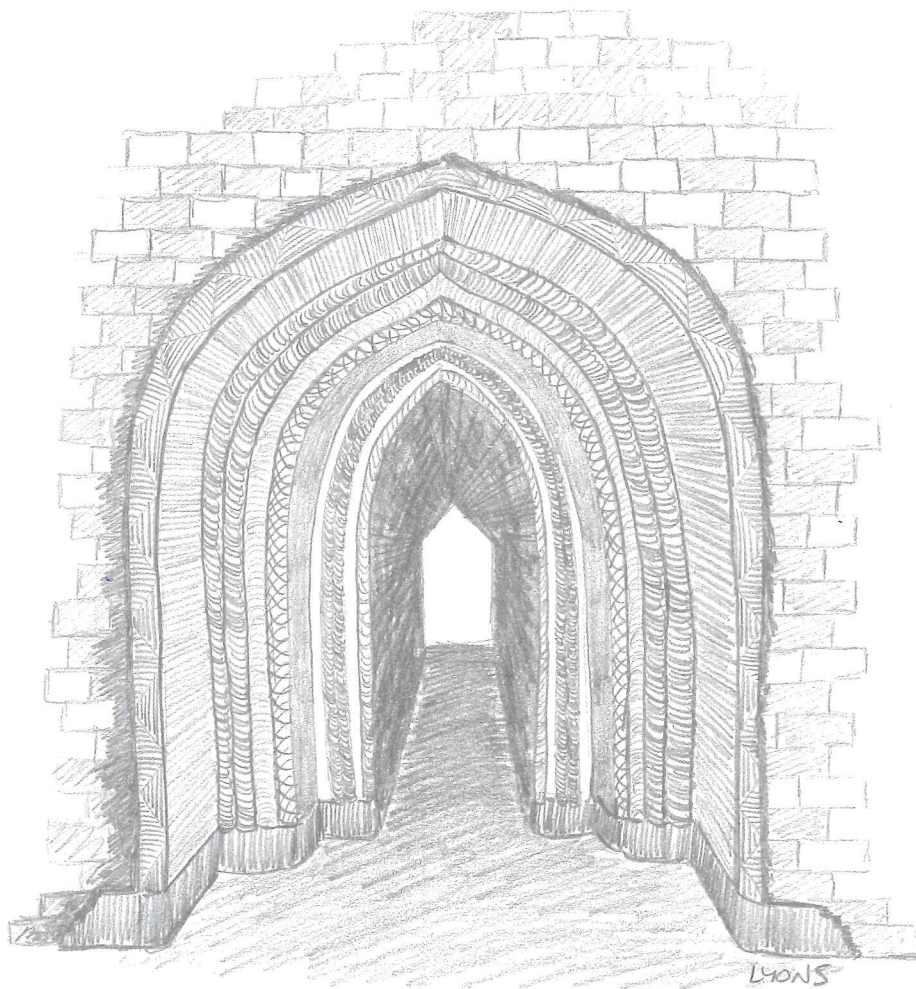


Produced by and for people with Asperger syndrome

united Asperger

Edition 42 April 2005



The National
Autistic Society



Asperger United is a self-help newsletter run by and for people with Asperger syndrome. The newsletter aims to put people with the condition in touch with each other and to share information so that they can lead more independent lives.

Asperger United is free to people in the UK with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. We ask for a contribution of £6 per year from overseas readers and £10 from professionals and institutions to cover postage costs.

Editor John Joyce

Additional support The National Autistic Society's Publications Department

Please send all correspondence and subscription requests to:

Asperger United
c/o The National Autistic Society
393 City Road
London EC1V 1NG
Tel: 020 7903 3541
Fax: 020 7903 3767
Email: asp.utd@nas.org.uk

Subscribing to *Asperger United*

Tel: 020 7903 3541
Fax: 020 7903 3767
Email: asp.utd@nas.org.uk

All we need is your name and address and we will add you to the mailing list – free of charge to people with a diagnosis!

Thank you to George Cox who kindly produced the illustrations included in the Pen Pal Network section. Thank you to Graeme Lawson for producing the *AU* logo.

