

## New Viewpoint DVD! 'Dealing with mental illness'

**V**iewpoint has produced a DVD as a training tool for staff who want to gain an insight into mental illness from the perspective of those who use adult mental health services. It plays for 24 minutes and looks at:

- How it feels to experience mental illness
- What helps in the process of developing good mental health
- The way forward to improve mental health services

Six service users from different backgrounds across Hertfordshire talk about their various experiences which include eating disorders, psychosis, depression and schizophrenia. See the whole person and not just the diagnosis is the message. It is often the little things that make all the difference in someone's recovery and there

are many examples of good practice by caring staff which have helped people to turn the corner. Building on this, there are hopes for how services could be improved.

The DVD is designed to be watched in its entirety and can be used by itself as a training tool. However, the additional presence of a service user on a training course is a powerful way of developing a discussion and Viewpoint supports a group of service user trainers.

Anne Markwick, Director of Mental Health Services at Herts Partnership Trust (HPT) says, 'This is a compelling piece of viewing. The contributors display great courage and insight talking about their illnesses and make many thoughtful suggestions about their care. The pace is gentle and the views balanced. We will be using the DVD at HPT as part of staff training.'



If you would like more information about obtaining copies of the DVD, please contact Jacqui Deakin at Viewpoint on 01707 328014, [jacqui@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:jacqui@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

### Mini Bus grant

Viewpoint has been successful in obtaining Capital Grant funding to obtain a specially adapted multi-purpose mini bus. Whilst fulfilling a need to transport our members from outlying areas to attend various events in other parts of Hertfordshire, it will also be used as a mobile information centre and a small meeting place. This will enable Viewpoint to come to its members whilst promoting the positive aspects of mental health to the community. We also hope to be able to offer employment to service user drivers, who will be supported in training towards obtaining a County Council mini bus driver certificate.

The vehicle will have disabled access and, to maximise usage, we will consider offering it to other small groups and organisations within the county.

### New report links mental ill-health to diet



Evidence released in January 2006 by the Mental Health Foundation and Sustain reveals that changes to the human diet in the last fifty years or so could be an important factor behind the major rise of mental ill-health in the UK.

Significant changes in the way food is produced and manufactured have not only reduced the amounts of essential fats, vitamins and minerals consumed, but have also disturbed the balance of nutrients in the foods eaten. The increase in industrialised farm-

ing has introduced pesticides and altered the body fat composition of animals due to the diets they are now fed. As a result, the population's intake of omega-3 fatty acids has decreased whilst the consumption of omega-6 fatty acids has increased. According to the research, this unequal intake combined with a lack of vitamins and minerals is associated with depression, concentration and memory problems.

Amino acids are vital to good mental health. Neurotransmitters in the brain are made from amino acids,



many of which need to be derived from the diet. A deficiency in certain amino acids can lead to feelings of depression, apathy and leave a person feeling unmotivated and unable to relax.

The two charities assert that many nutrients can improve a person's mental health, and dietary changes may hold the key to combating specific mental health problems including depression, schizophrenia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

They have joined forces to raise awareness of the links between diet and mental health and are asking the Government to support the supply of nutrient rich food. They are also calling on the Government to incorporate the link between diet and mental health into all food-related policy and practice.

For more information:  
[www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

## Viewpoint AGM 2005

Our second AGM was held last year on the 28th October at the Campus West in Welwyn Garden City.

The event was well attended by service users and professionals and the day proved to be both interesting and entertaining. Stalls from Mind, SUTRA, Rethink and Carers in Herts were set up and staffed with information for people to take away. A DVD of clips about discrimination was shown from the Mental Health Media's Anti-discrimination Toolkit Project. There were also photos and personal accounts of historical long stay institutions in Hertfordshire supplied by Watford Museum.

Heather Straughan, Chair, introduced the day and

thanked service users, Viewpoint staff and the Executive for working together



**"We have an opportunity to create more imaginative ways of dealing with the 'epidemic' of mental illness in our society".**

to help shape services for the future.

Service users provided excellent music and singing on the guitar and keyboard. Later on some moving and stimulating service user poetry was

read out. Lastly, the business part of the day was undertaken and an Executive of previous and new Trustees were elected.

