa. There is an assessment at the beginning and the end of the program so members can track their selfdevelopment.

One of the Spa's highly skilled therapists kindly helped me research complimentary medicines for mental health problems for an article that can be found here: huffingtonpost.co.uk/kerryhudson/alternativemedicinesfor_1_b_2286048.html

More information about the Shoreditch Spa can be found at shoreditchtrust.org.uk/HealthandWellbeing

Shoreditch Spa is based at Healthy Living Centre, 170 Pitfield Street, N1 6JP / 0844 225 2054

Love your local library

Jo Martin discovers unexpected treasures in Hackney's public libraries

If you haven't been inside a library since school days, you may be surprised at how much they've changed. Yes, there is still a wide range of quality books, including new releases, to borrow free of charge. But you'll also find a wealth of resources, events and activities, including some especially for people with mental health problems. There's everything from free one-to-one computing lessons, pop up legal advice surgeries, film clubs, and creative writing to folk dancing with the University of the 3rd Age and an extensive collection of ebooks to borrow online.

Legend has it that, in history's most famous library at Alexandria, there was an inscription above the shelves that read, "The place of the cure of the soul." When I asked Hackney Central Library assistant Abdul-Hakeem Badmos what there was in Hackney's libraries to help with wellbeing and mental health, the first thing he said was, "You will find silence, a place where you can sit down and relax." He then went on to explain what else was on offer in the borough's libraries, which inspired me to take a closer look.

As well as reading for pleasure, there are books on wellbeing topics including self-help, stopping smoking and healthy eating. There are DVDs and CDs. There is information on and sign-posting to resources on welfare benefit entitlements, legal advice,

drug and alcohol services and educational grants for individuals in need, to help people move on with their lives. Hackney Community Law Centre holds a drop-in legal clinic to advise on various areas such as welfare benefits and debt.

There are numerous opportunities to improve basic skills such as English language, numeracy, money management and computing. There is internet access, drop-in computer sessions for beginners and bookable one-to-one lessons, all free of charge. There is careers advice, CV development, job search, job application and employability skills training.

A dozen adult reading groups mean you can socialise as you learn. There's even a weekly therapeutic reading group which especially

welcomes people with experience of mental illness.

Hackney's libraries host groups on creative writing, poetry appreciation, classical music appreciation and film, to name a few. There are activities for groups such as African and Caribbean men, deaf people, those with learning disabilities and the over 55s.

On top of regular events, the libraries host special events. Throughout June the history, culture and languages of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities will be celebrated with a series of great free events.

Hackney's eight public libraries are packed with resources for lifelong learning. Why not visit one today?

For more information on Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month: hackney.gov.uk/Assets/Documents/Gypsy_Roma_Traveller_History_Month_leaflet.pdf. For full details of groups and events in Hackney libraries, see hackney.gov.uk/libraries-whats-on.htm.

Want to learn how to edit?

Are you someone with experience of mental health difficulties? Are you interested in writing articles? Have you ever wondered how you edit articles for publication? Would you like some practice and some tips?

Come and join us for a class on how to edit for magazines, newspapers and websites. It'll take place on **Wednesday 12th June at 2pm - 3pm at The Centre for Better Health, 1a Darnley Road, London E9 6QH**

The session will be led by Mark Brown, editor of this newsletter and *One in Four* magazine, the national lifestyle magazine for people with mental health difficulties. It'll also give you a chance to meet the rest of the More Hackney team too!

To sign up to attend the session, call 020 8521 7956 and speak to David or Mark, or email us at hello@socialspider.com

My continuing journey with Time to Change

Hackney resident Nikki Llewellyn shares more of her experiences working with the national mental health anti-stigma campaign

Channel 4 is the first broadcaster in England to sign up to the Time to Change campaign (TTC), a national programme trying to change the negative ways that people think about those of us with mental health difficulties. In the month leading up to this historic event, the channel publicised the launch of a brand new season called 4GoesMad. This was a series of programmes not only focusing on mental health, but featuring people with lived experience of mental illness.

I was asked to be a part of the first programme in the series, called Ruby Wax's Mad Confessions. Ruby had recently become the 'poster girl for mental health' as she put it. She kindly invited me to the private screening at the director's house with all the other participants in the season, as well as the producers and director. From the minute the documentary started, the response on Twitter was enormous, and we knew that something big had happened, something that would hopefully put a huge dent in the stigma and discrimination many of us have felt for so long.

