

Issue 1 - June 2012

Open Mind

A Newsletter informing you of the experiences of **staff, volunteers, and service users** of Open Road

“My advice to anyone suffering from problems similar to mine is to not be afraid to seek help, and not let drugs destroy your life any longer.”

Anon,
Open Road Service User



open road
your journey to recovery

Open Road Helpline:

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Open Road is a leading charity providing individual care and practical help across East Anglia. Our mission is to empower individuals, families, and communities in their journey or recovery from the harmful effects of drugs, alcohol and other addictions.

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Welcome to Open Mind

Open Mind is a special newsletter edition for the Recovery Month at Open Road. This newsletter give you an idea of some of the activities of people involved in Open Road, with content from staff, volunteers and service users.

Contents

3. Homelessness by Anon
4. A day in the Park
5. A poem by Nicki
5. A painting by Nicki
6. First Aid Training by Neil
7. Pioneer Boat Trip by Neil
8. Film Review: X- Men
First Class by Rob
9. Refurbishment at Open
Road photos by Steve
10. Sixty second interview
with Recovery Worker,
Lisa Mechen by Neil

Recent events at Open Road

For the past six weeks, two Occupational Therapy students have been facilitating the Phase Two Creativity Group. Within the sessions we discussed Recovery Month, which takes place in June. The clients decided they would like to use the creativity sessions to produce a leaflet which will inform the public about Open Road's services and also raise awareness about the journey to recovery from a client's perspective.

All of the features included in this newsletter have been written by the clients and volunteers of the service.

Homelessness by Anon

An anonymous Open Road service user recounts his story of how his cannabis addiction made him homeless, and what he did to seek help

As part of our open road open mind newsletter, I have decided to write a few words in an attempt to explain the struggles with addiction and the problems it created in my life.

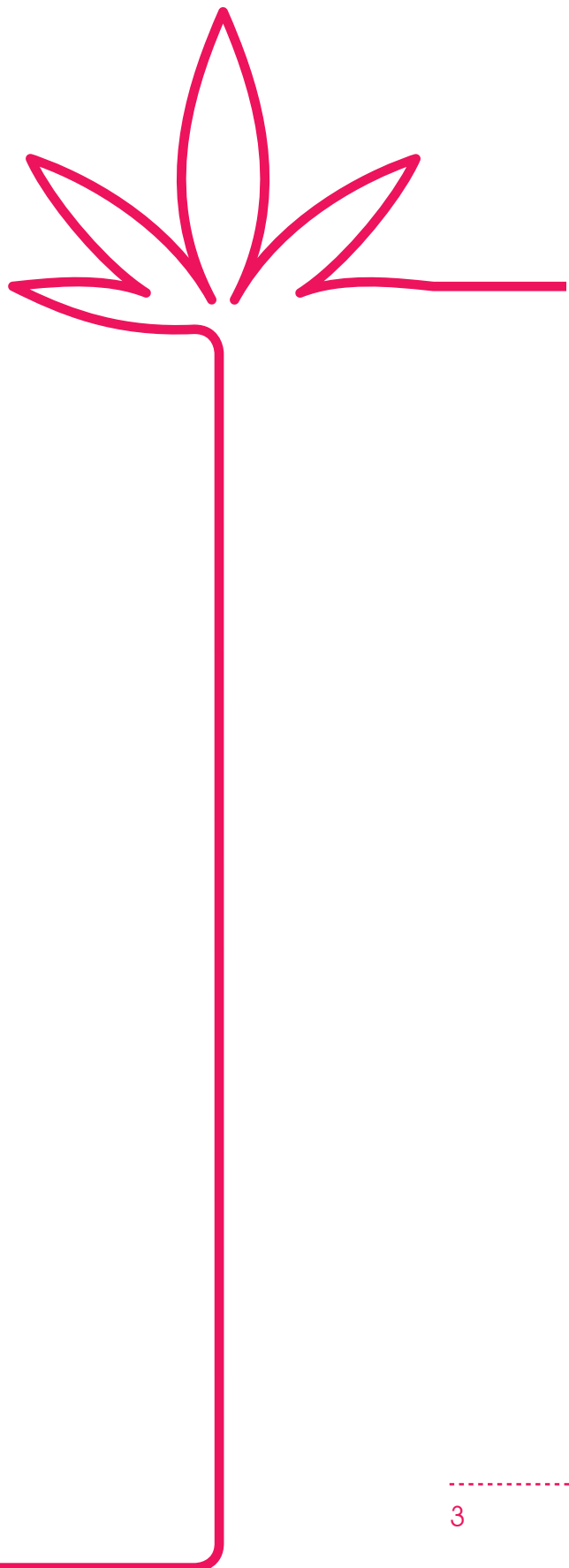
My addiction was to cannabis and spanned several years, starting from when I first finished secondary school, and it began as a bit of a social activity smoking cannabis as an attempt to feel more relaxed as I found myself feeling anxious in social situations and cannabis seemed to relax my mind and also gave me and my peer group a common ground and filled a lot of the time that we found ourselves with after finishing school.