Dr Chris Manning (left), a retired GP and service user, gave a talk with humorous slides about the "rhetoric" of service provision for people with mental health problems. He praised Viewpoint and other service user involvement groups for enabling people to become part of the "social revolution on the ground" for service users who have been "disenfranchised" by Government agenda. He was also "passionate about bringing 'mental' into the mainstream" and wanted to dispel the old fashioned view that the mind is separate from the body.

Viewpoint would like to thank all those who organised and participated in the day.



### New Mind in East Herts

There are a number of Local Mind Associations (LMAs) across Hertfordshire but not one in the East of the county. In January, Mind in Dacorum, the largest LMA in Herts, set up a new, user-led service based in Ware covering the area from Bishop's Stortford to Cheshunt. If you live

or work in the East of Herts and have a view about mental health services and how Mind should develop in the area, or want to get involved as a volunteer, contact the Development Manager of the new service, Rachel Garrill on **07879 406572** or email [ehertsmind@gmail.com](mailto:ehertsmind@gmail.com)

### Changes at Mind in East Hertsmere

Everyone at Mind in East Hertsmere would like to say a big 'thank you' to Margaret Barrowcliffe who has retired

after ten years as its Development Worker. Margaret was also a member of the HertsMind Network which established a county-wide mental health user involvement project. This eventually became Viewpoint. We all wish Margaret a happy retirement.

A warm welcome is extended to Leah Bretton who joined Mind in East Hertsmere as the Co-ordinator in January and is looking forward to developing new ideas in consultation with its service users. She can be contacted on **01707 659 455** or email [mineasthertsmere@tesco.net](mailto:mineasthertsmere@tesco.net)

## The Advance Directive: making your wishes known

Worried about what happens when you become unwell and can't make your own treatment decisions? An advance directive may be the way forward. While you are well, you can write a statement listing what you would like to happen and what you don't want to happen when you no longer have the capacity to make a decision.

For example, you can set out what has worked well for you in the past. You can identify someone to look after your pets, list any dietary requirements or set out when your bills are due. In addition, you can specify the treatment you would prefer not to receive. Working with people involved in your support, an advance directive can help reduce anxiety in a crisis.

Every effort will be made to honour a patient's advance directive. However, parts of it can be overridden if it becomes necessary to admit you under the Mental Health Act. If this does happen, a full explanation will be given to you when you are well enough to understand and this will be documented in your records.



Herts Partnership Trust has designed a form you can fill in. Call the Care Records Department at Albany Lodge on **01727 834330** or email [medrecords@hpt.nhs.uk](mailto:medrecords@hpt.nhs.uk).

Alternatively, you can contact Mind for a form online at <http://tinyurl.com/rtxxo> or call their legal advice line on **0208 519 2122** 2.00pm-4.30pm Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

## THE OPEN DOOR CLUB

The Open Door Club meets in Harpenden every Tuesday from 10.15am to 12.00 noon. Our open door policy offers a warm and friendly welcome to everyone in need of support whilst suffering from stress, anxiety and any other mental health problems.

Enjoy tea/coffee in the morning followed by a programme of talks, discussions and outings.

If you are interested in meeting with us at the Open Door Club ask your doctor/social worker/ or supporter to refer you to us.

For further information contact:

MIND in St Albans (the mental health charity)  
Telephone 01727 865070

## Ridgehill Floating Support Scheme in Borehamwood



This is a Supporting People initiative between Ridgehill Housing Association and Hertfordshire County Council, working together to provide a short term supported housing service, helping clients with mental health problems to manage their tenancy.

### How does it work?

Firstly, an assessment is made of the client's needs. This involves a discussion with the client and other relevant people e.g. Community Psychiatric Nurse and/or Social Worker, to find the best ways to help him/her meet their needs. If the client is accepted onto the Floating Support Scheme, a support plan is made and agreed with the client. Progress is monitored and assessed and the plan reviewed at regular intervals.