Following the glitz and glamour of the Channel 4 studios, the next chapter in my journey took me back to what we do best: having conversations. The Time to Change Village travelled to



Nikki with Time To Change supporter, Ruby Wax

Leicester and Totnes (Devon), to engage with people from all walks of life and encourage them to talk about how they're feeling. Regardless of how many roadshows or Villages I do, it just doesn't get old!

In September, the Department of Health (which, along with Comic Relief funds Time to Change) held a Health and Wellbeing Fair for their staff at each of their offices, and myself and two others were asked to run a TTC stall

at these events. In a very similar fashion to the Villages, we talked with staff about mental health, shared our experiences and encouraged them to be open-minded about mental health.

Here's a question for you: what comes after speaking with the Deputy Prime Minister (see previous issues of More Hackney), travelling up and down the country, launch events at Channel 4 studios and taking part in a documentary with Ruby Wax? Well, the answer to that would be a guest spot on BBC Radio 5 Live! Part of the filming of the documentary took place at the Maudsley Hospital, and someone there said she was so inspired by my story she wanted me on the Shelagh Fogarty show! It was a humbling experience, however surreal. I couldn't believe there were people out there who could hear me talking on the radio! I'll never forget the text I received on the bus journey home from a TTC staff member: "There I am, tucking into my breakfast and listening to the radio, when a familiar voice comes on and I dropped my toast!"

See you in the next issue when I describe how I spent World Mental Health Day!

For more about Time to Change, including ways that you can get involved see time-to-change.org.uk/

Listings - June 2013

Throughout June - *Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month* - The history, culture and languages of Gypsy Roma Traveller communities will be celebrated throughout June with a series of great free events at Hackney's libraries - see hackney.gov.uk/libraries-whats-on.htm

Thursday 6th - *Hackney Volunteer Centre Open House* - June 1st to 7th is Volunteer Week. Hackney Volunteer Centre is holding an Open House for local residents to find out more about volunteering and meet organisations offering volunteering opportunities between 3 - 8pm with refreshments provided. Hackney Volunteer Centre Unit 13, Springfield House, 5 Tyssen Street, London, E8 2LY. / 020 7241 4443 / vchackney.org

Friday 14th - *Closing date entries to the final Hackney in Bloom competition*, so get your entries in. See hackney.gov.uk/hackney-in-bloom.htm

Thursday 18th - *7.30pm - Not Your Average Type radio* - all the underground sounds of Hackney and beyond on reelrebelradio.com

Thursday 27th - *Klub Katz n Dogs open mic* & special guest headline band at The Royal Sovereign 64 Northwold Road E5. A chance to see Core Arts

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regulars, many who have experienced mental health difficulties, in performance. This month with 'Georges Kaplan Presents' film noir and big band sounds from a live saxophone and piano duo. Free entry.

Community law shops service - Free legal advice sessions on a first-come, first-served basis. See a qualified legal advisor about housing, benefits, debt, employment, immigration, etc. Central Library, Reading Lane, Hackney E8 1GQ. Mondays, 2pm to 5pm. Contact: Miranda Grell - miranda@hclc.org.uk - 020 8985 5236 - www.hclc.org.uk

Open Now - *Centre for Better Health Artisan Bakery* - 13 Stean Street, Haggerston, E8 4ED - open to the public with a great choice of breads and pastries, all prepared by people who have experience of mental health difficulty: betterhealthbakery.wordpress.com

Send us your listings - If you have ideas for mental health and wellbeing events, activities or opportunities in Hackney that could be included in More Hackney, email them to hello@socialspider.com

Deadline for July 2013 issue: June 19th 2013.

Would you like to help make this newsletter happen? More Hackney is produced by a small team of people and we'd like to have more! We need people to write articles, help work out how we're going to get the newsletter to people who want it, to research what Hackney has to offer and even people who'll be able to lay it out (fit all of the words on the printed page). We meet every Wednesday at 2pm-4pm at The Centre for Better Health, 1A Darnley Road, Hackney, E9 6QH. If you have or do experience mental health difficulties and fancy being involved in something to help people who've been - or are going through - similar, we'd love to meet you. Email us at hello@socialspider.com or call 020 8521 7956 for more information.



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