If you can’t sleep, then get up and do something instead of lying there worrying. It’s the worry that gets you, not the lack of sleep.

Dale Carnegie
Editors Letter

Welcome to the Spring Edition of "One in Four". Members continue to excel in giving their accounts of mental health issues. In this booklet we have focused on sleep deprivation - I have been overwhelmed with the number of members who have wished to talk about problems with sleep and how they have overcome it-please enjoy the articles.

AvrilM went to a conference on “Making Sense of Mad Studies” at Durham University last autumn and I have done a question and answer section with her (see pages 12 and 13).

AlanS has once again done sterling work with the Brecon Outdoor Group (BOG). Unfortunately winter has been very wet and a number of the walks had to be cancelled. We have included the Spring programme in this issue (see pages 15 and 16).

We have excellent news in that the “One in Four” and BOG now have a “website” as well as “facebook”. This means that members’ wonderful articles can progress to a much bigger audience and show everyone how much good work is being done by them here in Brecon and District Mind. You can find us on our web site: www.breconmind.org.uk

A special mention to Matthew Sowerby – the volunteer coordinator who has organised an Eco Volunteering Project together with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority – this is highlighted on page 20.

Once again many thanks to Sarah for the puzzles page on 21.

DISCLAIMER: Please note that the views and opinions expressed in this booklet do not necessarily reflect the opinion of every member of Mind and whilst freedom of expression is encouraged it is suggested that each person takes responsibility for their own research and information gathering.

Andy H. – Editor

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Sleep deprivation

At my worst, I would only be able to sleep for 3 hours at a time, if that. This would be after hours of tossing and turning, thinking and re-thinking before actually falling asleep. After a while, this takes hold of your life, it creates new demons. The general tiredness makes you physically weak, the lack of REM sleep turns your brain to mush and your body begins to slowly break down.

The physical weakness presents itself as muscle aches, headaches and a debilitating loss of energy. Some people can cope with this, but as a builder’s labourer, I severely struggled. I would need coffee or energy drinks to push me through the morning, coupled with painkillers for the discomfort. I craved sugar and junk food, anything to give me a boost because I could have simply fallen asleep given the chance but this diet I spiralled into only made things worse.

Now, onto the mushing of the brain. I am sure there is a more technical term to describe this ailment due to lack of sleep but mushing just seems to sum it up to be perfectly honest. Your once organised mind is now infiltrated by an army of ghosts appearing at will, re-laid with a range of unbeatable mazes and is seemingly run by anyone but you. I have had experiences where I have seen things that are not there and heard things that have never been said. Each of these episodes have at times deeply scared me, sometimes making me question my own sanity and making it hard to be alone with my mind.

One of the worst things about sleep deprivation, unlike depression, is that it is extremely hard to hide from others. People often say that a person’s eyes show you much about them, well try having bloodshot ones with dark bags below them. My body did begin to break down, any bump or bruise would take longer than normal to heal and coughs and colds became more common whilst taking hold with more conviction.

All in all, it was a horrible and demoralising period for me. I still suffer from depression, but I no longer have the sleep deprivation. Through a mixture of medication in the short term, followed by Cognitive Brain Therapy to retrain my thought processes and support from family and professionals, I managed to gradually increase the amount of sleep I was getting. I still have a huge sleep debt, and as a consequence the bags under my eyes remain but I wear these with pride knowing that I got through those years of sleeplessness and now have the ability to have the odd night of no sleep and still find a way of functioning that following day.

So, if you find yourself in this spiral, know that there is a way out and the experiences and little techniques you gain will actually stand you in good stead once you find yourself on the other side of this exhausting problem.

SamP
Lack of Sleep

I have suffered from manic episodes. Sleep, or lack of it is an important part of the illness and I thought that I would share my experiences with you. I always take my medication which includes “Clozapine” and “Amisulpride” for schizophrenia; I then feel drowsy after about one and a half to two hours after taking the tablets. I usually wake up in the middle of the night with a wet pillow (excess salivation) and I take amitriptyline to help but it is not very effective; then I usually go back to sleep. As explained shortly I am not concerned about waking up it’s whether I go back to sleep that’s the problem and whether I feel tired in the morning. If I do not sleep during the night and churn things around in my mind like a washing machine or racing thoughts then I see how I feel the next day. If I am tired then I have just had a poor night’s sleep and this is not a feature of the illness. If I still feel wide awake and keep churning things over in my mind and cannot sleep then I need to be aware that it could be the illness and I need to contact my doctor. I usually jot down notes that I am thinking about so I don’t have to dwell on them – I usually do this in an evening to reduce my racing thoughts so that I can go to sleep better. Obviously, if I have had a poor night’s sleep then this will affect my sleep pattern and I try to stay awake during the day so that I can sleep the following night. I hope that my experience helps others understand more about sleep and the illness and how they have affected me.