### Qualifying criteria

Applicants must meet the following conditions before he/she can be considered for the Ridgehill Housing Association Floating Support Scheme:

- They must be aged 18-60;
- Live alone; or with children; or with a partner, who is unable to provide support;
- Have no other significant input of support;
- Have a history of mental illness with low care needs;
- There must be sufficient medical information available.

### A Floating Support Worker helps the client to:

Budget their income and expenditure, claim correct benefits, keep the tenancy in good order, deal with disputes with neighbours, liaise with other agencies, take up social/educational and training opportunities, develop daily living skills, enable clients to be as independent as possible in their home and help access community services.

Contact: Ridgehill Housing Association, 12 Elstree Way, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 1JE, 0208 235 7000, [www.ridgehill.org](http://www.ridgehill.org)

## Albany Lodge Service Improvement Project

Viewpoint was approached last year to help develop user involvement for a project focusing on the 'user experience'. Working with the staff team, Mind and carer representatives, we have worked to involve members in the whole process. Staff members on the ward have also been asking their clients for views and ideas to increase the range of people involved.

By using service user views concerning the different stages of a person's stay in Albany Lodge, the team found a variety of areas where improvements could be made. These were then looked at in more detail, to see how quickly each area could be tackled and how this was to be done. Identifying 'quick wins' is a good way of making differences fast but longer-term aims need good planning and commitment to enable success. A process based on 'PDSA's (Plan, Do, Study, Act) is therefore being used to support the improvements.



Areas highlighted for improvement include:

- Ensuring that clients can easily identify which nurse is involved with their care at all times;
- Improving the understanding of clients and carers by developing information sessions covering a variety of subjects from relapse prevention to information on support and community services;
- More interaction between staff and clients on the ward.

The project is ongoing and we will continue to ask you for your views and ideas throughout. We will also continue to feedback any developments. Viewpoint would like to thank all its members who have helped with this project.

For more information on PDSAs you can visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/q6swk>

## 'Talking about our lives'

“A BIG 'thank you' to the chaps who came to the University of Herts last Friday. As a student mental health nurse and a former carer to a family member, it was really refreshing to bear witness to your experience. You both reminded me why I've bothered to train. Sometimes, it's easy to denigrate my own experiences of the mental health system and get caught up in the 'academia' of it all.

Thanks for helping me to be someone you might want to engage with on the wards.” Student Nurse

“Two service users attended on both days and very eloquently explained how their particular mental health illness had affected their lives. How brave I felt they were to confront a room full of strangers and give a personal account of their emotional struggles. I found this experience both informative and humbling.” Irene Weller (From an article on Hert of the Matter, Herts PartnershipTrust magazine).

# Recovery: just another buzz word?



**Recovery is very much the latest buzz word in mental health and it can get quite tedious with all the new buzzwords and fads that come and go whilst few important changes seem to happen in reality.**

I am getting more and more convinced that the actual term 'recovery' is misleading because it does suggest total cure - a quick fix and everything is back to how things were before. However, I am very passionate about the recovery concept and what it stands for. I think the buzz is real and that there is good reason to be optimistic.

## What does recovery mean?

Recovery in relation to people with mental health problems means:

- people recovering a meaningful life
- people living as well as possible even though relapses may occur
- people having hope and some control and responsibility over their own lives
- people living their life and not the label
- an individual journey - there are lots of different ways of having a meaningful life and lots of different ways of getting there

## What does recovery not mean?

- being 100% well and healthy all the time
- being in full time employment and not ever receiving welfare benefits
- not ever needing and using mental health services

One of the main strengths of the recovery approach is that it gives credibility and value to people with mental health problems and recognises that they are 'experts in their own experience'. Many people report that hope, taking responsi-

bility for their lives, being able to state what they want and having relevant information has been crucial in their own individual recovery.

## What are the barriers to implementing the recovery approach?

Mental health services have left many service users with a strong sense of 'learned helplessness' and it therefore would be unrealistic suddenly to expect people to be able to speak up for themselves, know what they want and not be anxious about making decisions. Most mental health professionals mainly see people when they have problems and professionals could therefore be said to suffer from 'learned hopelessness'.

Both professionals and service users need to unlearn these traditional ways of perceiving each other and there needs to be a serious shift in the power relationship. It could be argued that no one gives away power and that service users need to take the power. The feedback from service user led self help groups is very strong and encouraging.

