

# BR AMAZIN

My Recovery  
Journey  
2012 to 20<sup>when</sup><sub>ever</sub>  
N



B  
U  
MARY  
E

## CLAIMER

This is a personal account written over several years. Family friends & professionals are not mentioned by individual name

**CAUTION**  
Before  
You READ

## DISCLAIMER

Any advice is based on my own experiences. You decide what is best for you

LIFE IN BALANCE

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Five Years On	

acknowledgements  
Helpful Stuff

# FORWARD BY DR MARY TODD

A brain injury is a life-changing, catastrophic event. But Mary's work shows that if you work long & hard to excavate the initial devastation, something precious and unsuspected can be found hidden beneath: in her case a flourishing talent for art & story-telling. This book will inspire those with the courage to embark on the courageous process of living in harmony with a brain which, while it has changed, is still marvellous and full of delightful surprises

Mary Todd  
PhD, (Psychol).



# AMAZIN BRAIN

Thank you for coming with me Mary Burke on my recovery journey following a head injury & brain haemorrhage in 2012. By sharing my personal account I hope to inform and inspire other survivors & their carers....→

# THE MAZE

This Journal is about my Journey of recovery following a head injury & a subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH) (bleed in the brain) SAH is a form of stroke 1-7 percent. It is a medical emergency & those who survive often have neurological physical and cognitive problems Thats the scary bit over 50 let the



story begins at Blenheim Palace Woodstock in Oxfordshire (the only place for Princesses like me!). With hubby Kelly, his sister, brother in law and nephews riding in the 60 mile Charity Bike Ride on Sunday August 2012 I decided to take the easy option, carry the sandwiches and do the 5k family trail instead



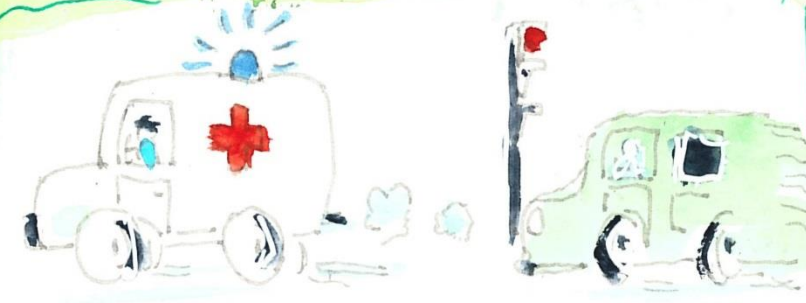
Fortune would have it that having waved at the St Johns Ambulance crew on the first time round they miss me on the second lap & checked the track. Without any warning symptoms I was found unconscious still attached to the bike

START

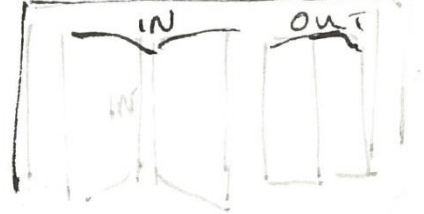


FINISH

so never made the champagne finish & picnic ..... but blue lighted to John Radcliffe Trauma Unit in Oxford... followed by hubby clad in lycra & sister in law with broken elbow falling from her bike.....



TRAUMA UNIT OXFORD



Bye Bye  
John Radcliffe  
Trauma Ward I'm  
better counting  
my blessings

4 days having  
blood tests x-rays  
brain scans stitches eye tests  
sleep dressings



Home to sunny Crumpsall  
not realising the impact of  
a head trauma was about  
to change my life style!

Diagnosis Traumatic Head Injury  
& Subarachnoid Brain Haemorrhage  
Which came first... that is  
the question? Either way  
expect many  
changes ahead!  
(celebrate pun)



Mixed up words  
rubbish  
talking  
confabulation  
slurring words

# SO WHAT CHANGED?

Disorientated  
Poor Balance  
Concentration  
Walking into  
Things  
Poor Direction



SWALLOWING  
CHOKING

DOUBLE  
VISION  
FRACTURE  
OPITAL BONE

Cross wired  
Getting lost  
Right Left



knowing I know  
know everyone

So What is a Subarachnoid Haemorrhage?

A BLEED IN THE BRAIN

HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU?

AND OTHER



It affects everyone in a different way depending on which bit of the brain it happens in. Never knew all of this until much later!

EMOTIONS

- ☹️ depression
- 😡 angry
- 😭 tearful
- 😰 Anxious
- 😵 perplexed

COGNITIVE

- ☁️ distorted thinking
- 🧠 memory ↓
- 👁️ attention ↓
- 🗂️ organising
- 🌀 confusion
- ⚖️ judgement ↓

PHYSICALS

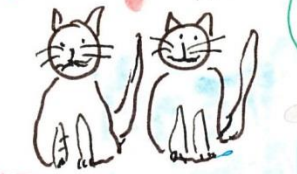
- paralysed limbs
- poor coordination
- balance disturbed
- sight & hearing loss

SUPPORT SERVICES

- G.P. & Practice Nurse
- Neuropsychologist
- Stroke association
- Telephone Helplines



SLEEP & REST



CATS

ART THERAPY



GETTING OUT & ABOUT

despite Topographic Amnesia

STOP



RAINBOW OF FRIENDS



WHAT HELPED

BASIC Brain And Spinal Injury Centre



# BASIC

## WHO'S WHO

AND WHAT DO THEY DO

"ANGEL"  
SANDRA  
Client Support Services



HANDS ON  
ANN

AROMATHERAPIST  
BODY BASIC ASSISTANT

BASIC "OASIS"  
offering support  
rehabilitation  
to individuals  
& families

Cognitive Rehabilitation  
Memory Workshop



Vocational Consultant



## HOW THEY HELPED

- listened & listened
- provided safe place to be
- support in returning to work
- art & relaxation therapies
- Managing finances
- welfare rights advice

Therapist & Counsellor



Captain LINDA

## Lots of + HOSPITAL OUT PATIENT APPOINTMENTS = 52 in one year

MAX OF FACE  
North Manchester

OPTALMIC  
Oldham Rochdale Infirmary

NEUROLOGY  
Salford Royal

AUDIOLOGY  
North Manchester

then more to get your head around

MY WAITING TIME MONITORING

## OWN 'THERAPY'

Chair 'moves'  
Getting dressed?