Please note that the views expressed in Asperger United are not necessarily those of the editor, The National Autistic Society or those involved in the publication of the newsletter.

Contributions for the next issue should reach us by 1 June 05

Asperger United was founded in 1993 by Pamela Yates and Patricia Howlin, in association with the Maudsley Hospital, and Mark Bebbington and Judy Lynch of The National Autistic Society.

This was in response to a recognised dearth of services for people with Asperger syndrome and the potential for self help and networking as a means of support for this group.

The provisions for editor's and sub-editor's post was to develop a publication that was truly the voice of the people it was aimed at. This post also provided the possibility of work experience and responsibility and has benefited those who have held the position. These are Richard Exley, David Wright, Martin Coppola, Ian Reynolds and the current editor, John Joyce.

Pamela Yates provided support and advice to the editors until the publication was handed over to The National Autistic Society in 2000.

The name *Asperger United* was chosen by the group of original readers as the most 'appropriate name' for the publication. This was suggested by Anna Cohen.



Dear readers

Welcome to the Spring edition of your newspaper. Hope you all enjoyed Easter, which I have spent in various European capitals in order to celebrate my retirement - the end of 40 years of Government service.

It has come to our attention that some readers with visual impairment have had difficulty reading the small print in previous issues of *Asperger United*. To comply with the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) 'Clear print' guidelines we have decided to increase our print size from 10 point to a more accessible 12 point.

However, as we are still limited to 12 pages per issue, long articles may have to be edited depending on how much space we have available.

We can also, on request, print off the occasional article in larger font, for example in 14 point, for those who need it. These will be printed as a word document and will not be available in the newsletter format. I hope this will make things easier for those of you who have phoned in about this particular problem.

May I thank you all for your usual high standard of presentation and apologies to those who have not yet had their articles published. We are looking into the possibility of increasing our page number as the amount of contributions has increased significantly. I'll update you on that next issue.

Best wishes

John Joyce

The blanket

For most of my life
I've been wrapped in a blanket
Whilst under it
I am unable to interact
Stuck with super glued outlooks
And thought patterns that circle
Over and over the same repeating facts.
Under this blanket
My movements lack the motors of response
And idiosyncratic gestures remain reclusive
Hidden under the thick blanket
Of behaviours often seen as illusive.
Watching the purple flowers sway outside
Trapped in my perceived haven
Marooned within my own world
With a cup of St. John's Wort
And a chin left coarsely unshaven.
But I just wished people understood
This syndrome and all the days I felt alone
Because in an under adaptive world
Only knowledge will lead me to a sense of dignity
Allowing me to see little beyond the blanket
And that for the first time in my whole life -
To know what it's like to be free.

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Dear Readers

I am 40 now, and had the diagnosis of Aspergers Syndrome (AS) at the Cambridge Lifespan Asperger Syndrome Service (CLASS) when I was 36. This came a year after seeking professional help to deal with the depression I knew I was suffering from. Needless to say, my GP prescribed anti-depressants, but she was keen to refer me to a therapist, as she was sure that the diagnosis of depression did not encompass all that I had told her. The outcome of the appointment with the therapist I then saw was the suggestion of AS and subsequent referral to CLASS.

In an article I once read, those with AS were compared to a traveller in a foreign country with a phrasebook. This certainly resonated with me as a good comparison. I struggle continuously with the fact that superficially I do come across as perfectly able, when in fact my composed and reasonably personable façade masks what is well articulated by another phrase I came across (not related to AS but nevertheless it struck a chord with me) 'there is nothing between the lines but the great void of nothingness' - well-disguised by coping strategies refined over the years.

My 'modus operandi' principally consists of reducing all the expectations that come with the reality of daily life to a series of functional tasks.

This is an advantage insofar as I consequently approach my responsibilities in a very measured and ordered way. It is a bit of a tightrope, however. I am so easily overwhelmed by unexpected demands or setbacks and often spend a disproportionate amount of time simply trying to regain order and a plan to work to.