*Grethe Hansen, Joint Training Unit, University of Hertfordshire*

# Positive ways of living

To have positive feedback from others is beneficial as it is good that other people can also appreciate the work I do. I feel that having things that I can do has improved my self esteem.

I regularly go swimming and use the gym. I find yoga is helpful as is the relaxation taught in a yoga session. I have also found that T'ai Chi and walking regularly is really relaxing and good exercise.

I use a Happy Light; it is essentially a light that you can use in the morning. By having light cover your face, it tells your brain to become more active. Light therapy is used to treat S.A.D. or seasonal affective disorder; a type of depression that is more acute in the winter.

I find that lavender is calming and can help me sleep. I have cut out caffeine from my diet and reduced the sugar levels that I eat. I previously ate a lot of sweets, and cakes but now I choose fruits and vegetables, and I know that I am getting good nutrition also.



Well, the first thing I think about self-esteem is letting go of the blame game. It is more about being kind to yourself. Also, this includes thinking about other people in a good light. If I make a

mistake now I will think about what happened and then, learn from it and move on. It is not to say that I make mistakes on purpose but I do not denigrate myself if the occasion arises.

I have been learning to drive and this has helped me feel more able to do things for myself. I went to a cookery class at Barnet College on a part-time basis for a year; this has given me the confidence to prepare a simple meal for myself.

I did a course in the Print Services Bureau at R.F.E.T in Barnet. I found it exciting as I had previously done painting at home. During the time I was doing the art course at R.F.E.T, I decided to go back to college to do art. So I decided on doing a drawing and painting course to improve my skills further.

You do not need to go to art college; you can do art at home. I paint at home doing my own mini-projects; successfully completing these projects helps me to feel more optimistic.

*Matthew*

# Recovery in a therapeutic community

## 'Everyone's scared of you!'

That was one of the hardest things to hear. I thought everyone was entitled to my opinion. Unfortunately, no-one else agreed. 'You're too much. You talk too much. You need to simmer down.'

I was in The Cassel Hospital where I was facing up to my demons and learning some difficult lessons. The Cassel is an NHS hospital which treats people with severe and enduring emotional problems, usually with the diagnosis of different forms of personality disorder. It's a therapeutic community offering a variety of treatment programmes and the one I was on offered psychotherapeutic inpatient treatment up to a year. The idea of the programme is to help patients to grow and develop through a better understanding

of their own difficulties and through learning different ways of coping and relating.

I had an abusive background, suffered severe bouts of depression, hallucinations and heard voices. On occasions I shut down completely. When I hit bottom, I finally decided to try to get out of the vicious circle of breakdowns. I wrote a list of issues, a list of needs and a list of actions. With the support of my consultant, I was eventually admitted to the Cassel.

The patients run the day to day living of hospital life and, on arrival, are given a job. We did the cleaning, ordered the food, managed the finances and chaired meetings. Contributing in this way helped me to face up to problems from my past. For example, cleaning was associated with beatings I had received and I was able to work through this with the nurses.

I received individual therapy twice a week and group therapy once a week. It was the best opportunity to stand in front of a huge mirror where everyone had the chance to tell you what they thought. I couldn't bear to spend time on my own and whenever I entered into a new group of people I always had to take the lead, whether I knew them or not. It was hard to sit in silence with others. It was hard to do things on my own. I had to learn to sit in the coffee shop with a magazine by myself, building up half an hour at a time.

Getting help is a strength not a weakness. It's easy to believe that when you are ill you have no choices and you have no control. It's hard to believe in yourself. However, with the right help, I began to regain my self-belief and build up my confidence. I learnt to recognise what triggered my

illness, for example not getting enough sleep or taking too much on. I could start looking beyond myself and listen to the cries of others.

Leaving such a challenging and supportive environment was the ultimate test. Now I have to take responsibility for myself and arrange my own support systems. Not only have I managed to do that, I have found a job with a mental



health charity. I have been out of The Cassel for nine months and it was one of the best steps I took for my recovery.