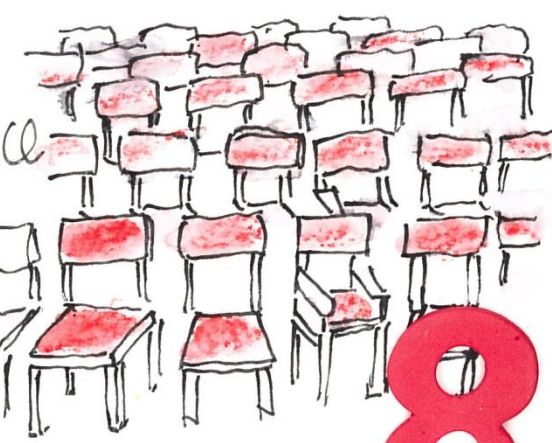
Walking  
Talking  
Stretching  
Yoga

## PHYSICAL THERAPY

Self Referral to PARS

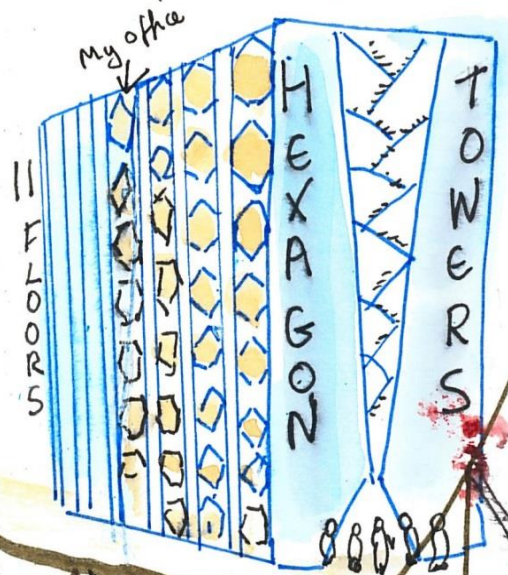
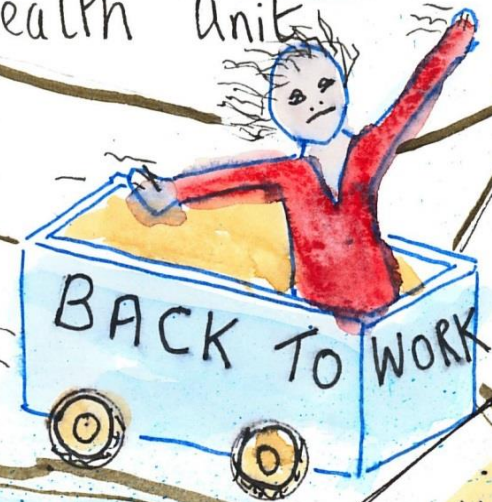
- Physical & Rehabilitation Service
- supervise activity
  - relaxation classes
  - monitoring health
  - providing support

Chair Sketching  
1 chair = 3 mins  
72 chairs =



8

Graded return to work assessment by Occupational Health Unit



**MY JOB DESCRIPTION**  
 Specialist Nurse for women with severe mental health difficulties around childbirth  
 Regional & City Wide Clinical work, advice teaching, supervision & assessments.

9



Union ☹️  
 Manager ☹️  
 Health & Safety ☹️  
 HR ☹️  
 Regular Review Meeting to discuss progress ☹️  
 Me ☹️  
 Partner ☹️  
 Phil from Basics ☹️

A Community Nurse unable to drive!



DVLA returned licence after one year and assessment at Specialist Driving Unit.



or find my way around!



10



# That Sinking Feeling

rapids  
no direction  
rough waters

launched out to sea

Sinking feelings, lower isolated, loss of purpose and change in roles, physically and emotionally challenged

11

on the rocks

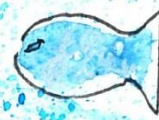
rock bottom



unhelpful thoughts

down the creek

drowning not waving



conflicting advice

no paddles

Thinking I could do more than I could

fear of being made redundant or being dismissed

no longer valued or able to do what I did before

not pacing my daily activities

not accepting physical changes



12



Embrassing positive life savers & accepting changes to move forward  
 & coming to shore for retirement



