



NO 5 - DECEMBER 1994

Asperger United is a self-help group run by and for people with Asperger Syndrome. Its aim is to put people with the condition in touch with one another and to provide them with information so that they can lead more independent lives.

EDITORIAL

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers

My name is Dave Wright, Mark Bebbington from the National Autistic Society and Pam Yates from the Maudsley has given me the chance to become your new Editor with Ian Reynolds as sub-Editor. I feel elated at being asked to do a new job. I hope to give my best as Editor. I want to give some personal background and discuss with you the reader why I've been given the job and what it is about me that makes me want to do this task.

My name is Dave Wright, I have lived in Essex all my life. Recently my work has been helping out at the Roundwood Garden Centre for Social Services. I communicate with customers and staff at Roundwood, give the prices of dinners and of vegetables and help with sales. I also do some clerical and plant work. I have a social worker who helps me and I have a good family.

I want to go back a little and explain my family and why I am your Editor of Asperger United. My family started life in Epping where my father was a Commercial Director for the Legion Publishing Company. My father's firm went through financial wrangling, my family ended up in Tilbury to start a business in cycles and toys. We worked hard until my mother took up a curtain shop in Shenfield, Brentwood. My father retired early and helped with the accounts of this business. In 1960's and 70's I went to school, my learning was slow because I was thought to have a mental handicap. It wasn't until I was 29 when I learnt from Dr Pat Howlin and Pam Yates about my autism. After various labouring jobs I went back to Braintree College where I improved my 'O' levels. I have English Language D, English Literature C, History C, Geography CSE and 5 CSE's. I have other qualifications in Drama and Maths.

When Pam asked me to become Editor of Asperger United, I thought this a wonderful chance to communicate with Autistic and like minded people. I hope that as Editor you would consider me as your friend and fellow scribbler on Autistic articles, so please send to Pam and myself articles on autism from people and interested parties.

A postscript to this article is that recently my father died and I am completely dependant on my mother. I wish to write about my father in a later article. Before presenting the next article I want to point out that Graeme Lawson my friend and fellow autistic person, has helped out in extremely difficult circumstances namely my own. Graeme worked at clearing up my own home recently. He then helped me write this article. Thank you Graeme.

Please remember this is our newsletter. Write to me c/o Mark Bebbington at the National Autistic Society with your articles and letters.

Dave Wright

The Life of John Joyce: A Personal Biography

An interview by David Wright

John Joyce is now 50 years old. John was diagnosed by members of the Home Based Team at the Maudsley Hospital when he was 48 years old. Mr Joyce has worked for Her Majesty's Government for most of his life. John's present position is Administration Officer for the Home Office. He has kept a good life of hard work for 30 years. First John worked in the Ministry of Agriculture. After an argument with his boss at the time, he was moved to the Home Office. John rakes through the files to find out how long someone has been in Britain. John worked in the Ministry of Agriculture for 15 years. John attends university in order to get a Bachelor of Arts degree. This is a qualification in Art, Music, Literature, History and Philosophy. He has bought many books for his studies. On Sundays John goes to St Elphedges in Wallington. He helps the disabled on trips to Lourdes in France. John's ambition is to retire on his small pension built up from government work. While travelling to his work every day, except the weekend John reads. John has also attended a course in assertiveness training which taught him communication skills and self confidence. John works well on his own initiative, his main studies for his degree started in 1981. John also learns languages at open university. The tragedy of his situation is that he was only diagnosed at 48 years old. Hopefully now with increased awareness of autism and especially Asperger Syndrome waiting so long for a diagnosis will not be other peoples experience. Lads picked on John at school, this was a frightening experience something he is now reliving. John is now happy to accept his civil servants criticisms. John will retire at 65 and why not, he has worked hard enough. Life is full of experiences that are sheer hard work.

ON MY HOLIDAY

by Ian Reynolds

This year for the first time on my own I went to Blackpool for a week on a coach tour.

Day 1 - pick up coach at Romford Essex, stop at Grantham motorway services for lunch 45 minutes then on to Wigan, stop for afternoon tea 20 minutes, arriving Blackpool early evening at the Hotel. 6.30pm dinner, rest of the evening is ours to do what we wanted.

Day 2 - off to Fleetwood market for 4 hours then back to Blackpool for afternoon, evening at 8 o'clock on coach tour to see the lights lasting one hour then when we got back I took a walk from south pier to north pier and took a tram back to hotel.

Day 3 - Couch tour to lake district taking in lake Windermere where we stopped for lunch and could have had an optional trip on a boat. We then went on to Kendle, stopped for afternoon tea, coach back to hotel arriving late afternoon about 5pm.