AndyH

Coping with Sleep

I always try to take my medication regularly at night. I suffer from Schizophrenia and hear voices and so I usually take a drug called “Clozapine”. This is very affective and is the last drug prescribed after trying others because it has a downside and that is it can reduce the white blood cell count and therefore affects the immune system. This drug not only helps reduce voices but also helps me sleep however it does not stop them entirely. I have noticed that I go into a shallow sleep rather than a deep sleep. As an aside I suffer from heart burn which is terrible but I take “Gaviscon” which is excellent at reducing it.

AndyJ
Sleep tight. Don’t let the bed bugs Bite!

Manic Depression, Sleep and Me

During the last 17 years I would say sleep has had an incalculable effect on my illness. It is as related as “fish and chips”, “bacon and egg” and “coffee and cake”!

My first manic episode gave me the fantastic belief that I was destined to live two lives as I simply didn’t need to sleep – who wouldn’t want that? I soon realised that maybe no sleep was not plausible but an average of 2 hours in 24 was sufficient to keep the motor running, and boy was it running!

As sure as Spring follows Winter, exhaustion followed unsustainable energy. The pendulum swung and a deep depression enveloped me. Sleeping for up to 20 hours a day was not uncommon nor was being nocturnal, but did nothing for my depleted energy levels, only seemed to add to the feelings of uselessness that is so common to depression.

Eventually things levelled out and I was lucky enough to go and stay in Bali in a beach shack. Exhausted by the days surfing and soothed by the lapping waves - at night I slept like a baby.

Later episodes of illness whilst on meds were just as bad. You sleep but wake up feeling like you have a huge hangover. I once took an overdose of “Olanzapine” (an anti-psychotic) and was admitted to “A and E”. To this day I don’t know if it was a suicide attempt or just a desperate attempt to have some respite in the form of unconsciousness.

As I’ve often been told I must have 9 lives as some of the incidents that have occurred whilst manic and completely exhausted resulted in potentially life threatening incidents. I have fallen asleep riding a motor bike with shorts, T-Shirt and no helmet . . . . twice – limping away both times; I drove into the back of a bus in a 4x4 luckily avoiding all of the scooters that dominate roads in Bali.

I fell asleep on a date, fell asleep in a tree, fell asleep having sex to the most beautiful woman I’ve met!).

Sleep is a cause, it’s a symptom, it’s a good yardstick to monitor manic depression; so pay attention to it!

P.S. The more “Valium” you ingest does not necessarily result in the more tired you feel (despite what the books say). I once took a handful, way over my prescription, and ended up dancing all night on a mountain then buying a flight the next day. “Nos Da”

Anon
Sleep Deprivation

My personal experience of sleep deprivation I can only describe as debilitating, consuming, and anxiety provoking. It’s a vicious cycle that continues around and around like a typhoon. The metaphor I’m using I believe is appropriate as it truly feels you are trapped in a cycle that you can’t get out of. I’m still in it despite attempting to use tools to improve it. I’ve been told relaxation techniques help such as, meditation, yoga, writing down thoughts and feelings, and of course exercise. I’m inclined to agree with the science behind these methods but practicing these as someone suffering with severe anxiety and history of bi-polar and depression is a different story.

Being consumed by your mental health and not having a strong support network is tremendously difficult. I’m fully aware of the old adage “you can take a horse to water but you can’t make it drink.” Speaking (or writing) as an individual I’m telling you conclusively that I try every day and night to improve my wellbeing by using the methods as I’ve mentioned above. Having to rely on ourselves can make us stronger in the long run but leaves us feeling very alone at the same time. There is a similar feeling I have when attempting to sleep: thoughts that go around and around my head, feeling alone, disabled, trapped in my mind, unable to just feel free and drift into a peaceful sleep and often only managing a maximum of 4 disturbed hours a night. I’m aware the main reason for this is my thoughts which leads to worry or anxiety. Nevertheless it isn’t easy to deal with.

JackH
Sleep Patterns

Most people who suffer from mental health problems will unfortunately also experience sleep problems or sleep deprivation.

