



The Willow Centre  
Dundee Association  
for Mental Health

# Heid Matters...

ISSUE 24

JULY/AUGUST 2015

The Newsletter from Dundee Association for Mental Health

## DAMH NEWS

### ABOUT DAMH

Dundee Association for Mental Health seeks to promote mental health, the understanding of mental ill-health and the importance of well-being.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Witnessing the Summer Solstice 2

Lifestyle with Louise

Maggie the Mermaid 3

Contact Us 4



### **John Muir Trust Sponsored Walk**

On Thursday the 6th of August 31 participants, staff and volunteers from Dundee Association for Mental Health (the John Muir Meanderers!) walked along the Dighty Heritage Trail to raise money for the John Muir Award. The larger walk began at Dronley and followed the Dighty Heritage Trail through the greenspaces of Dundee until its end in the sea at Balmossie. The main route stretched out over eleven miles but a shorter walk of five miles was also organised along the trail so that people of all abilities could get involved.

The John Muir Award encourages people of all backgrounds to connect, enjoy and care for wild spaces. Dundee Association for Mental Health has long recognised the positive effects that time spent in the natural environment can have on mental health and wellbeing. This has resulted in DAMH establishing Greenbuds, a project which encourages individuals to take part in outdoor activities. The John Muir Award has become central to the work of Greenbuds and those within the project have experienced great benefit from it. Through the John Muir Award, Greenbuds participants have explored greenspaces, helped to conserve them and shared these experiences with others. This has not only positively impacted on the health and wellbeing of individuals but has also improved the natural environment for the whole community. Greenbuds participants are keen to support the Award, which is currently available free of charge, so that others may also have the opportunity to do so in the future.

Our sponsored walk allowed us to give back to this valuable organisation (at last count we have raised over £300 with donations still coming in!) but it also allowed us the opportunity to take some time out to, as the Award suggests, connect with wild spaces.

## Witnessing the Summer Solstice

The Dava Way is a trail mostly following an old railway line in Moray from Granttown-on-Spey to Forres. The route passes through a variety of terrain. This includes wooded areas, moorland, and farmland. This vast railway line extends for twenty four miles. This length was not unusual for me as I have accomplished the West Highland Way and more locally, the Dundee Kilt Walk last year. What made this a different experience was that the walk would take place over night during the Summer solstice. This allowed me to experience the dramatic setting of the sun and the gradual awakening of light in the early morning. This was truly an enjoyable experience which I would recommend to all who are fit and able bodied. I would note that it is more pleasurable if some training is put in beforehand as this is not a challenge to be taken lightly. My mum is even thinking about repeating the feat in a couple of years but I am unsure whether I will be able to motivate her to scale a Munro. I know her partner definitely won't.



By Daniel Cruickshank 03/07/15

## Lifestyle with Louise

*What? Got a question about what you can do to help your health? This may be physical activity/ exercise/ nutrition or mobility based.*

*When? Dates & Times can be found in the sign-up sheet  
How long will each session last? Approx' 45 mins.*

*What will we do? Have a chat about what you can do that is realistic for you and your lifestyle and what you want to do. My job is simply to help you work out what that is.*

*Can I book more than once? Yes, this can be discussed when you first book in.*

*For more information and available sessions see Sue or Joan at the Willow Centre.*



## Maggie the Mermaid

We at the Willow Centre are privileged to work alongside our talented and skilled participants, many of whom, we have known for several years.



But every now and again, we discover yet another skill, ability or talent that a participant has kept hidden under a bushel and then casually and humbly mentions extraordinary achievements in passing! We believe the “gifts” people have should be recognised, valued and celebrated and, of course, shared.

One such extraordinary person is Maggie Simpson. For several years, Maggie was committed and dedicated to developing a particular skill and told us about her amazing experiences ....

When Maggie was 18 years old she started swimming at the Olympia Leisure Centre, then joining the Hawthorn Swimming Club. A couple of years later she was spotted by a swimming coach, who recommended she join the Belmont Swimming Club and from there Maggie started to work on her front and back crawl and built up her speed getting faster and faster. One day during training, Maggie was spotted by a Coach from the Scottish Squad for Disabilities who asked her to join their team and compete in Wigan for the 4 Nations swimming competition where she won 2 gold medals.