13

41

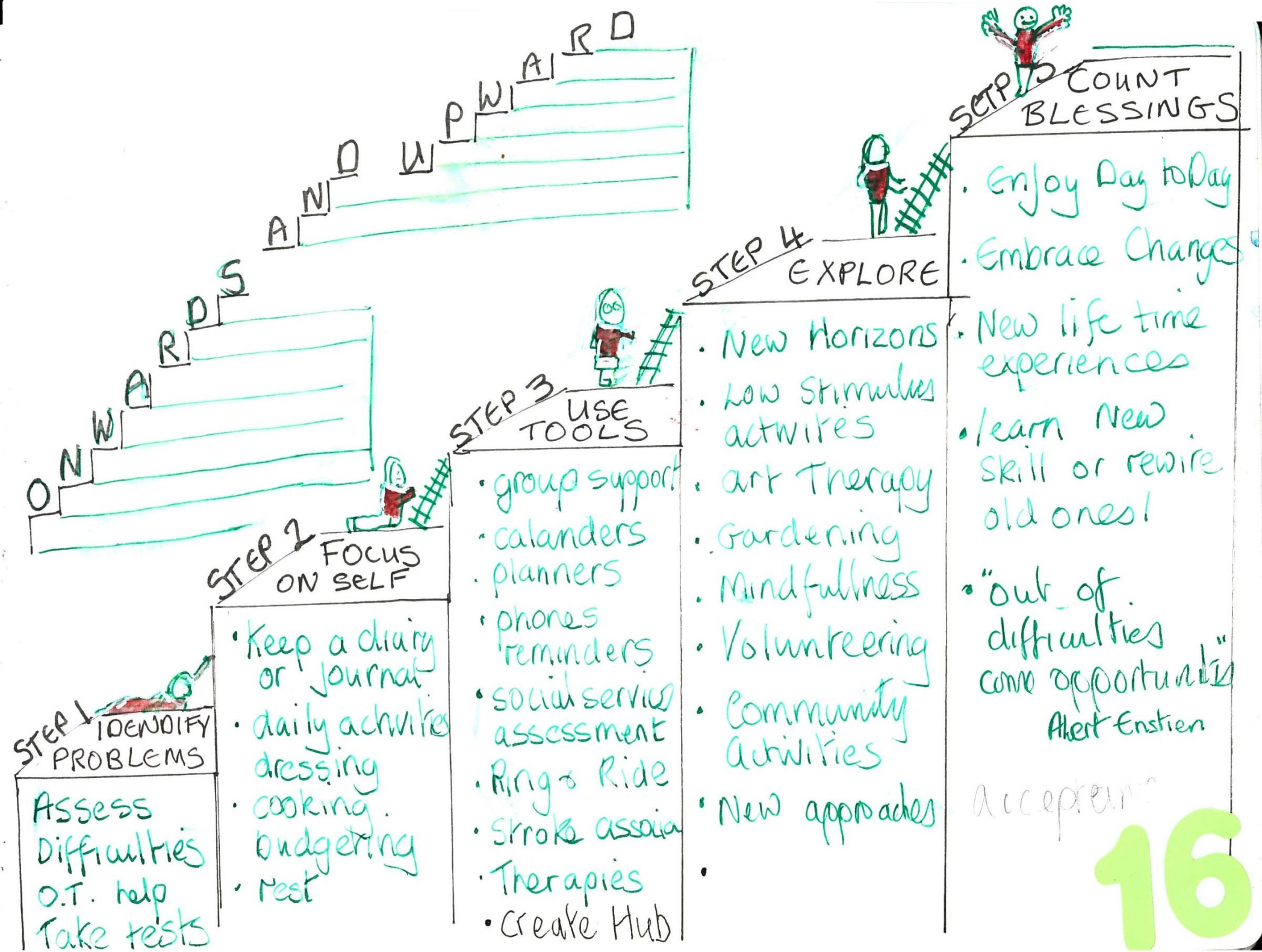
# PHYSICAL CHALLENGES

FATIGUE  
 MEMORY & ATTENTION ↓  
 EYE SIGHT CHANGES  
 REDUCED VISUAL FIELD  
 GETTING LOST  
 SWALLOWING CHOKING  
 TINGLING IN HANDS  
 FACIAL PALSY  
 BLADDER TRUMAS  
 BAWANCE & COORDINATION  
 KEEPING & FIT  
 NEUROPATHY in FEET



# REALISTIC SOLUTIONS

PACING PLANNING REST SLEEP  
 WORKSHOD & STRATEGIES  
 GLASSES PRISMS LIGHTS  
 READING GUIDES AUDIO  
 PASKI SAT NAV MAPS  
 COUGH CONCENTRATION & CARE  
 MRI SCANS PHYSIO  
 MAXOFACIAL MEDICATION  
 TENA LADY! MEDICATION  
 GYM SUPERVISION SWIM  
 YOGA WEIGHT GROUPS  
 CHIROPATMY WALKING SHOES



HEAD IN THE CLOUDS



HOLIDAYS



CAMPER VAN AND TRAVEL



SMELL THE ROSES



GARDENING & HORTICULTURE

GASTLE IN FRANCE



ART FOUNDATION COURSES



ILLUSTRATION &

COTTAGE IN IRELAND



USE WORRY WEARHOUSE



WALKS IN THE PARKS



CANAL TRIPS



7

8

(toilet seat!)  
Putting "a lid on it" & moving  
on in recovery & life .....



9

Follow The Yellow Brick Road

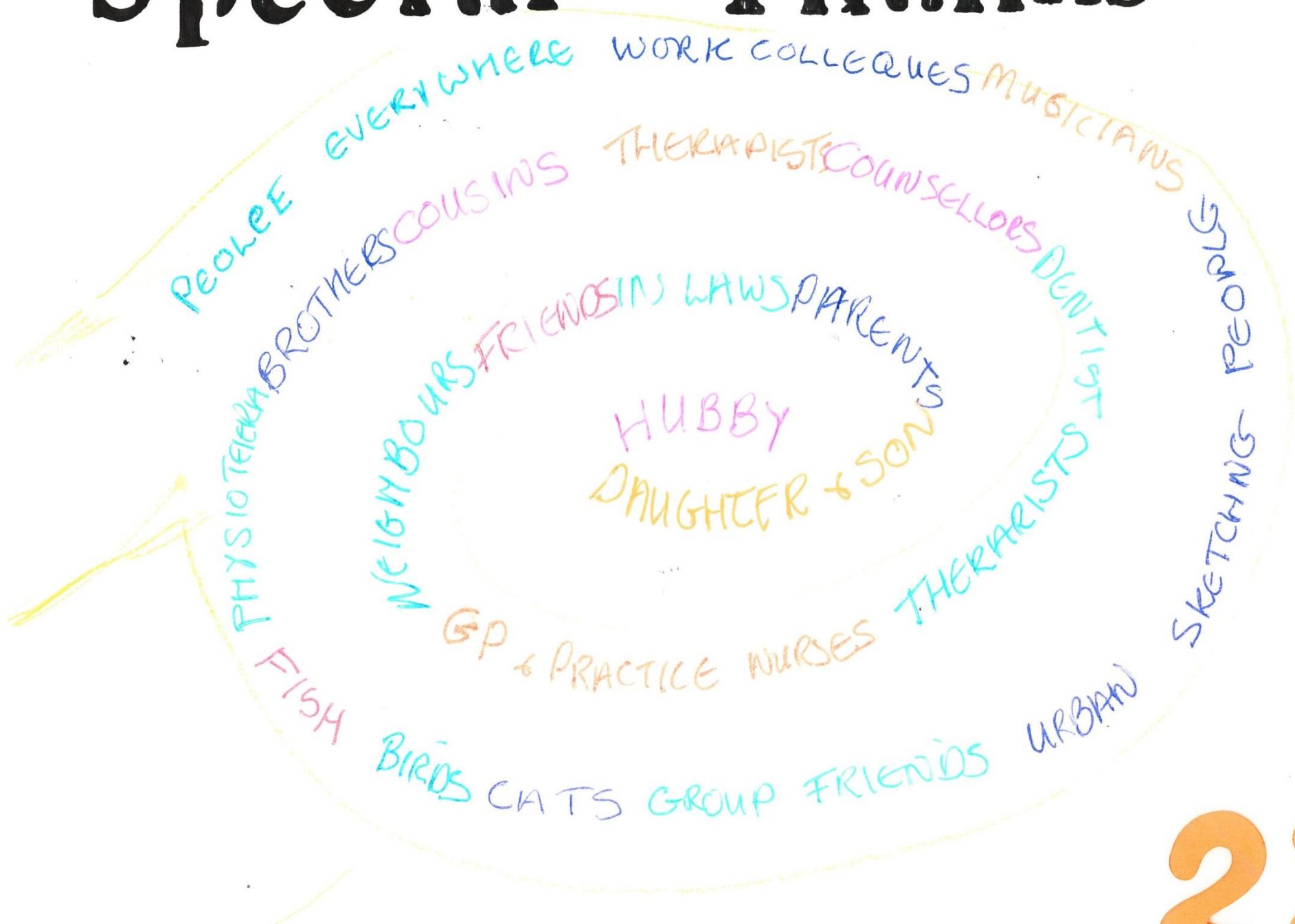
North South  
East West  
Home is  
always best...