I have come up with various analogies over the years, in my attempts to illustrate how I experience myself in relation to the immediate world around me. One is that I feel like a stone in a river, the river somehow representing the course of life and the impermeable stone being me - edged along by the current but not actually being inwardly moved or touched. Sometimes the inability to access my own emotions is almost painful: I feel so tangibly shut off.

Another image is that of a helium balloon, tenuously attached to the reality of daily life, just a thin string keeping it from disappearing into space. It is this lack of centre which I experience so strongly, and which leads to social interaction being such a strain. I am all too conscious of carrying a misleading mask and my aim really is to be as inconspicuous as possible for fear of drawing any attention to myself. In the end my coping mechanisms are learnt and quite hollow, and don't stand up to the challenge that comes with participating in

meetings or social gatherings. I do usually manage to get on quite well with people on a one-to-one level though, and have a small number of lasting friendships. I have also been involved in the occasional relationship, but never anything leading to a healthy, longer-term commitment.

The best way to describe my daily experience is that I live life at a distance, at one remove. It is a fundamental block and basically means that for virtually every action I take, however simple, I have to consciously, as opposed to intuitively, step into that situation. I can never quite shake off the sense of being superimposed onto scenes rather than actually being a living part. I liken this to stepping on and off the stage: I feel that I am constantly in fear of forgetting my lines, so to speak, or just not having any.

I am forever planning ahead, creating an order for the coming days, including the most mundane of tasks. It is a 'script' that lacks any vitality and therefore the ability to improvise - ie actually to live a life. I see myself very clearly managing an existence rather than living a life.

Finding a niche for myself, where I can make a meaningful contribution but not be pushed beyond the limits of my coping strategies, remains a delicate balancing act.

Continued on page 5

I have been living in a community for over five years now, where I work as an organic gardener with responsibility for a house and some community administration.

There is a well-established basic structure and routine to daily life which suits me well, but the demands that come with this daily life are many and various, and inevitably often do not tend to fit naturally with my need to impose order and clarity before I can work effectively.

I would say the situation is at best workable, at worst a source of quiet despair when my limitations are once again painfully exposed and, in between the ongoing anxiety, of feeling that I am not quite managing.

I sometimes get so angry with myself when confronted by the depths of suffering and injustice in the world, making my problems seem ridiculously insignificant. For some years I thought my niche ought to be in some way working with those actively involved with human and animal rights, or the environment – areas which I do actually dwell on a great deal.

What I still encounter in this regard is that I cannot bridge the gap between what I inwardly hold to be true and the reality of functioning effectively within a group. In solitude I can believe my ideas are well-informed and formulated and therefore I should be able to express them, but any clarity of thought I might have had dissolves as soon as I am

confronted by the reality of articulating these ideas verbally. On the rare occasions when I do force myself to speak, what comes out is awkward and clumsy and, by and large, I simply don't contribute to discussion.

Clearly the life situations and personal experiences of those diagnosed with AS vary enormously, just as for those who haven't been diagnosed. I am always somehow reassured to come across accounts relating familiar experiences. I have tried to be as accurate and honest as possible in capturing the essence of how it is to be me, so to speak, and would like to think that it strikes a chord somewhere amongst the *Asperger United* readership.

Thanks for reading!
Catherine

Nottingham Aspergers support group - update

Our group is still going strong. In common with many other Asperger people, we enjoy lively discussions on politics and that other topic that always comes around in Asperger circles – climate and weather facts. We also have an informal session after the main session, when we make our way to a local pub. This generally goes well. We are currently debating whether to link up with another AS group in Leicester – we will be talking about this at a later date.

We are an open group so anyone in the East Midlands with a diagnosis of Aspergers can join in – we meet on the first Tuesday evening of

every month at 7.30pm at the West Bridgford Tennis Club, near to County Hall. Just drop in.

