

Walk For Wellbeing Group

DECEMBER'S WALK

Written by Kirstie Garside

It was a bright, sunny, frosty day when five of us set off from Todmorden market towards the canal.



We were a bit worried about the possibility of icy paths, but when we got on to the canal side it was not too bad at all. Everyone was in good spirits and we headed past the great wall of Todmorden, a huge wall supporting the railway line, stretching up from the canal, to the interesting Victorian castellated train viaduct. We saw some plump geese and a goosander chasing fish. Our feet carried us quickly to Grandma Pollard's fish and chip shop about 45 mins along the canal, where we marvelled at the wonderful display of homemade cream cakes, pies, and custard slices. American Lily couldn't resist trying a homemade scone with cream, and the rest of us had a good plate of fish and chips. However the real



treat was boarding Grandma Pollard's vintage coach by the canal side to eat them. We had waitress service and unlimited tea refills. The coach was lovely and warm and cosy and soon there was a merry hubbub of people feasting on chips at the yellow gingham covered tables. After a lovely lunch we headed back along the canal in the sunshine to Todmorden and we all agreed that we had a lovely day out.

Everyone is welcome on the walks. Do keep a look out for our next one advertised on the website, Facebook page and at the groups.

their ability to fight back when they felt put down. Others related to the colours of certain pictures that drew them in- the benefit of "colour therapy"

We then dived into the arty bit of the session-no previous art experience necessary! There was an abundant supply of materials, paper for collaging, dried leaves, fabrics, pens, pencils, pastels, glitter...

In a short space of time, everyone became completely absorbed in their own piece of art. People relaxed and enjoyed the creativity, and we were pleased and proud of the end result. (see pictures)

For such a small group, and in such a short time, the variety and inspirations of the pieces were quite incredible.

We finished off by displaying the work together on a table, and explaining what it meant to us as individuals.

The workshop was declared a success by all, and more art based workshops were requested.



"Show the world you are not here to just pass through. Leave great footprints wherever you pass and be remembered for the change you initiated."

BARGE TRIP DAY TRIPS (11-3PM)
WITH HEALTHY MINDS

JOIN US FOR A FUN, RELAXING DAY
EXPLORE THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF THE CANAL
IN A SMALL GROUP

A FREE EVENT WITH LUNCH PROVIDED
8 PLACES AVAILABLE ON EACH BOAT

MONDAY 2ND JULY (WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE)
TUESDAY 14TH AUGUST (WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE)
WEDNESDAY 5TH SEPTEMBER

BOOKING ESSENTIAL

CONTACT THE OFFICE 01422 345 154 TO BOOK A PLACE AND TO LET US KNOW ABOUT ANY DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Thank You

A big thank you to Paul Swanick and Wickes for your support. Our new office space is looking lovely with its fresh lick of paint from your Halifax store!

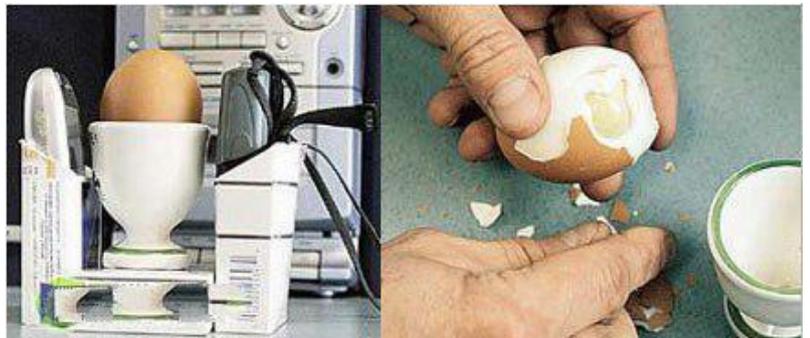


Wi-Fi do you sleep?

An article by Lou

A friend mentioned to me a while back about her efforts to lower the impact of Wi-Fi technology and associated electromagnetic waves on her general health and wellbeing. An array of google swipes later and I had found out quite a lot; bearing in mind never to believe everything I read. And a few years ago I'd seen a programme on TV about people paying to install (very expensive) electromagnetic field-bouncing membranes in the walls behind where their sleeping heads lay in bed, in an effort to block said fields travelling from the TV on the other side of the wall (even when its turned off) towards their precious grey matter at night. It seemed far-fetched at the time. But sitting with my friend, talking about a recent and prolonged spate of severely disrupted sleep patterns I'd been having – waking continuously, lying

there all night waiting for the alarm to go off, that sort of thing, she asked the pertinent question, 'Is your mobile phone by your bed?' Flashback to meeting some science students, also several years ago, who told me about an experiment they'd been doing; cooking an egg placed between two mobile phones connected via a call. It took them a while but they did it. Blimey.