Now I can continue climbing my ladder. As told to Jacqui Deakin by a service user

## New skills: New confidence

Learning how to use a computer was a key step in helping me to regain my confidence after a period of mental illness. It was my daughter who suggested I should try Learn Direct. I met an advisor at the computer centre who made me feel at ease very quickly. There was no pressure to explain why I was on benefits. When I explained that sometimes I might not feel so good, I was told not to worry and that I could come and go as I pleased and that I would always be welcome to come back.

I started on the Surf Direct course and learnt the basics of using the internet and sending emails. Each session lasted an hour and a half and there was always someone on hand to give advice. You go at your own pace through the coursework and there is no pressure to complete it in a certain time. The tasks are given by audio through headphones and it was this way of

working that made all the difference to me. I felt safe going to the computer centre as I did not have the stress of having to talk to other people as they were all wearing headphones.

Doing the course gave me a lot more confidence as I had to make the effort to book sessions and go out of the house to get to the course. I am now doing a course called ECDL, which is a recognised certificate of competence in computer skills. I hope that gaining this qualification will help me get back to work. It is really helping to build my self-esteem as I left school without qualifications and now I know I can achieve things.

I feel very strongly that it is up to me to help myself. If I don't make the effort, no-one else can do it for me. Going to Learn Direct has been one of the best things I have ever done.

Brian Luck

## What do we need to feel better?

Mental health patients often need understanding and a lot of love and affection.

They are the most misunderstood group of people in society; there is a core problem that needs to be addressed. What is it they need to feel better?

I think the problem is that the mental health services tend to see 'us' as people with a mental health condition, and as ill, and as something that can be treated medically, when all that's needed is somebody to relate to what 'we' are going through that has led 'us' to re-act to situations happening in our lives, often referred to by 'them' as abnormal behaviour. What we want is to be treated not as patients but as human beings who need help, real understanding and caring – sympathetic kind of help.

Nicola MacCallum

**If you have any comments or experiences about recovery that you would like to share, please write to us or call Jacqui or Tracy on 01707 328014**

## Hitchin Forum

Service Users' views matter! Your views can then be passed on to those planning services, and can influence the type of care you receive in the future.



Date of next forum meeting:  
**21st March (& 3rd Tues of each month)**  
**1pm – 3pm**

For details of the venue and more information,  
please contact

Christiana on: [01707 328014](tel:01707328014)  
or [christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## INTERESTED IN TRAINING NEW POLICE RECRUITS ?

We would like to hear from service users who would be prepared to:

- ❖ Talk to new police recruits about mental illness and how the police could identify and approach people with mental health problems in distress. We are particularly looking for people who have had more than one experience of police contact whilst they have been mentally unwell. We offer an 8 week training course to help with presentation skills.

- ❖ Contribute to Viewpoint's research in training other police departments. If you don't want to talk on a training course, we would still like to hear about your experiences.

Please call Jacqui or Tracy on [01707 328014](tel:01707328014) if you would like to help the police gain an understanding of how mental health service users feel.

## Stevenage Survivors' Forum



**COME AND GIVE YOUR VIEWS ABOUT MENTAL  
HEALTH SERVICES IN STEVENAGE  
AND  
HELP SET UP A NEW DROP IN CENTRE !**

**Next Meeting: 10th April 1pm-3pm**  
(Meetings are held 2nd Monday of each month 1pm-3pm)

For details of the venue and more information,  
please contact

Christiana on [01707 328014](tel:01707328014) or email  
[christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## SERVICE USER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES AT HPT

The mental health directorate of Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust (HPT) always has plenty of opportunities for people who have been receiving mental health services, and their carers, to get involved. This maybe by providing feedback about personal experiences, taking part in training or in decision making at meetings, or taking part in the recruitment and selection of staff.

Jo Burnham, the Service User & Carer Involvement Lead, is always keen to hear from people who would like to contribute. Payment is offered and travel expenses can be reimbursed.