This relationship with Cannabis quickly became a dependence, and after several years of regular use, smoking strong high grade cannabis for many years, I found that in the long term the drug was taking over my life and had led me into a depressed anxious state of thinking that led me to steal to maintain my habit, which caused me to become homeless.

Now after ending up in supported housing, almost two months of smoking abstinence, and plenty of support from Open Road, I have begun to overcome the problems I have had my anxiety and also discovered a new direction in my life which is to support other people with their drug problems and aid the charity open road through their 'Recovery Champion' training.

My advice to anyone suffering from problems similar to mine, who have had enough of feeling 'sick and tired of being sick and tired' is to not be afraid to seek help, even if people seem to be the problem and that support is out there. So come in and see us at Open Road and have a quick chat and don't let Drugs destroy your life any longer.

Anon, 24



A Day in the Park

Clients and staff of Open Road made the most of the warm weather and held the Health and Wellbeing session in Central Park. Here are some pictures from the day



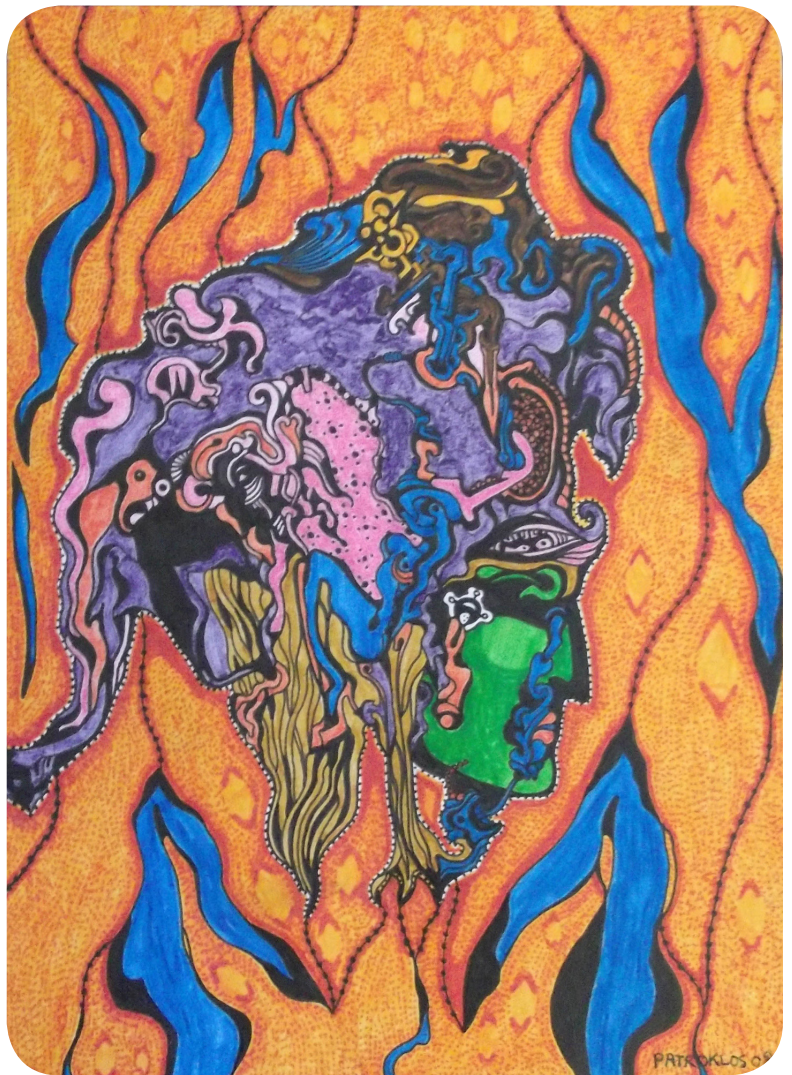
A Poem by Nicki

I Sold my Soul

I sold my soul to the devil
Now it's time to get it back
All my life I've been a rebel
Now I'm pushing through the cracks
I've been lower than you can go
But I'm getting up again
It's a long, long road
But now I can see it happening
Life is hard so hard
But when you've made the first step
You can go so far
And start looking forward to what's next

Nicki, Open Road Service User

A Painting by Nicki



First Aid Training by Neil

Open Road clients underwent a first aid course this spring, organised by volunteers of the service. Here is a run-down of the details...

First Aid Lessons were devised after hearing of people's experiences and a suggestion made by a member identifying a need for a course. Research identified that conditions covered in first aid courses such as heart attack associated with the elderly may occur with certain substances.