So the research according to the oracle that is google (cynicism)... Well I've decided not to give the ending away, because there isn't really one, it's more of a 'watch this space'. But some of the evidence is compelling and I came away from the research session on my device thinking 'Wi-Fi signals are bad for you' (no surprise there then really). According to some of said research, there seems to be proof that Wi-Fi signals can affect cell growth, damage childhood development, change brain activity, neutralise sperm and affect fertility and heart rhythms. Alarming indeed - as google often can be. Anyhow I decided to do an experiment – for a month. I started turning my mobile phone off completely overnight and charging it downstairs. As a result, I'm convinced that I had more restful sleep; better quality and less disrupted somehow. But it's all very subtle and difficult to pinpoint. And am I just making it up? After a month I bought a cheap watch with an alarm and the mobile phone did not return to my bedside. This was several months ago now and I realise that, although I would still say, 'I never sleep that well', what I mean, in fact, is that I sleep lightly (but not as 'lightly' as I did incidentally). Gone is the constant, sleepy time internal head 'fizz'/alert dial left on number 2.



I'm not sure how I'm going to deal with the rest of the electromagnetics zapping around my house; cordless landline, remote doorbell, TV on standby (I know – uses just as much electricity but I forget), fridge, broadband, oven, iron, kettle, toaster, Hoover, lightbulbs, laptop, fitbit (I'd be lying if I said I had one), digital radio, music system, microwave oven, light switches and power lines etc. For me, it's important to know where to stop with these things, for my own peace of mind and balance. So I might

not do anything. And the quality of the sleep I do get, does seem improved after all - for now. Although I did recently refuse to have a 'smart' meter installed... and my wonderful friend is now wiring herself up to copper pipes at night. Maybe I'll google that...

Lou – groups worker

Winter Reflections at Shibden Park

Debbie and Ann

For 3 weeks in January, we ran a course exploring strategies to improve our mental health during winter. We walked around the lake, noted the wildlife, made connections with others, had a go at writing Haikiee Poems, created cards of winter musings as keepsakes and enjoyed the tranquil setting of Shibden Park.

Thank you to all participants for your generous contributions and willingness to share your own stories.

Debbie and Ann



New Year, new premises ... new look!

A message from our Chief Officer Jonny Richardson Glenn



We're just about getting everything sorted out in our new premises at King Street and, with it, a new look for Healthy Minds. Our logo has had a revamp and you'll start to see new posters and leaflets coming out over the next few months. Our website is having a bit of a tidy up too.

Healthy Minds came into being 10 years ago and we've worked with around 8000 people across all our services since then. The anniversary coincides with lots of other changes, like newer services Time Out and Safespace, and it feels a good time to update our branding. We hope you like it – we'd like to hear what you think!

Celebrating 10 Years!!



6 EASY LINEAR FUNDRAISING SPONSORED WALKS

Walk Details

1. **SUNDAY 6TH MAY:** Brighouse to Elland 11am Walk Leaders: Cath & Claire
2. **SUNDAY 20TH MAY:** Elland to Sowerby Bridge 10.30am Walk Leaders: Helen & Tracy
3. **SATURDAY 2ND JUNE:** Sowerby Bridge to Mytholmroyd 10.30am Walk Leaders: Phil & Kirstie
4. **SUNDAY 17TH JUNE:** Mytholmroyd to Hebden Bridge 10.30am Walk Leaders: Steve & Geoff
5. **SATURDAY 30TH JUNE:** Hebden Bridge to Todmorden 10.30am Walk Leaders: Gary & Kirstie
6. **SUNDAY 15TH JULY:** Todmorden to Walsden 10.30am Walk Leaders: Tracy & Helen

For queries regarding accessibility please email info@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk & mark it for the for the attention of your walk leaders

Gather your pals, enjoy a refreshing walk, all the while raising vital funds for a worthy cause! For more info, walk routes and sponsorship forms please email info@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk or visit our website.