From then on, there was no holding Maggie back! She won 2 silver medals in the Paralympics in Madrid. Then won 5 gold medals and a trophy in Aberdeen in the 4 Nations in 1993. Thereafter, Maggie headed to Atlanta to compete in the Paralympics in 1996 beating her own personal best times. Before retiring and becoming a swimming coach Maggie competed in the Tayside Championships and won 4 gold medals.

Q -How did you manage to achieve so much?

“I trained every day. I went swimming at 5am – 7am, then back again for an hour 7 – 8pm. Swimming made me feel good and I was really happy when I was awarded my medals and certificates. I also used to train in the River Tay swimming from the road bridge to the rail bridge once a week. People used to grease themselves before training in the Tay. The grease helps you to keep warm. But I didn’t use it, I used to just jump in.”

Q -What are your favourite memories of swimming?

“Once during training I was swimming from Broughty Ferry to the Olympia Leisure Centre and focussing on getting to the Olympia, which I could see in the distance. However, I don’t know what happened that day, because I ended up inadvertently swimming in a circle and swimming back towards Broughty Ferry! My coach, who was in a boat supporting me, had been shouting at me for ages that I was going the wrong way, but I didn’t hear him!

On another occasion, when I was swimming from Newport to the Olympia, I got stuck in a strong current but at the same time, I saw a shape in the water beside me. I think it was a dolphin or a seal and it swam with me for half an hour. It felt reassuring to have it with me. I gave it a wee pat and it stayed with me until I got out of the current.”



## Our Projects... DAMH consists of three projects all of which can be accessed through a referral process



**Dundee Mutual Support Group** offers groupwork, drop-in facilities and one-one support for people experiencing mental health issues. By providing and promoting a broad range of activities and support we aim to help people realise their potential. We work with individuals to ensure that they are better equipped and able to cope, have stronger support networks and are able to make healthier life choices.



**Two's Company**... As group activities are not suitable for everyone, Two's Company Befriending Service links trained and supported volunteers with people within the community who may have become isolated due to their illness. The friends share in social and leisure activities such as a coffee and chat or a trip to the cinema.



**Greenbuds** is a project that works co-productively with individuals to deliver programmes of outdoor activities. Greenbuds aims to improve the mental health and wellbeing of participants and communities. The project focuses on people's assets, skills, talent and experience rather than just their problems.

### **Support DAMH!**

YOU CAN HELP us keep doing this and much more by supporting DAMH in the great work we do by helping us spread the word of this hardworking local charity by passing on this email to some of your friends. You could volunteer some of your time or donate some of your hard earned cash.

Benefits gained from the funding you provide will enable us to build on a number of initiatives. Our capacity to develop them is limited by the need for relatively small amounts of money. It has been our experience that the “**small steps, big impact**” approach has been very effective in promoting peoples' social development and wellbeing.

**Dundee Association for Mental Health**  
**The Willow Centre**  
**4 Chambers of Commerce Buildings**  
**Panmure Street**  
**Dundee**  
**DD1 1EP**  
**01382 227288**

**Executive Officer**  
[tomgarnett@btconnect.com](mailto:tomgarnett@btconnect.com)

Tom Garnett

**Two's Company**  
[2scompany.aware@btconnect.com](mailto:2scompany.aware@btconnect.com)

Joan Kennedy

**Dundee Mutual Support Group**  
[sue.black@btconnect.com](mailto:sue.black@btconnect.com)

Sue Black

**Greenbuds**  
[laura.campbell.damh@btconnect.com](mailto:laura.campbell.damh@btconnect.com)

Laura Campbell

**General Enquiries**  
[damh.info@btconnect.com](mailto:damh.info@btconnect.com)

### **Your Money Can...**

- £5– £10 a week to enable us to provide befriending support to an isolated individual
- £15 can provide three social activities a week reaching between 15 and 30 people weekly
- £30 can provide the fuel and van rental for up to 14 people to go hillwalking

**JustGiving™**

We are now registered with just giving please consider making a donation - Thank You.

If you would like to be added to our mailing list please email [damh.info@btconnect.com](mailto:damh.info@btconnect.com)