As a lot of people who experience mental health problems turn to smoking to help themselves and relieve their stress, this can actually make their sleep pattern worse, causing them to feel more stressed, and consequently smoking more which makes them more tired and more mentally ill. In other words, smoking and drinking coffee can lead to a vicious cycle. The more tired they get the more coffee they drink and the more cigarettes they have to overcome, it stops them sleeping so well.

Also what can happen is that people who sleep badly wake up in the middle of the night, and worry about the fact they are awake, or maybe some sort of anxiety gets worse and worse, as the person sleeps less and less. Usually problems can seem 10 times worse in the middle of the night. Lack of sleep or sleep deprivation can also make people depressed and stressed.

In my personal case, when I began to suffer from schizophrenia like psychosis of epilepsy, one of the key triggers was sleep deprivation. As above, the sleep deprivation would cause me to feel exhausted early on in the evening because I would wake up early. For example, I would go to bed early, feeling shattered but then I would wake up in the middle of the night and sit in the kitchen, downing cups of coffee and smoking, thinking at the time that it would make me feel better, but in the long run, it made me feel worse, not realising at the time that I was exhausting myself.

It is only now, that I have packed in drinking coffee and smoking that I can see what it did to me.

Basically, in a short summary, sleep deprivation can seriously worsen mental health problems.

In comparison to how I was before I packed in coffee and smoking, I can now sleep much better and consequently feel much better. And just like in the way that vicious circles occur – the better I sleep the better I achieve, and consequently, the better I feel.

Anon
Managing my sleep at night

Although I don’t suffer from mania I can have problems sleeping and I would like to share with you how I manage my sleep. For me I generally go to bed around 11pm and almost always go to sleep very quickly. It’s only if I have issues such as financial or relationship problems or perhaps the bed is cold that I struggle to get to sleep. The problem I find in these circumstances is that I lie there hoping that tiredness will overcome me when in fact through thinking about the issues, or feeling cold I become more and more restless. A similar thing happens when I need the loo in the night whereby when going back to bed, I am so awake that I find it difficult to drop off again.

Meditation in bed is not easy for me but a good method is to relax with deep breathing, repeated continuously until “Hey Presto!” I have gone! However, it is so easy to slip out of this practice and start thinking again, so concentration must be applied. I also carry out this method lying on my back and must turn onto my side before dropping off as I have woken up choking when sleeping on my back, very frightening!

If all else fails and as a last resort, I force myself to get up, maybe re-make the bed and add more blankets if I’m cold. Also I might have a cup of tea and then sit cross-legged in my armchair, wrapped in blankets, and then meditate for 20 minutes. Usually this relaxes me so much that when I get back to bed I’m asleep in no time at all. This method has proved to be almost 100% successful.

If for some reason I am unable to sleep whatever method I try the most important thing I think is to stay relaxed as this is almost as good as sleeping anyway.

AlanS
In the Company of Hunters

After endless, restless night, April, 
that fertility of sunshine, haze and rain, 
brought a morning to me calling for rebellion. 
Now when life becomes intolerable I travel without maps, 
leave my compass keeping company with teacups.

I would walk the hills of Glascwm#
that lie as languid limbs bathed
this morning in the purity of Spring.
I would find their hill-top secret pools
Where horses come to drink.
Instead, I met the hunters of the hill:

I saw him first, the dog fox, as I ambled
pathless round low hillocks where he keeps his den
below dead bracken sparkling yet with jewels
captured from gushing mountain springs.
Then he sensed me, and turned his
red gold handsome savage head,
and for a while we stood and stared as if
conspiratorial slayers of the lamb.
Then, with rustling brush of tail, he went.
And I went, scrambling upward for the hill
until I heard the calling of the kite
and stopped to watch the genius of its flight:

Four birds-two couples- sunlit feathers flashing
red and white in their blue troposphere,
they circled in formation dance, riding air,
hovering, swooping, diving while I, there,
in their hunting ground, climbed on.

I never found those secret hill-top pools
where horses come to drink.
But chancing on the company of hunters
made me bold. I, too, became a hunter.
I found my prey, and diving deep
to where my own heart beat,
I tore away the spoilers of my sleep.

PatriciaE

#N.B. Glascwm ia a village in the Radnorshire hills
Sleep

Even if you live in Wales
Don’t trust the Wives tales
You can’t rely on counting sheep,
Counting sheep to send you to sleep!