1. Brighouse to Elland linear walk via canal towpath and Cromwell Bottom 4 miles, 2hr walk max. 2. Elland to Sowerby Bridge along towpath 4-5 miles (depending if Elland bridge is closed) 2hrs 30mins. 3. Sowerby Bridge to Mytholmroyd along canal towpath & cycleway 4 miles, 2hrs. 4. Mytholmroyd to Hebden Bridge & back along cycleway, back on canal and /or via Redcar woods 5 miles or 2 miles one way. Circular walk 2hrs 30mins or 1hr 15mins one way only. 5. Hebden Bridge to Todmorden 4.5 miles via canal, 2hrs. 6. Todmorden to Walsden and back, circular walk, there and back by canal 3 miles, taking 1hr30mins. 45mins if only walking one way.

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ALLOTMENT NEWS

An Update from Nicola

It's that time of year again at our Healthy Minds allotment! After what seems like the longest winter on record (only by a few minutes), the birds are tweeting and the weeds are growing, this can only mean one thing... WORK! The group has been working hard to keep the weeds at bay, prepare the beds with compost, manure and coffee grinds ready for the March, when the first batch of seeds need sowing.



Picture 1: Helen, the allotment lead volunteer slogging a wheelbarrow up and down the hill leading to our allotment. Helen described the work as 'ruthless exploitation' – I call it 'good exercise'!

Even though this will be our 3rd year of 'allotmenting', we are all still very much in the early stages of learning. There's a lot of differing information (in books and online) about when the best time to treat beds with manure. So, following our fellow plot

holders advice, we have applied a thin layer of *fresh* manure on the beds! Let's see if we can square the nitrogen cycle ;-)

Picture 2: In the last edition of allotment news, you may remember I unearthed a colony of sleeping slugs in one of the beds? During a stretch of weeding, I uncovered a nest of slug larvae (insert half perturbed half awe struck emoji – if there is such thing).



Picture 3: Due to the heavy rain, Victorian drainage system under the site and our plot being situated at the bottom of a hill, we have been struck (again) with a flooded plot.

Picture 4: John, a regular allotment group member decided to tackle the problem head on! After a good hour of heavy digging and slogging mounds of muds around, John successfully dug out a drainage system that directed the water into a mysterious hole that only John seems to be able to locate!



Well done John! :)



ALLOTMENT

For the First Time

A Poem by Helen

NEWS

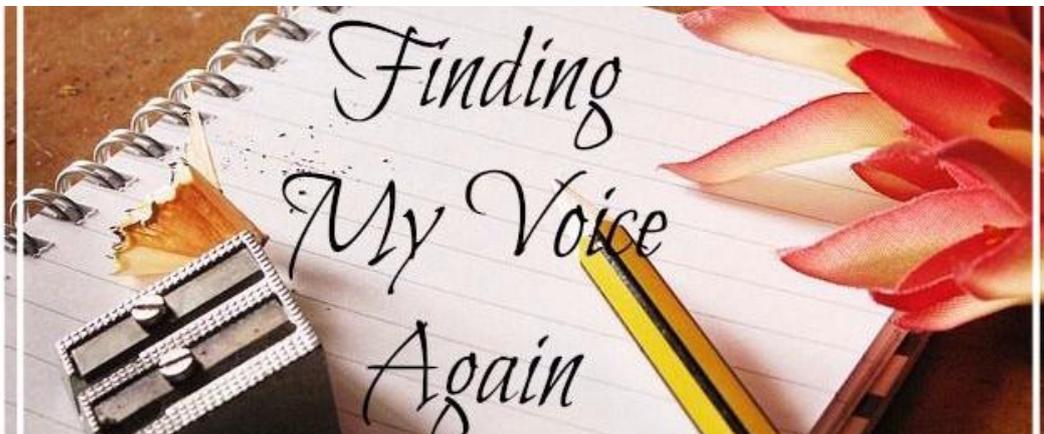
(written before the big chill of late February engulfed us)

For the first time this year
My coat came off
Warm from shovelling muck
I barrow it down
The steep slippery path
To our bare allotment

For the first time this month
I see buds swell
On black current bushes
Gooseberries stark
But still the first faint signs
Of winter's retreat

For the first time this week
We follow our plan
Spreading muck and compost
On the right beds.
Pink naked worms wriggle,
Hidden and covered quickly

For the first time this day
My thoughts stopped churning
As my body stretches and bends
My mood lifting
Sharing stories, catching up
Feeling content and whole.



Kate Armitage writes about living with disabling depression and anxiety...