20

# Special Thanks

to



22

# Organisations & other useful stuff

to make it easy!

- Headways
- Basic
- Creative Living
- Lumosity
- Creative Support
- Stroke Association
- Different Strokes
- Speak Easy
- Access to Work
- Physical Activity Service

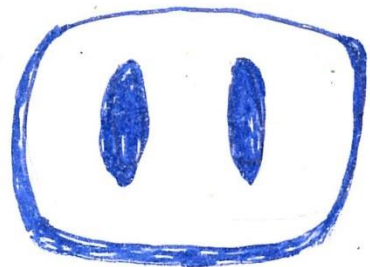


"Life Jugs" getting  
Back on the Table



24

PRESSING  
THE  
PAUSE



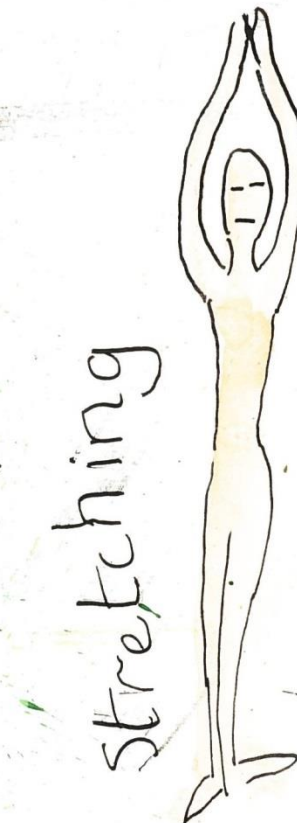
Button

Mary Burke  
2015



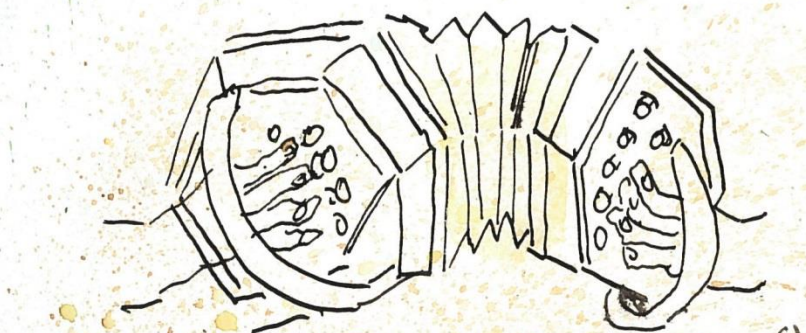
Feeding

watching



stretching

Reflection

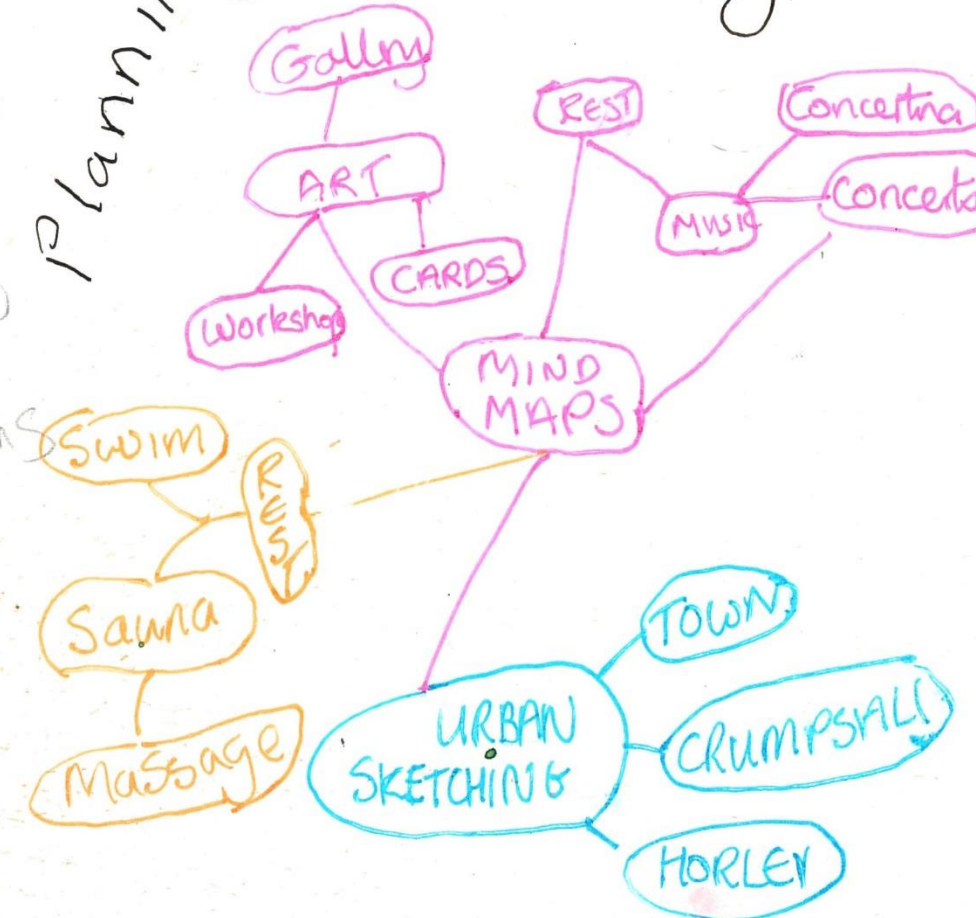


Listening and Playing



Planning and Pacing