Some examples of opportunities currently available are:

1. Service User Council
2. Carer Council
3. Complaints Training
4. Management and Aggression Training
5. Suicide Prevention
6. Psychological Therapies

Please contact Jo for further details of how to get involved:

Jo Burnham  
Service User & Carer Involvement Lead (Mental Health)  
Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust  
99 Waverley Road, St Albans, Herts, AL3 5TL

Tel: [01727 897761](tel:01727897761)  
Email: [Joanne.burnham@hpt.nhs.uk](mailto:Joanne.burnham@hpt.nhs.uk)



## WAY2WORK FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

Way2Work is a project run by Mind in St Albans in partnership with St Albans and Harpenden NHS Trust. Created to support people who have experienced mental illness return or remain in employment, Way2Work recognises the importance of employment in the maintaining of health and wellbeing.

Valerie Pinkerton and Andrew Lyddon from Way2Work reported, "In the last ten years, people with mental health difficulties have remained at the highest rate of long term unemployed out of all the disability groups. Way2Work ensures clients are well prepared for work by offering help with confidence, coaching, work preparation and continued support when a job has been secured."

Ronnie, a client now in employment said, "Way2Work helped me see how my experience of ill health has shaped me as an individual. For example, I have a greater understanding of my strengths, more patience and determination: all very

desirable qualities in my field of work!"

Many Way2Work clients go on to education or training or voluntary work in order to gain skills and qualifications. Way2Work supported Jane, who said "After being out of the workforce for so long I believed my prospects were bleak. I am now thrilled to be at university, completing my social care degree".

The support offered by Way2Work extends to people who are experiencing mental health problems in the workplace. "We recognise that people are sometimes reluctant to be open about their problems at work. Way2Work will do their best to support both employer and employee."

Way2Work has established links with local employers, like Barclays Bank plc and St Albans District Council, to provide stress management and mental health awareness training and a range of work placement opportunities to clients.

"We are now looking for other local businesses who demonstrate good mental

health practice in the workplace and will award "The Way2Work Employer of the Year" to a local business which has demonstrated the greatest contribution to the development of a range of work opportunities for Way2Work clients, raised awareness of mental health issues within their organisation and/or identifies and implemented strategies which support people with mental health problems within the organisation".

Interested employers should contact Way2Work, St Albans MIND, 137a Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 4LX. Telephone: 01727 894913 W2W@mindinstalbans.org.uk.

Valerie Pinkerton

### Choose a new name for Mental Health Unit!

A new name is needed for the mental health unit at the Queen Elizabeth II Hospital in Welwyn Garden City. There's a prize for the chosen suggestion. Any good ideas? Let Jacqui know at Viewpoint on 01707 328014 by 31st March 2006.

## Calling all budding event organisers



We are looking for service users/volunteers/voluntary agencies and other agencies to form a committee to help co-ordinate a large community initiative in late summer. The idea is a 'Bringing People Together' Ball. If interested please contact Suzie on 01923 226761 or [suzie@guidepoststrust.org.uk](mailto:suzie@guidepoststrust.org.uk)

Please chat to people you know in the following fields to see if they or their company would be interested in this opportunity:

- Hairdressing
- Dress Hire
- Party Decorations
- Fashion Show Equipment
- Ticket Sale Opportunities
- Beauty (mini facials/nails)
- Dress Donation
- Food
- Shoe Hire
- Fashion Show Designers/Colleges

## Communicator

mental healthcare magazine

### REVIEW

"The Communicator Magazine is an independent credible source for mental health-related news, features and information aimed at service users and carers; voluntary support groups; organisations and professionals in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambs, Northants, Beds, Bucks and Herts (the eastern region). The Communicator Magazine is published and produced by service users and carers (the Communicator team). The volunteer members of the team are involved in every aspect of production of the publication working to publishing industry standards. The publication offers people with experience of mental ill health both exciting and relevant work opportunities in a professional – based production environment.

To receive your free copy of Communicator Magazine write to FREEPOST ANG 20392, Norwich NR6 5BR.