Although you could try a wee hot toddy
It’s no hope to imbibe
Or else go to the Doctor.
Sleeping pills he’ll prescribe
(Always remembering it’s not very
clever to take the Whisky and Pills together

When going to bed leave your worries
And cares at the bottom of the stairs
Jump under the Duvet,
Mouth open start yawning
You’ll wake up refreshed in the morning

The moral of this story
If you are not getting enough sleep

Leave your worries by the
Door at the bottom of the
Stairs and definitely don’t
Count Sheep!

PhilP
Contact Information

St Davids House,  
48 Free Street,  
Brecon,  
Powys.  
LD3 7BP

Tel: 01874 611529

Samaritans crisis call  
Tel: 0845 7909090

Community advice and listening line:  
Mental Health Help Line:  
Tel: 0800 132 737

Kaleidoscope  
Est: 1968

Tel: 01874 622333

Gwalia Housing  
Brecon  
Tel: 01874 622617

bipolar UK  
Newport

Tel: 01633 244244
Making Sense of Mad Studies Conference,
Grey College, Durham University
30\textsuperscript{th} September - 1\textsuperscript{st} October 2015 - Editors Interview

Avril Meyler attended the above conference and I was intrigued by the title and her enthusiasm when she returned from this event that it was decided to share with members and readers in the following interview.

\textbf{Andy:} “Can you review where we currently are with mental health issues?”

\textbf{Avril:} This is a huge question and would probably be given very diverse answers by many others, depending where on the spectrum one starts from, as an “experiencer” or practitioner. The conference title had a sub-warning \textit{“May Contain Traces of Nuts.”} Despite this “tongue-in-cheek” approach the subject was tackled seriously and from very diverse groups, both from Durham and other Universities in the UK and as far away as Toronto, Denmark and The Sudan. If we compare where we were say a hundred years ago when we were giving people ice cold baths, shackling them in windowless cells and performing lobotomies, then yes we have progressed. But are we any nearer discovering the causes and whilst treatments may be less barbaric can they be considered effective and life enhancing and enriching? The wide use of medication assumes there is a “chemical “imbalance yet there is no hard evidence based proof of this. Researching how psychiatry came into being and a study of the DSM otherwise known as the Psychiatrist's Bible, opens one’s eyes to some dubious and unprovable assumptions in which those on the receiving end of what was sometimes trial treatments never found a voice to question their psychiatrists and other professional treatment givers.

\textbf{Andy:} “Can you give background to the conference and attendees?”

\textbf{Avril:} It was funded by the Wellcome Trust and Durham University. Most of the presenters were a mixture of researchers, professors, students undertaking their Doctorates, support workers and experiencers who were now studying the subject at University level. Quite a diverse group of people consequently they shared much of their expertise, knowledge and experience.

\textbf{Andy:} What is “Mad Studies?”

\textbf{Avril:} Mad Studies emerged from Canada and probably the most promising challenge to psychiatry. It was notable there was an absence of medical practitioners, psychologists and psychiatrists in attendance. The studies engaged different stakeholders in equal relationships with survivors. Mad studies is emerging as a truly international movement - in the UK pioneered in Scotland, following engagement with Canadian pioneers and initiatives.

\textbf{Andy:} In what way did the conference highlight the relationship between professionals and patients?

\textbf{Avril:} What was evident and stressed many times by presenters is the necessity for treatment professionals to learn from their patients with an emphasis on the power imbalances that exist between the professional treatment giver and the treatment receiver. But it also had a left wing political slant as do many Universities. The message emerging was that we as a Society has to bear some responsibility in creating an environment whereby the stresses of modern living exceeds the human capacity to flourish under such stressors often resulting in Mental Health Issues. As one presenter aptly described it “Society Drives us Mad!”

\textbf{Andy:} “Why is an alternative approach so important”

\textbf{Avril:} Because generally the accepted paradigm of mainstream treatment givers is that “there is something wrong/ill/amiss” with a person who experiences what they name as a “mental health problem.” When in fact it could have many legitimate causes including the psyche's sanest response
to their circumstances, environment and/or a mad world. But there is also a lack of multidimensional approach; do many psychiatrists/treatment givers ever refer to the human entity as having a spirit and soul?

Andy: Can you summarize some interesting points arising from the presentations?

Avril: Due to limited space I can only highlight a few.