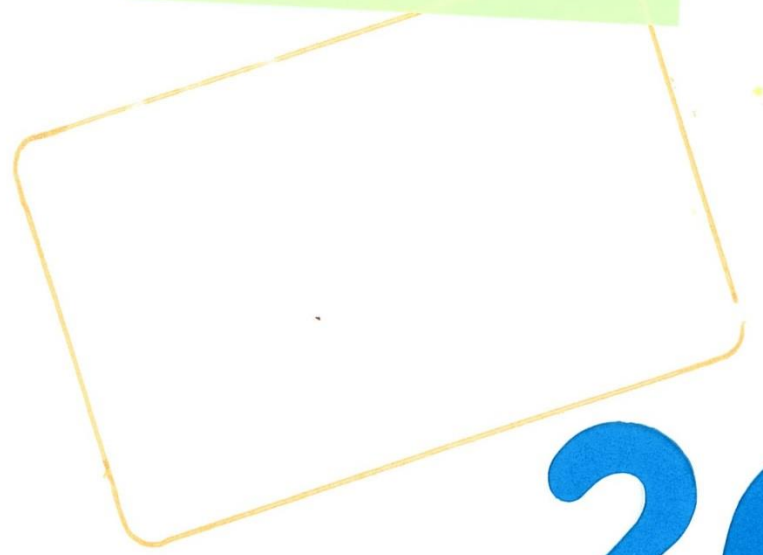
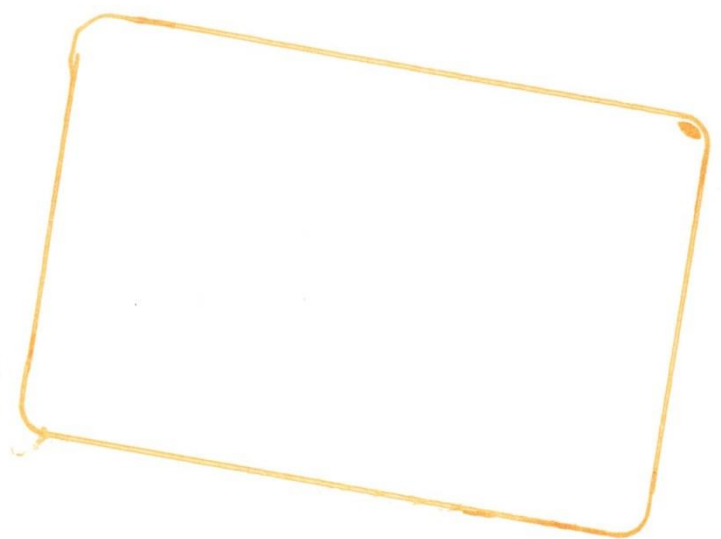
Fullstop  
Commas



# INVITATION for READERS TO COMMENT

# SHARE EXPERIENCES OR THOUGHTS

Recovery is a long long process. "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."  
The motto of my life after a stroke. Small steps are better than no steps.



# 28 WHO CARES?

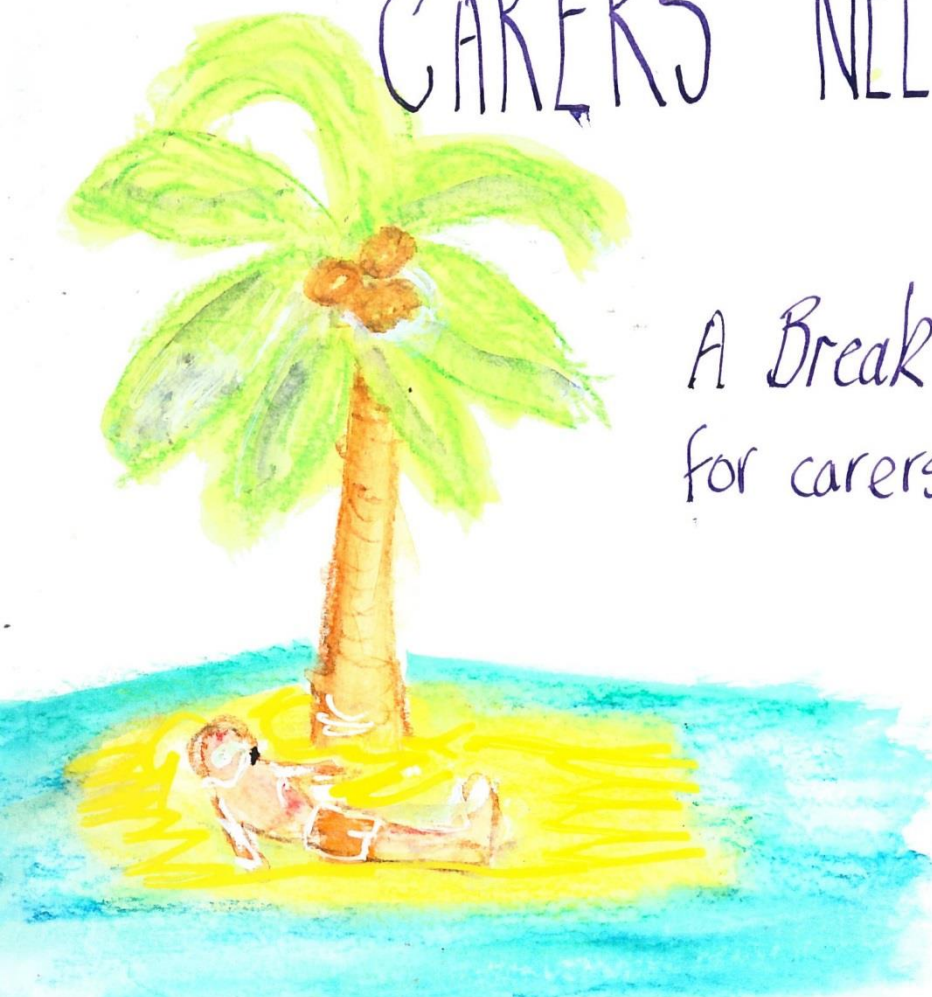
Children Partners Family Friends Neighbours



All carers deserve support even if you don't live with the person.  
A Carers Needs Assessment is the best way to find out about what can help you in your caring role.