This will be my fourth column for the Newsletter; it is a full year since I began writing for Healthy Minds. I have been thankful for the opportunity to simply *write* again, after years without my everyday voice. The relief of finding that I can now begin to pluck thoughts from mental confusion, link ideas, and put words together in coherent sentences has been indescribable. For too long, my only expression had been in forced circumstances: the forms that had to be completed on pain of losing my minimal financial support, and the appeal statements that followed. These are situations full of fear and worry. Despite my love of words and desire to communicate, there was no joy in them.

On the other hand, in some ways, it has been a strange experience. Alongside the pleasure of playing with words again, there has been the slightly uncomfortable sensation of pouring my heart out in an empty room. I have no means of knowing whether my words resonate, whether a thought strikes a chord, or an image lifts the spirit and says "You are not alone!" to a reader looking for comfort in mental ill-health. Depression can be all-encompassing. The simplest of tasks – reading, a phone call, a walk outdoors - becomes a mountain to climb, often an insurmountable obstacle. As the years pass and the fog struggles to lift, I have found that holding on to small joys has been a way of keeping a sense of self. My books, my pictures, moments in nature, all help to remind me of who I was and who I will be again.



The importance of the natural world as an inspiration and a lifelong source of strength and consolation was brought home to me recently in a 'Picture This' Healthy Minds workshop. Three short weekly sessions are designed to support the creation of an image that "explores your past, present and future, and identifies your strengths, resources and hopes". This



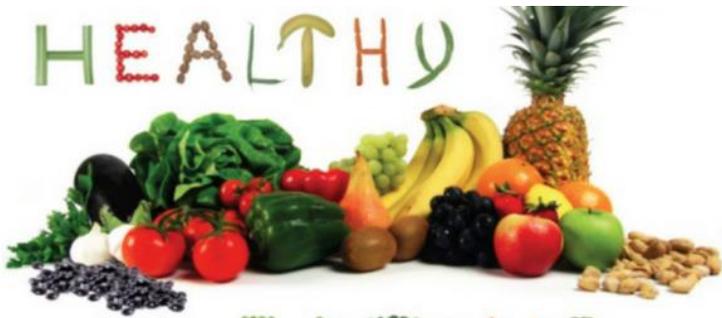
'digging deep' can be hard and I have to say the first session flattened me, but only after I had created an image of my childhood focused on a golden glittering heart encompassed by the green of nature, animal tracks and leaves. Over the next couple of weeks, these "roots" grew into a sturdy trunk and branches traversed by squirrels, nuthatches and woodpeckers, in turn bursting into shimmering green and silver leaves with pale, star-like, flowers. As a finale, the single word "creative" crowned the tree in an explosive cloud of red glitter fireworks. What fun that was! Glitter, shiny papers, glitzy pipe-cleaners and crayons! Try a course yourself. Your inner five-year-old will love you for it.

Finally, we added an animal that could support us. I envisaged a Potter-like Patronus or the daemon that manifests the inner self in Philip Pullman's Dark Materials universe. In which case, I have to report that my spirit animal is a hedgehog: the humble prickly urchin. I was planning an owl to represent my waking night-life, symbol of wisdom, long associated with books and book learning. The quiet of the night is my time, safe time, the hours when I reflect and plan. Then I realised how perfectly my prolonged depression in response to trauma is symbolised by the 'playing dead' strategy of the hedgehog. When winter comes, the hedgehog rolls into a prickly ball and sleeps, quietly resting in hibernation until hostile conditions give way to springtime renewal. He is a symbol of hope.



Kate welcomes your feedback - please send to info@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk

HEALTHY



EATING

An Article by Septimus Williams

Septimus asks for reader feedback and encourages you to make contact with ideas for future themes/topics for him to write about - info@healthymindscalderdale.co.uk

I think if we do our own research into healthier eating, develop personal independence and awareness on how to eat healthier, it can help in promoting change to our lifestyle, and our physical and mental health.

I'd like to mention while out doing my weekly shop, I choose to buy as much organic food as possible, as I believe most foods are now genetically modified. Buying organic foods can be more expensive, though, I think the nutritional benefits can be much greater. Some foods unfortunately tend to contain harmful chemical such as trans fats, preservatives, sugars and salts. I



mention organic foods because organically grown foods, vegetable and fruits are grown free of chemical assistance. The best source of organic vegetables and fruits are from private allotments during harvest season.