We have recently been discussing the 'Mr Bean' series and would be interested in hearing readers' opinions. I am sure you are familiar with 'Mr Bean' and we at the Nottingham group strongly think he is a deliberate – if not unkindly – depiction of a person with Aspergers. His irascibility, anger and indignation are all Asperger traits. He can also present duplicity, which I think is an earnest if light hearted portrayal of Aspergers. What do readers think and is anyone offended by this?



letters to the editor

Dear Mr Joyce

I was pleased to receive the latest copy of *Asperger United*, and as usual there are some good bits to compensate for those not-so-good.

Good bits first! Thank you for the questions and answers to/from Dr Wing, following on from the report of her introduction to the October conference. In her introduction she mentioned the book by Mark Haddon (which I was glad to read recently) and I wondered why there has been no mention of it in *AU*. Please can someone with enough experience tell me, and any other readers of *AU* who may be interested, whether the portrayal of 'Christopher' is true to life, and a fair picture of what AS is for some people.

I laughed at the final question, as my wife would certainly understand the question about 'persistent and contrary'. I say I am liable to answer what she asks, which isn't always what she means, but she does not see it that way. I don't mean to be awkward and I sometimes manage to stop myself from correcting other people's inaccuracies.

Thank you also for three good long articles from readers.

Not-so-good bits! Under my letter printed in issue 31 you said my 'reading list idea is a really good one!' but items have been spasmodic; one each in issues 23, 35, 39 and 40 (which I bought on your recommendation) but four reviews in two years is not what I expected, and since *Curious Incident* is in the bestseller list I am surprised it has not had a mention - **G Ball**

Just a word to let you know that my website, *Asperger syndrome - from the horse's mouth* is back online again at its new address of <http://www.angelfire.co4/asperger>

George Handley

Dear Editor - I am always pleased to receive my copy of *AU*. This time I read with great interest, the letter from Ametrine Ruth Lavender. I must say being the mum of an AS son aged 25, I felt warmed to this lady. Especially the part where Ametrine writes the 'government wants us all to live independently.' This really does need looking into as we have been badly let down recently. As my son cannot manage in the community, we decided to add a bedroom/en suite to the bungalow we moved to for our retirement. We were informed about the Living Independently Scheme - so when we moved, we phoned up to ask for details. This was followed by a detailed questionnaire and interview. Three months later, we hadn't heard anything, so we instructed plans to be drawn up by an architect. This cost us £700!!

However, I then learnt that having the plans drawn up was a mistake as no retrospective payments are available!! Feeling very let down, I wrote to my local MP. He investigated why our referral was never sent. The answer was because our son had 'mental health' problems and only physically disabled people are entitled to a grant for new buildings etc. Could this be discrimination? Nowhere in the brochure or even during the interview with the manager of Homestay was the fact that my son was not eligible mentioned.

Our son has since settled into his new room/en suite. He too needs his 'safe corner'; he couldn't manage his own affairs. He can't cook, except toasted sandwiches and toast. He never attempts these things. He never answers the phone or the door. He would never survive the cruel society we've made these days. So anyone contemplating asking their council for a grant for people with disabilities for independent living accommodation, please tread carefully.

Ametrine sums it all up very well, saying 'take away my support and then what?' My son's future scares me too. Bless you, Ametrine Ruth Lavender - **Mrs Bennett**

How to reply to Pen Pals



- Please remember to let us know the name of the person who your letter is for.
- To contact a pen pal, please send your letter to *Asperger United*, c/o The National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG.
- We will pass your letter on to the person you wish to contact. However, we cannot guarantee the person will reply as that is entirely their decision.
- Please note that all penpal letters sent via *Asperger United* are opened before being passed on
- Young people under the age of sixteen must have parental permission before placing a pen pal advertisement in *Asperger United*.

****Important notice - please read****

Asperger United is happy to publish pen-pal adverts but we must stress that we are not a pen-pal or introduction organisation. We do not match people up and we cannot monitor letters (other than the first letter, that is sent via us) so please be cautious when releasing personal details in your letters. The National Autistic Society/*Asperger United* cannot intervene or be held responsible for any ensuing correspondence between letter-writers.

Hi, my name is Ruth. I'm 31 years old. I have recently become a Buddhist and am moving into a new Kadampa Tradition Buddhist Centre. I would like to correspond with any other autistic/AS Buddhists out there of any age, gender or nationality.