Day 4 - To stay in Blackpool for the day or optional trip to Chester, so I took in Chester. Left at 9.15am getting back to hotel at Blackpool 4pm afternoon.

Day 5 - Friday left for home at 9.15am stopping at Blackwell for lunch and at Northampton service station for 10 minutes arriving home at 5.15pm.

I booked up 2 months in advance at my local travel agent for my holiday to Blackpool. Cost of holiday was £150 plus spending money including breakfast and evening meal (dinner). Best times to go early in the year or late in the year.

HELPFUL HINTS ABOUT TRAVEL IN LONDON

by Ian Reynolds

To travel around London is best by underground train or bus. If coming from out of town, get a train to London. Best time to travel 9.30am or 10am and ask for a cheap day return, all zones ticket for trains and buses. Price check at station booking office.

What you can do:

- 1) Art Galleries Several but the one I have been to in Picadilly costs £5.50
- 2) Exhibitions On all year at Olympia, Earls Court, Kensington box office or send a stamped addressed envelope for a brochure. For dates of whats on please ring box office or see brochure.
- 3) London things to do - Theatre - prices start from balcony or upper circle £5 - £11, dress circle £18.75 - £32. Stalls £12.75 - £32.

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Prices start from Upper slips £3.50 but very high up in house. Lower slips £3.50 - £10 restricted view, semi-restricted view £18 - £29 near top.

Amphitheatre - restricted view £8.50 - £29. Rear sides £34 - £62. E-K centre £28 - £45.50. A-D centre £30.50 - £49.50. Balcony restricted view £12.50 - £21. A-C sides £34 - £62. A-C centre £60 - £93. Boxes (4 seats) £160 ? - £248. Balcony Grand tier (4 seats) £340. Grand tier semi-restricted view £62 - £97.50. AC centre £85 - £133.50. Stalls restricted view £13 - £26. Stage AB-C sides £44 - £76.

B sides £56 - £87. C-D centre £60 - £93. A sides £68 - £105.

A-B centre £77 - £117. Orchestra stalls, sides £73 - £110. Centre £77 - £117. Day seats (rear amphitheatre) sold 10am on day £18 - £29. Standing rear stalls circle £8.50 - £14 sold 1½ hours before performance. When top artists are there prices could go up to £250 each ticket. Starting times 7pm - 8pm, finish 9.50pm - 10.45pm. Some are 2 to 3 hours but one opera is 6 hours, starts 4.30 - 5.30pm mostly sung in German or Italian with subtitles with clear view from some parts of house. Please book early by post or at the opera house, booking forms are at opera house and prices are on a board inside the ticket office.

Ballet - Upper slips, restricted view £2, high up in the house at top.

Lower slips, semi-restricted view £7.50 - £12.50, (near top) restricted view £2.

Amphitheatre restricted view £4 - £6.50. Rear sides £7.50 - £12.50. E-K centre £12.50 - £22. A-D centre £13.50 - £24. Balcony - restricted view £6.50 - £9.

A-C sides £13.50 - £25. A-C centre £21 - £41.50. Boxes (4 seats) balcony £54 - £100.

Boxes (4 seats) grand tier £136 - £234. Grand tier semi-restricted view £22 - £43.

A-C centre £34 - £58.50. Stalls circle restricted view £7 - £9.50 stage A B C sides £15.50 - £31. B sides £19.50 - £39. C-D centre £21 - £42. A sides £24 -

£47. A-B centre £27.50 - £55. Orchestra stalls £27.50 - £55. Centre sides £26 - £52. Day seats £7.50 - £12.50 sold from 10am on the day. Standing £7 - £9.50 sold 1½ hours before ballet. Times start 7pm - 7.30pm finish time 9.50pm - 10.25pm evening. Some matinees start 2pm - 2.30pm on Saturdays, but please check with box office if on that week mostly single works some mixed works. They have ballet season and opera season or mixed season but please check with box office.

Plays & Theatre

Straight and Narrow - Wyndhams theatre (play)
 Stop the World I Want To Get Off - Lyric theatre, Shaftsbury Avenue (musical)
 Matador - The Queens Theatre, London (musical)
 Run For Your Wife - Aldwych Theatre (comedy)
 The Hunting of the Snark - Prince Edward Theatre (musical)
 Stop in the Name of Love - The Fabulous Singletts Comedy Theatre
 A musical celebration
 Ken Dodd - London Palladium (comedian)
 Children of Eden - Prince Edward Theatre (musical)
 Rejoice - Vaudeville Theatre (musical play)
 Brigadoon - Victoria Palace Theatre (musical)
 Budgie - Cambridge Theatre (musical)
 Oliver - London Palladium (comedy)
 Shows seen in last 5 years, seen more before usually sit in upper circle or balcony which is cheapest.