If we put into practice our own food research prior to purchase we'll have a better understanding about the benefits of eating healthier. Having some knowledge of nutritious foods will provide us with an advantage. We can gain knowledge by sourcing books from the local library, or from a range of health and sports magazines which can be

purchased from the local Newsagents. Discount book store, *The Works Bookshop*, which is based in most towns and cities around West Yorkshire, have a wide selection of books on healthy eating as discount prices. They stock a wide selection of books written by well-known cooks and authors, providing information on nutritious foods and cooking.

I'd like to provide a few tips for when out and shopping; try making it a habit to read the labels on food items or look for vitamins and additive contents just in case of any allergic reactions and perhaps make the effort to take part in some form of exercise. Don't forget that Healthy Minds put on a monthly walk which is a great opportunity to make new friends and enjoy a great day out.



★ ★ The Art of Being ...at Bankfield Museum ★ ★
An article by Nic

We were delighted to be invited by Fiona & Lauren at Bankfield Museum to deliver a series of workshops at the museum during January this year, using mindfulness techniques & practises.

At the outset, many people who signed up to the workshops said the sessions had come at the right time for them. January and February can be difficult months for many of us, with short days, "Tupperware skies" and a short supply of sunshine. Starting something new in the New Year can often give us that extra support we need to get through till Spring comes.

So we were all very excited to find ourselves, warmly welcomed by Bankfield staff, in the lovely Ackroyd Library on the first session.

Through a variety of mindfulness practices we had an experience of just 'being' in the building & grounds, using our senses, watching thoughts & feelings come and go, as we focussed on the present moment. After each exercise, we came together over a cup of tea, to talk about how the practise had been. We also had the opportunity to sit and explore items from the museums collection, again using our senses to keep us in the present.

"In a lovely place, spending time just being, After 2 hours I feel really refreshed"

How long do you think we typically spend looking at a piece of art? According to some studies it's between 2 & 17 seconds, depending on whether we read the text next to it. If you doubt this, next time you're in a museum or gallery, sit down & watch groups of families race through, barely glancing at what is on display. Bringing mindfulness in these spaces encourages us all to slow down, and just 'be' with the displays, and helps us to notice and appreciate more.

With this in mind, during the first two sessions we collectively decorated three 'mindful chairs', using decoupage words and images. The idea being that we would leave the chairs with the museum as a legacy, to invite other members of the public to sit down and 'be'. This was a relaxing & fun activity, which gave us all the opportunity to connect with each other and create together.

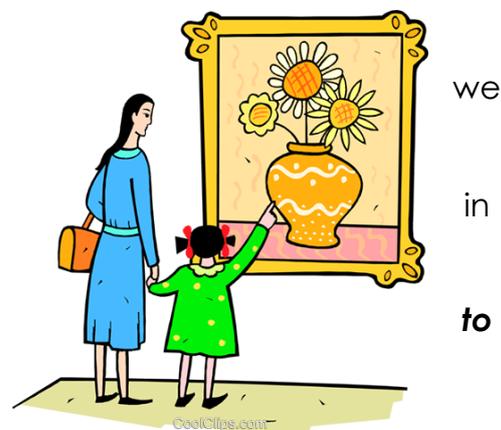
We can often think that by visiting a venue once, we've somehow 'done' it, and therefore do not need to go back, because we already 'know' it. However, during the workshops found the opposite to be true, that the more we returned to Bankfield, the more we wanted to return. We found ourselves envying the staff that work there, for being able to spend time such a beautiful place on a daily basis.

"I'm aware of holding tension in my body, and using breathing ease it."

In the final two sessions we explored 'being in nature' in the grounds of the museum, and were blessed on both days with brilliant sunshine & glorious blue skies. We used the tree as a source of inspiration, for connecting with our bodies, helping us to be grounded & stable through what can sometimes feel like turbulent times. We then moved to the beautiful Oak Gallery, and practised a series of mindful movements, yoga positions, and were guided through a relaxation exercise.

"It's been very beneficial to my wellbeing. Today has been the first day in a long time I haven't felt depressed"

The common thread throughout the sessions, was how we can use the most simple & yet powerful tool we have for wellbeing: the ever present (& therefore thoroughly underestimated) breath, which can help



ground and support us through difficult thoughts and emotions.

At the end of the workshops many participants said they felt calmer, more positive, focussed and connected, and were being kinder to themselves. We ended the workshops with a promise to ourselves to bring mindfulness practises into our everyday lives.

“This has helped me so much. I have been in a dark place, & though I’m not the other side yet, this practise I’ve learned has helped enormously. I’m so grateful to Healthy Minds & Bankfield Museum”

Thanks for reading.

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