# CARERS NEED CARE TOO!

Carers Direct  
0808 802 0202  
[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect)



A Break from caring is essential for carers to remain happy & healthy.




## Carers Individual Budget

- can offer financial support for:
- a holiday
  - domestic help
  - decorating costs
  - gym membership
  - day trips / breaks
  - self pampering

# partens perspective

WHAT THE F.....K just happened?

JUST WHEN WE THOUGHT  
WE'D MANAGED TO GET OUR  
LIVES BACK

**BANG** 

DOWN TO EARTH WITH  
A BUMP

KEEP PADDLING PUFF!  
KEEP COPING SWEAT!

KEEP LEARNING TEARS!

ANOTHER ONE  
OF LIFE'S

CURVE BALLS

**30**

To Be or  
Not to Be...  
...together  
is not just  
the Question

MAJOR LIFE  
CHANGES

Empty Nest  
Retirement  
Redundancy

MOVING  
FORWARD

Travelling  
Interests  
Growing  
Music

Remembering  
Celebrating  
Supporting  
Connecting

Staying  
Same  
on the  
Page

Stretching  
Changing  
Growing  
Planning  
Playing

3

To Work or Not to Work Is that the <sup>other</sup> Question?

**Some Options**

Extend Sickleave  
Reduce Hours  
Reemployment  
Job Centre assessment  
Ill Health  
Retirement  
Early Retirement

**Agencies Contacted**

Work Managers  
Access to Work  
Occupational & Physiotherapists  
Trade Unions  
Financial Advisors  
Work & Pensions  
Welfare Rights

**Decision**

Each person has a different work situation that needs individual approach  
Take time to find right support

# Long Service Award

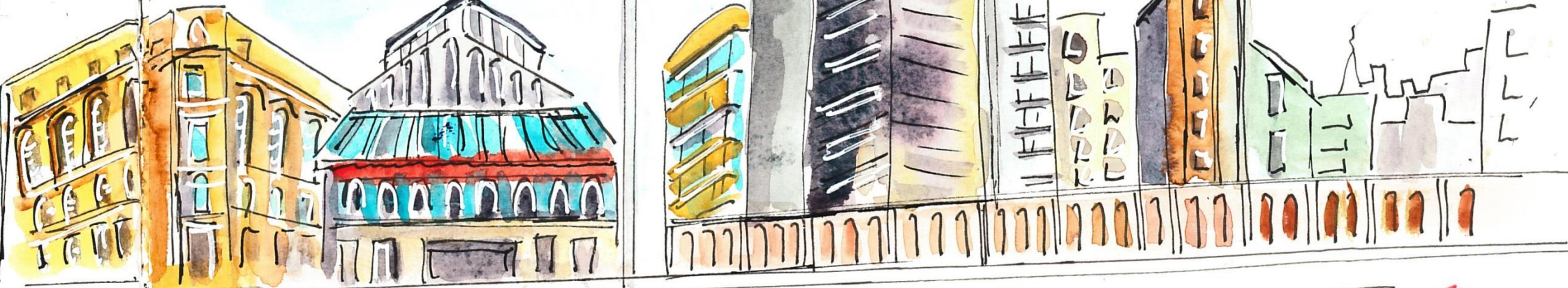
This certificate is presented to

*Mary Burke*

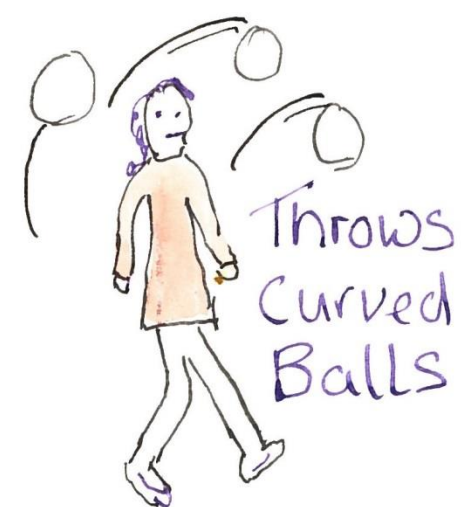
In recognition of her long and valuable service to the National Health Service

*Wyn Dignan*  
Wyn Dignan  
Chair

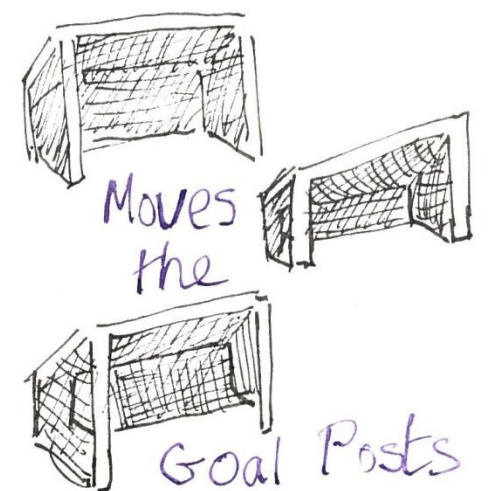
*Michele Moran*  
Michele Moran  
Chief Executive



JOURNEY BACK ON THE REGULAR STREET WITH LIFE'S CHALLENGES AND CHANGES BELOW SO WHAT EVER THE FINAL DESTINATION ITS TIME TO