Other ways of having fun are:-

- 1) Golf - which I play
- 2) Tennis - which I watch at Wimbledon, London in the summer, I stand or get a ground admission ticket that is cheapest way, but long queues to get in.
- 3) Phonecard collecting buy cheap ones at fairs shop or find around left in the phone box.
- 4) Cricket - watch test matches in London one of the 5 days.

LETTERS/CONTACTS

- * In order to ensure the privacy of contributors to Asperger United full addresses will not be printed. If you would like to reply to any of the letters or requests for contacts please write to the N.A.S and we will pass your letter on to the appropriate person.

Anna Cohen
Barnet

November 1994

Hi David

You wrote to me recently asking me to write to you and tell you about my holiday in America. This is what my holiday was like in the States.

I went first to Colorado to visit my older sister and her husband, and then I went to Arizona to see the Grand Canyon which was so massive it was an unbelievable sight, I climbed down it a little way but I soon got tired, so I went back up and took a plane ride over the Grand Canyon. From the plane I could see everything even the 'Colorado river' which runs through the Grand Canyon in Arizona.

We also went to Las Vegas which is a very big gambling centre in Nevada. I gambled a little on the fruit machine even though you are supposed to be 21 to gamble in Nevada. Sometimes there are shows going on just outside some of the major hotels. One hotel put on a pirate show another hotel had a 'fire and fountain show' going on every quarter of an hour. Where certain parts of the fountain would suddenly burst into flames and water would squirt up from the fountain.

There was also the restaurant 'Planet Hollywood' there. I went inside even though I never ate anything in there, and saw the old lady in her rocking chair, which was heavily featured in all the Psycho films, and I saw other props used in Hollywood movies.

I have been to America 5 times and I've had most of my best holidays there.

Anna Cohen

LETTERS/CONTACTS

Graeme Lawson
Colchester

My name is Graeme Lawson, I work and study at Colchester College. I am studying computer literacy otherwise known as Clat. Next year I am thinking of doing GCSE's. I have an interest in the travel industry. This interest I hold in common with other autistics. My future career could be in the travel industry.

I have a girlfriend named Nicola whom I met at a former residence. I live in Colchester. I will be moving to another address in Colchester. This is my future address * for anyone wishing to write to me. I have studied very hard at Colchester college and help my parents at the weekends. My parents live in Tiptree 10 miles from where I live in Colchester. My mother and father are an invaluable help to me at home and in my life.

Graeme Lawson

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POEM

THE ROTHERHAM SHOW

by David Miedzianik

Yesterday I went to the Rotherham Show
 I stopped there a few hours
 While I was there it'd rain, and then the sun'd shine
 I went to the music tent where they'd got some folk singers
 They were busy tuning-up while I was there
 They were also doing some sound checks too

Yesterday I went to the Rotherham show
 I saw there a lot of people that I know

I went to where the Labour party were
 The MP dennis Mac Shane wasn't there
 I hung around for about 2 or 3 hours but he didn't turn up
 I kept walking backwards and forwards from the music tent
 To where the Labour party were
 At about 2pm I'd had enough
 I'd also not seen Ray Hearne and that was tough
 Walking about everywhere by myself sure makes life rough

Yesterday I went to the Rotherham show
 I saw there a lot of people that I know

I thought I might go to the shop and get a video tape
 Although for some reason I didn't get one yesterday
 I can't afford to get a lot of pre-recorded video tapes
 My mum used to say I'd never live by myself
 Because I'd buy a tape or something instead of something to eat
 I get my money Thursday, I might wait till then to get a tape

Yesterday I went to the Rotherham show
 I saw there a lot of people that I know

The Rotherham show is still on today the 11th September 1994
 Yesterday I went to visit Paul he just lives,
 just up the road from Clifton Park
 The Rotherham show is held in Clifton Park
 He was out but his wife and kids were in
 His wife made a mug of tea
 I only stopped about 15 minutes or so
 This was long enough to drink the tea and then to go

Yesterday I went to the Rotherham show
I saw there a lot of people that I know

These days they're deducting less money for gas and electricity,
From my pension book
This gives me more money on my pension book
I'm not any better off because if I get more money I blow it
I sometimes blow it on fish and chips at nights
Or I blow it on things to eat and mugs of tea in the daylight

Yesterday I didn't blow much on the Rotherham show
All in all it was a cheap day out
It was a shame I didn't see Helen about

11th September 1994

NOTE: David has a book of poems entitled 'Taking the Load Off My Mind' available from the Child Development Research Unit, Nottingham University, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, price £6.50 including post & packing.