1. “Navigating Distress; Writing Language and the impossibility of closure;” Prof. Brendan Stone. He started with asking whether writing or speaking have any role in “the re-discovery and reconstruction of an enduring sense of self as an active and responsible agent” - which is to say, a movement from a sense in which the world happens to us to one in which we have some control over our lives. How far can language take us, when we live within intersecting social worlds and practices which may be toxic for well-being and which 'author' us in ways which feel harmful to identity? He presented his personal diaries which was produced during episodes of “Madness” as well as quieter more reflective moments when distress levels were weaker. He was a most lucid yet humble presenter making no claims to full recovery despite his obvious status within his field.

2. “Recovery in the Bin; Recovery has been co-opted, colonised and corrupted”. Recovery in the Bin is a Facebook-based group of survivors and allies who are fed up with the way colonised 'recovery' is being used to discipline and control those who are trying to find a place in the world, to live as they wish, trying to deal with the very real mental distress they encounter on a daily basis. Our individual anger, despair, humour and intellects all come together to generate solidarity, action and knowledge.

3. “Theory as Healing: Mad Studies Reading groups in Amsterdam;” Grietje Keller. She showed how popular “Mad Studies” reading groups can be with the first reading group of 12 participants who reads and discusses during 10 meetings and was completed in 2014. This was a service users led group and is on-going. Their material is a selection of books and/or texts that somehow relate to “madness” from experiencers perspectives.

4. “If R.D Laing hadn’t existed; would mad studies need to invent him?” Dr Jon Warren Durham University. R.D Laing was described as the anti-psychiatrist par excellence. As a psychiatrist he was able to use his position and insider status to question and attack the psychiatric establishment. Laing did not reject psychiatry as a discipline but rejected its practices, in particular diagnosis. He argues that psychotic episodes were events that were not just the result of underlying issues but phenomena which had meaning in their own right. By their analysis, progress could be made which might benefit the individual. For many with an interest in mental health Laing is a familiar figure.

5. “Doing Mad Studies: The subject and object at boiling point”. Prof. Brenda Le Francois. Highlighted “Mad Studies” is very much in its infancy. She said after 7 years it is gaining momentum as an academic discourse, but as yet there is not a single University that has set up a department of “Mad Studies.”

I found the conference well-worth the personal investment in time and money that I made to attend.

Andy: Finally, what are your thoughts about “Mad Studies” that could apply to Brecon and District Mind Members?

Avril: There are many possibilities for those who are inquisitive, courageous and adventurous from running our own “Mad Studies” Members Group, to future workshops, seminars or conferences. Members have a wealth of experience among them and their insights can be invaluable resources to be shared.

For further information on the conference visit https://madstudies2014.wordpress.com/archive/
BOG Winter Events Report

Our walks programme this winter has been decimated by wet weather so many of the proposed walks will be repeated in our spring programme.

In mid November several of us attended two consecutive events at Brecon Theatre; “Ballet Cymru – Cinderella” and “Cloudbusting” – a Kate Bush Tribute Band. Both shows were brilliant! And we all had a great time.

Our cinema trips took in some of the best films we have seen in Brecon. “Bridge of Spies” with Tom Hanks; “Spectre” – the James Bond Movie; Mission Impossible” “Rogue Nation” and “The Lady in the Van” with Maggie Smith.

Our meals out took us to “The Old Ford Inn”, Llanhamlech – Great place! “Ghurka Corner” – always Superb! and “The Clarence” – excellent food and friendly staff!

Visit to the Red Kites at Gigrin Farm 24/01/2016

Four of us arrived before 11am at Gigrin Farm for the event. We set off on a walk in fine mild weather and were soon seeing a handful of kites as we looked down onto the farm, the town of Rhayader, the Elan Valley and the surrounding countryside. The views were stunning, while the delightful walk took us through sheep grazed fields that were interspersed with moorland and woodland creating a mosaic of interesting habitat in which there were two quite large natural looking ponds that no doubt would soon be alive with frogs and toads and later dragons and damsels. The hills were not too steep and the walk very rewarding.

After a snack in the café we ambled down to a bird hide where kites were now circling in much bigger numbers. From the hide we watched the birds for twenty minutes, some calling, seemingly excited and especially so as the farmer and meat laden tractor made its way for the feeding at 2pm. With the farmer shovelling the meat in all directions kites swooped in taking no notice of him. There were about 200 birds making forays to the ground in a frenzy of activity. Later, after the farmer’s departure and the kites well fed the crows moved in but the kites mobbed them if they got to near the meat. Meanwhile the buzzards dared not to venture too close.

An excellent day out; well worth the visit.  