Throws Curved Balls



Moves the Goal Posts



Shakes Up Life Snow Globe

34



Don't Know Whats Around the Corner



Pulls The Rug From You

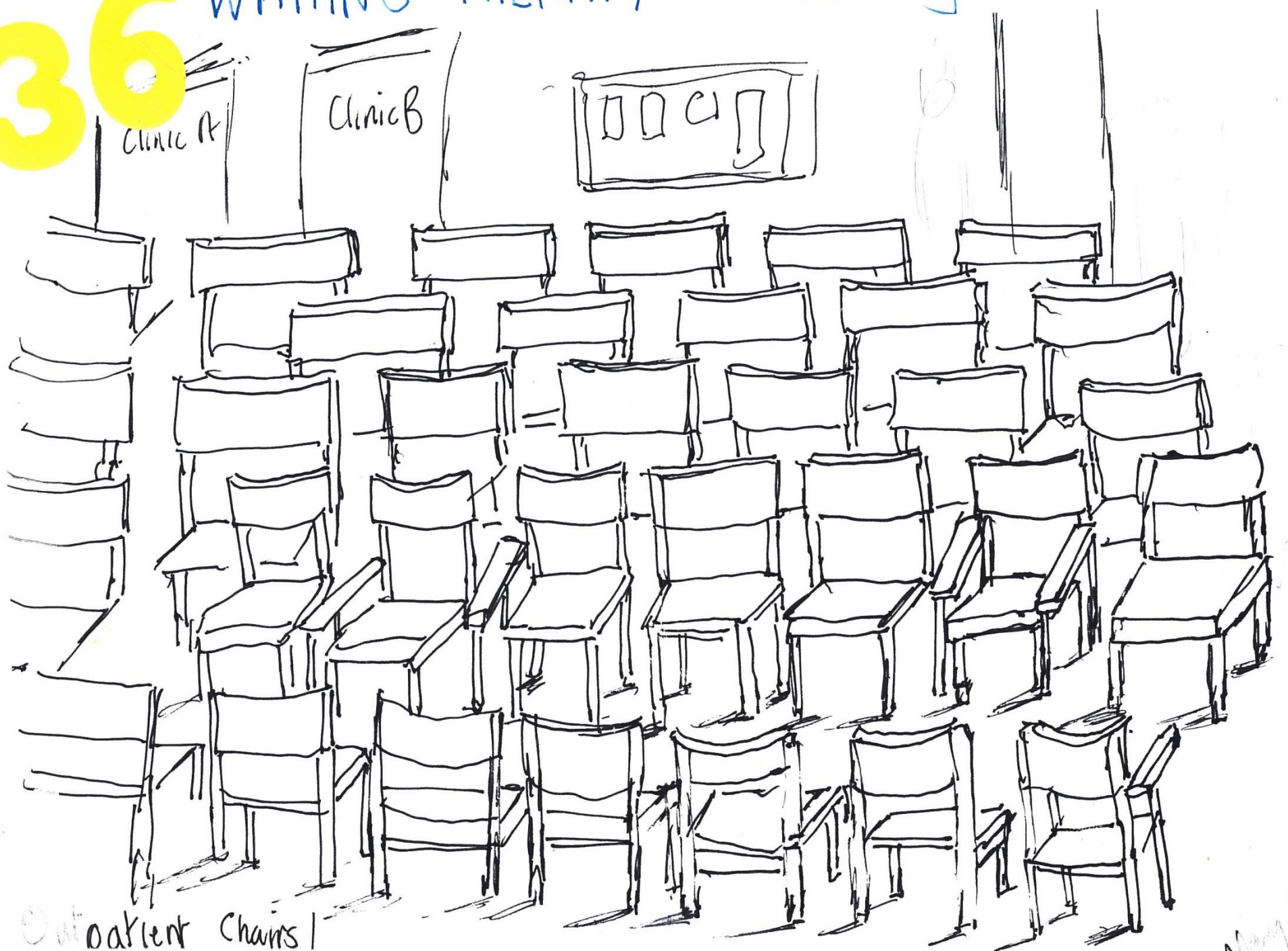


Moves Your Cheese!



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WAITING THERAPY SKETCHING CHAIRS

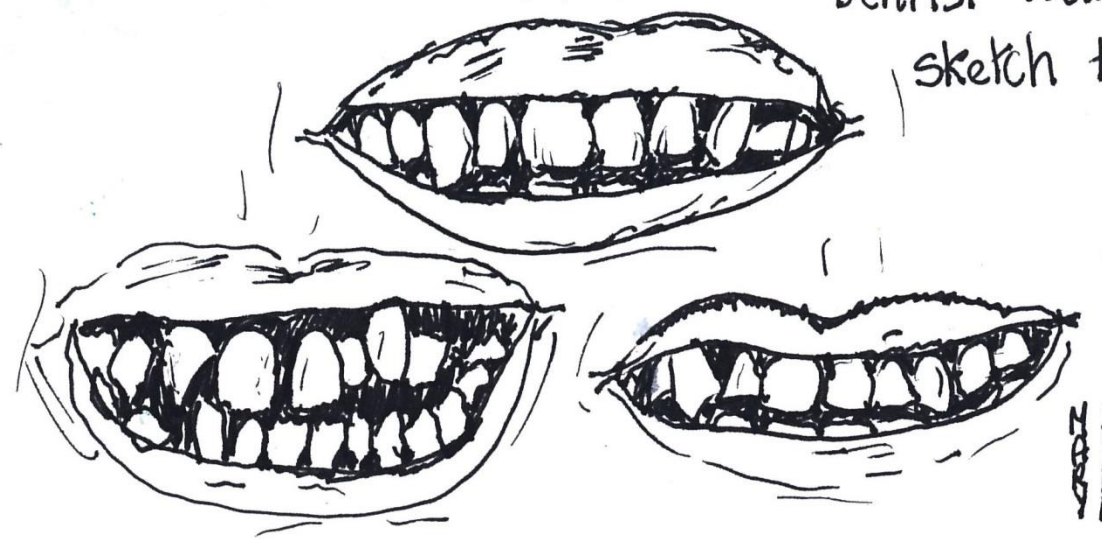


Outpatient chairs

Mary

HEALTH ISSUES ONGOING!

How To Relax in the Dentist Waiting Room.... sketch teeth !!