I have found Communicator magazine to be an invaluable source of up to date mental health information especially the 'Welfare Weasel' benefits column." Bob Houlston

[www.houlston.freeserve.co.uk/mental.htm](http://www.houlston.freeserve.co.uk/mental.htm)

## No More Fear

I existed in fear  
letting no-one near  
controlled by fright  
in fight or flight

wishing, crying  
constantly trying  
to cope with the pain  
to cope with the shame

To cope with feeling  
of emotions reeling  
of true desperation  
no win situation

talents hidden  
actions forbidden  
by anxious voices  
restricting my choices

with chemicals measured  
a life is now treasured  
Free from the madness  
and free from the sadness

I live another day  
In my own special way  
I relax on my own  
in the comfort of home

the thoughts are no more  
I've a future in store  
with no desperate tears  
just rational fears

with a smile on my face  
I rejoin the race  
lucky to be here  
no longer in fear

By M

## I Don't Want To.... Or How we are....

I Don't want to look at you – because you don't seem to look so different than me.....

I Don't want to talk to you – because what you say might make me feel uncomfortable about how I live my life...

I Don't want to listen to you – because what you say might make sense to me, one day....

I Don't want to associate with you – because then I'd stop looking cool.....

I Don't want to know you – because then I might have to know myself.....

I Don't want to hate you – because that would be politically incorrect and unfashionable.....

I Don't want to consider you – because then I would have to consider somebody other than myself....

I Don't want to think about you – because I don't give things much thought anyway

I Don't want to challenge you – because you might have a better argument than mine....

I Don't want to anger you – because I've seen the tabloid headlines and it all looks bad....

I Don't want to care about you – because I don't want to care for anybody other than myself.....

I Don't want to help you – because I have enough to do helping myself and it's not my problem....

I Don't want to value you – because that might make me look insane....

I Don't want to love you – because I can hardly love myself...

AND

I Don't want to spend time with you –

**because**

**you**

**just**

**might**

**make**

**me**

**change**

**my**

**mind.**

And - I Don't Want to.....

H.J. STRAUGHAN

## Thin Air

I am now a gardener,  
A planter, digger of dreams.  
Never fulfilled, always anxious.  
I'm a gardener, a seed tray of  
Vegetating compost.  
From thin air, with no  
Wish of return ticket in this life.  
I am like you a gardener,  
But you are not me.  
A honer of fine soil, a dreamer of  
Old bones.  
Is youth always only a young man's  
ideal?  
From thin air, out of azure skies,  
You came to me, with air for my  
garden heart.  
Wind in my sails, drift in my wood.  
All things are within grasp.  
All that's needed is for that intangible  
- Hope to last.

P.C.Vealey



## CONTACT VIEWPOINT

62b Bridge Road East, Welwyn  
Garden City, Herts, AL7 1JU

Or write to us free with no need of  
stamps at:

Viewpoint  
FREEPOST NAT8850  
Welwyn Garden City  
AL7 1BR

Tel 01707 328014, fax 01707  
328068

[info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)  
[www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk](http://www.hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## PROJECT MANAGER:

Dennis Edwards 01707 328014  
Mon-Weds  
[dennis@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:dennis@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## PROJECT WORKER (Central &SE)

Jacqui Deakin 01707 328014  
Welwyn/Hatfield, S.E. Herts and  
Hertsmere.  
Mon-Weds  
[jacqui@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:jacqui@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## PROJECT WORKER (West)

Simon des Forges 01707 328014  
St.Albans, Dacorum and Watford.  
Mon-Fri.  
[simon@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:simon@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## PROJECT WORKER (North & NE)

Christiana Ashare 01707 328014  
North Herts, Stevenage, Royston,  
Buntingford and  
Bishop's Stortford.  
Mon-Weds  
[christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:christiana@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## ADMINISTRATOR

Tracy Kinsella 01707 328014  
Mon-Fri  
[info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk](mailto:info@hertsviewpoint.co.uk)

## ARE YOU A CURRENT OR PAST USER OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN HERTFORDSHIRE?

Would you like to help improve mental health services in the county?  
Then Viewpoint would like to hear from you.

- ❖ Viewpoint exists to empower and support people who use or have used mental health services to be part of the decision making process. We do this by bringing together interested groups and individuals to get involved in the development, provision and monitoring of mental health services.
- ❖ We work with local user groups across the county to ensure users can take part equally, wherever they live in Hertfordshire.
- ❖ We offer support, training and travel expenses to Viewpoint meetings.