AlanS
Brecon Outdoor Group (BOG)
Programme March to May

Social group run by members of Brecon and District MIND with an aim to bring people together to benefit their health, fitness and general well-being.

We have a variety of events from cinema, theatre and meals to outings and many walks of distances from 3 to 7 miles.

For further information call:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alan</td>
<td>01874 611628 or 07969986154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avril</td>
<td>01874 711677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>07790594485</td>
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MARCH PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 3</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>WALK Llanfrynach Lanes and canal. 3.5 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 5</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>WALK, Brecon to Groesford. 5 mile circular</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 8</td>
<td>Eve</td>
<td>CINEMA (TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 12</td>
<td>2-4pm</td>
<td>WALK along canal path. 3 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 22</td>
<td>12-4pm</td>
<td>WALK around TALYBONT RESERVOIR. 6 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 27</td>
<td>12-4pm</td>
<td>WALK around Mountain Centre</td>
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If interested in any of these events please contact Alan, Rachel, or Avril.
Generally for all walks and trips we meet in the small car-park next to the Markets Tavern Inn behind Morrison’s
### APRIL PROGRAMME

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 1</td>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>MEAL (TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 2</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>WALK around ABERYSCHR. 5 miles</td>
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<td>Tues 5</td>
<td>8.30-6.30pm</td>
<td>CARDIFF TRIP by bus to visit ART GALLERY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 10</td>
<td>9-5pm</td>
<td>BIRD TRIP to Newport Wetland Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 11</td>
<td>8.30pm</td>
<td>PUB QUIZ at The CLARENCE, booking essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 12</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>WALK – CHRIST COLLEGE. 3 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 15</td>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>MEAL (TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 19</td>
<td>1-5pm</td>
<td>WALK around BWLCH, some hills. 6 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 21</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>NATURE WALK at LLANGORS LAKE. 2 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 23</td>
<td>1-5pm</td>
<td>WALK – CHRIST COLLEGE. 6 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 26</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>WALK from TALGARTH Car Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs 28</td>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>MEAL (venue TBA)</td>
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### MAY PROGRAMME

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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 1</td>
<td>10-4pm</td>
<td>TRIP and WALK to Llanthony Abbey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 3</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>WALK from LLANFRYNACH, lanes and canal. 3.5 miles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 7</td>
<td>2-5pm</td>
<td>TRIP to TRETOWER CASTLE and GARDENS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 10</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>TREASURE HUNT in BRECON</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 12</td>
<td>6.30pm</td>
<td>MEAL (VENUE TBA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 15</td>
<td>10-4pm</td>
<td>NATURE WALK at CRAIG Y CILAU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 16</td>
<td>8pm</td>
<td>PUB QUIZ at The CLARENCE. Booking essential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 17</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>TREE ID in BRONLLYS HOSPITAL grounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 21</td>
<td>2-6pm</td>
<td>WALK from LLANFRYNACH with PUB visit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun 22</td>
<td>11-5pm</td>
<td>GARDEN FAYRE at GLANUSK ESTATE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 24</td>
<td>6-8pm</td>
<td>WALK at ABERYSCHR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 27</td>
<td>3-9pm</td>
<td>WALK and MEAL at GLASBURY</td>
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If interested in any of these events please contact Alan, Rachel, or Avril. Generally for all walks and trips we meet in the small car-park next to the Markets Tavern Inn behind Morrison’s
Brecon Outdoor Group Details

1.0 CONTACTING ORGANISERS:
   • For all events please let the organisers know that you are attending.
   • The organisers can confirm meeting place and hopefully arrange transport if required. They will advise the difficulty of the walks etc.
   • An event will only be cancelled if no one contacts the organiser or if the weather conditions are considered to be hazardous.

2.0 CAR SHARING & COST:
   • The recommended cost when car sharing has been agreed as 20p a mile. This cost is divided between all occupants of the car including the driver.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP:
   • Anyone who receives a programme is permitted to attend events, guests are also welcome.

4.0 WALKS:
   • Walking boots, waterproofs etc are necessary for your safety as well as clothing suitable for the weather conditions. You are advised to carry your own basic first aid, whistle, adequate water, snacks and packed lunch if necessary

5.0 DOGS:
   • BOG has a NO DOGS ALLOWED policy

6.0 DISCLAIMER:
Everyone taking part in the activities of the group does so at their own risk. BOG will not be held responsible for any accident, injury or loss occurring on or as a result of any group, or in connection with travel to or from any such event, however caused. Any transport sharing arrangements are deemed to be made between passengers and drivers and it is the responsibility of the passenger to satisfy him or her that the driver has appropriate insurance cover.
Fitness & Wellbeing with Complementary Therapies

Acupressure Massage

Acupressure works wonders on tight neck, shoulder and back muscles. Sitting comfortably on the massage chair, all you need to do for the next half hour is to relax, to let go of your worries and stress, and let yourself be pampered and pummelled.