The course was integrated into two Health and Wellbeing sessions facilitated by Lisa and Peter to maximise participation. The sessions, which may be repeated, were attended by six participants, and covered:

- Risk assessment
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
- Management of unconscious casualties'
- Heart attack
- Choking
- Bleeding

The emphasis was on problem solving as pre-hospital environments present with difficulties which may create risk and anxiety. An attendance certificate and comprehensive handouts are also presented as part of the course.

Neil, Open Road Volunteer

Do you have any ideas for good courses as an Open Road client? Please get in touch with your mentor, or drop by your local branch to share your ideas.



Pioneer Boat Trip by Neil

A report of a boat trip along the Essex coast.

Members of Chelmsford's Open Road Centre consisting of Steve, Robert and Myself met at 7.30 in the morning on the 8th of May to be ferried by taxi to Brightlingsea. The purpose was to participate in a trip on the Pioneer, a sailing ship built in 1864 to dredge oysters then restored in 1999.

We arrived about 9 O'clock and joined participants from Lowestoft and Colchester. After dressing in wet weather clothing and life belt we were taken to the awaiting Pioneer by dingy.

After a safety briefing everyone assisted the crew in setting the sails which provided a unique workout. Sailing terminology such as port (left side) is a foreign language, literally, originating from old Europe. But I personally got by following a pointing finger.

During breaks in work we admired the view during the U shaped journey along the River Colne estuary sighting Bradwell power station and a black line indicating Clacton pier. In the grey, dry sky were occasional pairs of terns. Later in the afternoon came a glimpse of sun in time for our lunch providing needed fuel break.

During our trip, two dredges were done with an iron framed net bringing up an assortment of creatures, which after being admired were returned to the sea.

We started mid afternoon storing the sails and returned by dingy to shore. At base we changed out of the water proofs and said goodbye to the crew and friends from Lowestoft and Colchester and returned to Chelmsford.

Neil, Open Road Volunteer



Film Review: X Men First Class

by Rob

A Service User of Open Road decided to write us a film review of a recently released film.

X-Men first class is one of the latest super hero offerings, but does it live up to the hype created by its impressive collection of actors; German Born Michael Fassbender- who rose to fame in his breakout role in A Dangerous Method and his role in Caméra d'Or winning Hunger, and British actor James McAvoy who made his name starring in theatrical productions, before moving onto the bigger screen to star in such blockbusters as Atonement and Wanted.

Well in short, Yes, in many ways X-men First class scores on all bases with a solid script containing the right amount of comic book cheese to make the characters come to life without hampering the dramatic power of the film, An impressive soundtrack that really helps the story to unfold coherently, Several impressive action set-pieces that really push you to the edge of your seat and make a great set-case for the great variety of super-human mutant powers on display, and a sharp and engaging storyline charting the prevention of world war 3 and the founding of the X-men and their mutant rivals.

This film isn't however without its flaws. The story rushes by so fast that it doesn't feel like much time was given to each mutant's back story, leaving a few of the characters feeling undeveloped and under-appreciated, which is sure to anger many loyal fans of the Marvel comic book franchise on which the film was based.

Also, the film might seem a bit on the dark side for its younger audiences, with an opening scene shot black and white in a Nazi concentration camp, detailing the separation of

young mutant Erik Lehnsherr (Fassbender) from his mother, as well as several graphic moments of violence which seem somewhat out of place but will undoubtedly appeal to older viewers with a craving for such stylised destruction.

A fast paced, well acted and skillfully told Superhero movie which will undoubtedly impress young and old audiences alike with its confidently but slightly rushed chronically of the rise of the X-Men. **7/10**

Rob, Open Road Service User



Refurbishment at Open Road - photos by Steve

Clients joined staff at Open Road one Saturday to give the foyer and open access area a fresh look.

“I really enjoyed the experience and it was great to paint in a group ”

- Steve



“I always associated decorating with smoking in the past so it was nice to enjoy the activity from a new mindset ”

- Steve



Sixty second interview with Recovery Worker, Lisa Mechen

- questions by Neil

A brief interview of an employee,
conducted by an Open Road
volunteer.

How long have you been in recovery?

I am eight years clean from drugs and alcohol.

How long have you worked for Open Road?

I have worked for Open Road for five years,
three as a volunteer and two employed.

What do you like about working here?

I enjoy working with clients in recovery as I find the job fulfilling, supporting clients with their personal growth and integration back in to the community.

What changes have you seen during your time here?

Now there is an increased awareness of the services we offer this is certainly having a positive effect on the community, this has also improved since we have started joint partnership with EYPDAS.

If you could change something about Open Road, what would it be?

The one thing I would change about Open Road would be that we could offer services to alcohol clients.

Questions by **Neil**, Open Road Volunteer



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