THE DENTAL SURGERY 01 06 13



Relax Mary!

37

Neuro Play

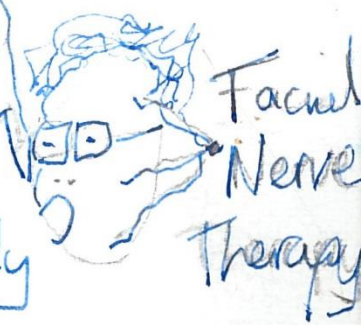
Finding

My Feet

Nerve Damage

SPEECH THERAPY

Speak Slowly  
Speak Easy  
Speak To Much!



24th May 2016

Step Out



Great turn out for Stepping Out for Stroke Event at Whitworth Park Good to see Services Users Workers, Medical & Nursing Staff, Physios & Therapists & Carers together. + Gallery tour tea & cakes.

Step Out



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Thank you

for taking part in Step out for Stroke and for your ongoing support

Together we can conquer stroke



Step Out for Stroke

Congratulations

Mary Burke

on making a big difference to stroke survivors and their families

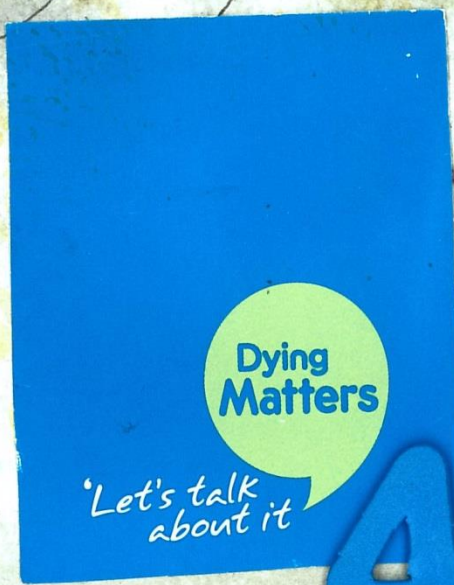
# ONE LAST THING...

Like it or not we all need to face fact we are on a equal footing when it comes to dying ... so talking about hopes & fears is brought forward when you have a health scare.

On a positive point & the highest point in Manchester my favourite outdoor place Bell Tower Heston Park, from which I can see Blackley Cemetery on the opposite side. Feeling happy & alive knowing I can walk to the top!!

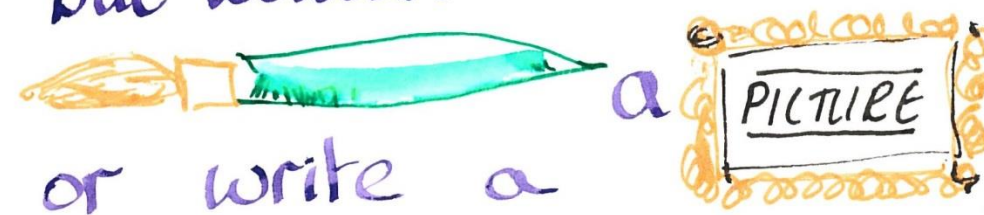


Dust if you must but bear in mind old age will come & not be kind! And when you go & go you must. You yourself will make more dust!



# 40

.... DUST <sup>if you</sup> MUST but wouldnt it be better



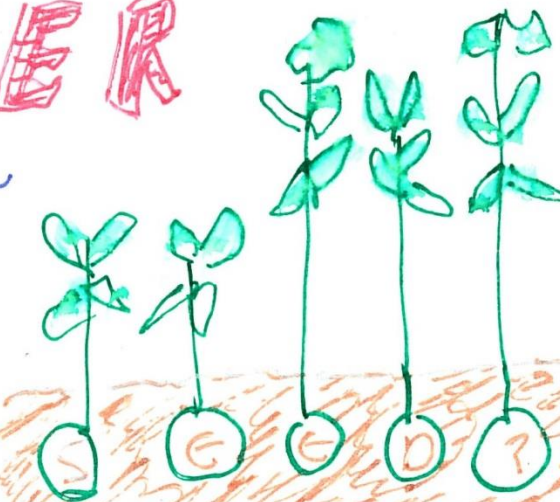
or write a

# LETTER

# BAKE



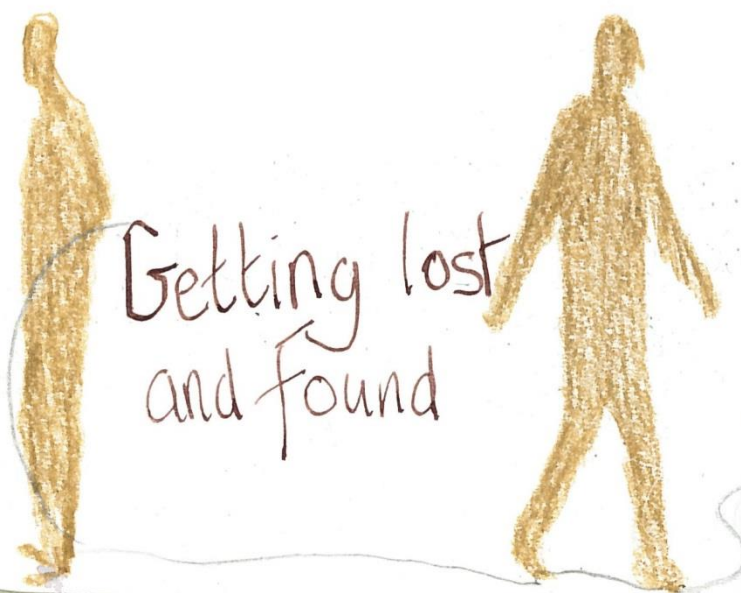
or



↳ Ponder the DIFFERENCE between WANT & NEED

Rose McKinnon

Dont let Topographic Amnesia stop ya in your tracks .....



Getting lost and found

BACK ON TRACK



A stroke of luck



STEAMING AHEAD



Embracing Changes



No Regrets

BACK ON LEVEL



Only Looking Back to see how far you... →

CAME..

GET BACK IN THE SADDLE ?

bad coordination

NOT BIKEZY !

poor vision

wobble wobble



reduced balance fall over

neuropathy getting lost