After a good acupressure massage, people usually come up with a smile, and the burdens everybody seems to carry on their shoulders are, just for a while, a little bit lighter.

Acupressure treatments are provided at Brecon and District Mind on Tuesday & Wednesday afternoons (on appointment).

What I like about Pilates – by Wynona

I have discovered Pilates quite recently – and it has been a marvellous addition to my life. The exercises all serve to develop strength & efficient use of muscles, especially the core muscles in the lower back and abdomen. I have found I can (with a bit of practice) do things I never expected I would. It’s really satisfying to find that I can improve my flexibility and fitness, and I feel stronger and more aware of what I’m doing with my body. The exercises can be varied from easy to hard, they can be adapted to personal strengths and weaknesses – and most people feel more energetic and encouraged after a good Pilates session.

I have now qualified as a qualified Stott Pilates Instructor, and at present I’m offering lessons on a drop-in basis (no booking required) at Brecon and District Mind on Tuesdays 2-3pm
On Not Dancing the Ceilidh

When buying a ticket well in advance of the event itself, I was able to explain that I would not be putting in an appearance myself, since I was still unable to walk properly after knee replacement surgery, let alone dance. The news was received with dismay. I was flattered.

When I was bombarded with reasons why I should still be able to enjoy the evening while sitting out the dancing, tapping my feet, listening to the band, and that, anyway, the evening would not be the same without my presence, I was honoured.

When it was ruefully pointed out that my contribution of food to the refreshments was needed, I was amused.

It was this last reason that got me dutifully out into an evening of howling winds and lashing rain armed with a few tit-bits from Morrisons and Aldi, my oven being out of action as well as my legs. I had also slipped a paperback into my handbag. One should always have something sensational to read when not dancing.

In the event, the book remained in my handbag, unopened. I thoroughly enjoyed sitting out of the dancing which was captivating to see, Andy and his mum were particularly impressive, closely followed by Veronica and Alan. And the band – The Strayaways, certainly got me tapping my feet.

I may have been a wallflower but I was never a forlorn one. All sorts of people came across to talk to me during the interval. It was a great evening. The food and drink were good too. Many thanks to those who spent the evening not dancing but serving and clearing up.

Patricia E

P.S. Many thanks to “Friends” for organising the function and for all the effort that they put in to make sure the Ceilidh was such a success. The “Friends” are a local support group attached to Brecon and District Mind to raise awareness of mental health issues. They can be contacted directly on: friends@breconmind.org.uk We would also like to thank “The Arts Council Nights Out Scheme” for sharing the cost of the band.
The 'Brecon and District MIND Eco Project' is an exciting opportunity for anyone who is interested in the natural world and how to care for their environment.

The project, in partnership with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, allows volunteers to take part in Environmental Conservation work which includes wildlife surveys on native species, pond clearing, Invasive plant control, and bird box siting amongst many other interesting and enjoyable tasks. Members will be assisting in the management of a National Park wildlife garden and varied habitats where activities such as hedge laying and drystone walling can be done.

We also offer our volunteers the opportunity to gain recognised accredited training in rural skills and conservation work.

If you are interested in becoming an Eco Volunteer with us, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Matthew, by email: matthew@breconmind.org.uk or by telephone on: 01874 611529
1. How many is
Twelve thousand
Twelve hundred
And twelve?
A 121212
B 131212
C 122112

2. Sudoku

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3. Maths Puzzle

Fill the empty squares with numbers that will make the across and down calculations produce the results shown in the grey squares. Each numeral from 1 to 9 must only appear once. The calculations should be performed from left to right and top to bottom, rather than in strict mathematical order.

4. Word Wheel

This is an open-ended puzzle. How many words of three or more letters, each including the letter at the centre of the wheel can you make from this diagram? We’ve found 66 including one nine letter word. Can you do better?
Outreach Centres

Sennybridge outreach is now up and running.
It was kicked off by Nicki Peat with a “Craftnoon” Christmas festival and since then has met again as a coffee morning and chat.
They currently meet once a month on the 3rd Wednesday.
A history group is meeting in March and will talk about local areas and look through pictures and discuss changes that have been made through the last decades.
If you are interested in joining contact Nicky Peat or Matthew Sowerby.

Hay-on-Wye meets on a Tuesday between 9.30am and 1.30pm at the “Bowling Club”. In summer we play frizby and outdoor darts in the fields. Dan and Nicky Peat run the group. We do arts with Tomasin which includes both still life and life drawings (“clothes on!”). Phil joins us once a month to do a poetry workshop. We have done felt making with Nicky producing small purses, spectacle cases and mobile phone covers.

Talgarth is open on a Thursday between 9.00am and 12noon at the “Church Hall”, Talgarth. People meet up for a chat and a cuppa as well as to have breakfast such as Continental Breakfast, Hot dogs, Cheese Burgers, Fishfingers and beans and more besides, and all for a pound!
Games are played such as Scrabble, Dominoes and Quoits.

Crickhowell: A Zany group of potters at all levels we meet every Friday morning between 9.30 and 1.30pm at “Arts Alive”, The Old School House, Brecon Road, Crickhowell. There’s a nice vibe and a certain buzz. The tutor engages with us all and is at hand to help whenever it is asked for. There are plenty of materials and ample amounts of information plus examples of class made work.

My name is Leanne Morris and I am a Police Community Support Officer, based in Brecon town. I am a part of the Neighbourhood Policing Team and my main role is to engage the local community and safeguard those who live within it.

Having worked within a substance misuse and mental health background for the last ten years I am aware that many people who are affected by mental illness may be wary of the police. I am hoping by engaging with MIND I may be able to break down some of those barriers so that people feel that they are able to speak to us in a safe environment and see a human face behind the uniform.
“Don’t go in there – you may never come out”

This comment, overheard from a passer-by, reminded us how much people don’t know about us at Brecon and District Mind or about mental health issues. 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem in each year so if even a fraction of those people came in and never came out we would be pretty crowded. Our main base and open access centre is in Brecon with outreach sessions in Hay, Talgarth and Crickhowell – providing a welcome somewhere 365 days per year. We pride ourselves on being an accepting, kind and compassionate community where you can come for information or to share what we do from simple tea and conversation through to a spread of activities and classes including art, crafts, music, pottery, drama, confidence building, healthy nutrition and cooking and of course the allotment. All this aims towards supporting resilience, respect for ourselves and our world, and change where needed and desired. We are particularly pleased about our new volunteering and employment support projects.

Annual recruitment of Trustees

The organisation as a charity is guided and overseen by a voluntary board of Trustee directors, who like our members do also come and go. We therefore have an annual recruitment of around 3 trustees. The current board are a mix of people with varying lived and professional experience and look forward to welcoming new members to the team.

This year we are particularly seeking a new treasurer to offer financial oversight and strategic thinking as well as a further two trustees for general strategic support. Our accounts are professionally managed with recent updating of systems and we are encouraged by our success with grant bids over the last year having employed Rosie from “Funding Assist”.

If you may be interested in joining us please contact Kate on kedufton@doctors.org.uk current secretary of the board or our office on 01874 611529.

Connecting, Learning, Giving back
Les Miserables

Visiting London from my Sussex home by train

The theatre my destination

Les Miserables the show I’d planned to see

The impressive Palace Theatre welcomed me

It was a wonderful experience. I have no regrets

Fine singing and acting – Magnificent sets

Returning from London to my Sussex home

The day out; nothing Less than a Sensation

Remembering inside The Palace Theatre

Great Performance and Audience Participation

JohnB

Poetry with Phil

Art in Mind
Dafydd Reeves: Art in Mind
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN FILM MAKING !!!!!!!

We are looking for people interested in helping us to create short films about mind and our projects. If you want to learn how to film and edit and help with this exciting new project, please contact Matthew.

Please visit the new volunteer Facebook group. Search for Brecon and District Mind Volunteers on Facebook.
Recover Discovery Well being Community

Wednesday 1:00-2:00pm
I something beginning with I

Lunchtime Discussion
An open space for interest, inspiration, invention, integration.

1:00pm We begin with a short awareness and sharing exercise. Then discuss and reflect in words and quiet.

2:00pm We try to end thoughtfully.

We meet in the main room at Ty Croeso.

We welcome those passing through.

Members, Staff, Volunteers, Trustees.
1. How many is
Twelve thousand
Twelve hundred
And twelve?

2. Sudoku

3. Maths Puzzle

C 13212