My name is Tony. I am 32 years old and have Asperger syndrome. I am looking for pen friends regardless of sex, age, location or interests. I find that I am lonely and wish to find out how others cope with loneliness. My hobbies and interests are many and varied. I am keen to hear about any spiritual beliefs that people may have, regardless of the religion or beliefs involved. Maybe your faith or beliefs have helped you to deal with Aspergers.

My name is Joe and I'm 13. I was diagnosed with AS two years ago. I am looking for a pen pal, preferably female, although I would like to make friends with boys and girls. My interests include TV, specifically *The Simpsons*, *Ed Edd and Eddie*, *Beavis and Butthead*, *Little Britain* and *Hollyoaks*. My favorite stories from *Little Britain* include Lou & Andy, Des Kay, Dennis Waterman and Kenny Craig, hypnotist. Another thing I like is PS2. I also love golf and

I'm also am interested in venomous creatures, particularly those found in Australia. I love music, any music really but especially George Michael, Queen, Soft Cell, Electric Light Orchestra and 10CC. I also love films, especially provocative ones such as those shown on 'Film Four Extreme Zone'. I love *The Thing*, *Back to the Future*, *Goodfellows*, *Guesthouse Paradiso* and *Home Alone*. I hope someone will have similar interests and get in touch.

More letters / pen pals

Dear Sir

I am the parent of a young man diagnosed with AS, and was much touched by the letter written by A R Lavender in your last issue. She deserves to have her letter read by a wider forum and its contents should be digested by all professionals involved in the care sector. Such was the clarity of her argument and sincerity of her anguish, I would urge her to send it to as many publications as she can.

I would also congratulate Brian Jones on his excellent poem 'Snow' also, in my opinion, deserving a wider audience.

N Davies

Pen pal

My name is Gareth. I live in Stowmarket, Suffolk. I am 21 years old. I was diagnosed with AS at the age of seven. I have not had an easy time over the past few years. I have emotional problems caused by the way I have lived my life so far eg growing up with the wrong people in the wrong environments. It was like being a little boy kidnapped and driven away to and abandoned in the middle of a great big wilderness and then trying to find my way out in the complete opposite direction, simply without realising it.

I have now got over most of my depression, mainly down to all the professional help I received and the medication I was prescribed. I started all that help off by seeing my GP back in 2003. As I look back, I just see a countless number of 'If only's' eg if only we had this ten years ago, things would not be the way they are today.

I am finding it almost impossible to make friends and I'm currently trying to get in contact with and subscribe to autism/AS organisations across the world to chat to and get to know other people in situations similar to mine. I think it is a good idea. Please get in touch.

Dear AU

I have recently had a (pseudonymous) letter answered by the Career Doctor at *Science's Next Wave*, in which my AS is mentioned. The letter is online at:

<http://nextwave.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/2005/01/13/4>

As you can see, the Career Doctor suggested I turn to my local branch of The National Autistic Society (NAS) for advice on 'how to interact with your employer, and ... further sources of local training or support.' I wasn't aware of the Devon branch(es) offering support in this field. I know there's the Prospects employment service at the NAS, but in my experience they're more aimed at getting people into jobs than assisting with career progression.

Are there indeed any local NAS groups that deal with practical issues such as career progression (or buying a property, even)? Or are they more concerned with arranging social get-togethers for Aspies?

I haven't attended my local AS group since last May; I'd become frustrated at the amount of time wasted on discussing plans for days out, such as day-trip to Tate Modern in London, which never came to pass. More than once I tried to raise the problems I was having with the local NHS psychotherapist, but all the support group facilitator did was to make a big spiel out of putting the item on the agenda, only for us to run out of time. I recently met up with someone who attends the AS group. She told me that all they've done for the past year is discuss plans for an Aspie art exhibition, yet they haven't even got as far as booking the venue!

Is this as good as it gets? Maybe the NAS should draw up some 'best-practice' guidelines for support groups.

Louisa - (aged 29: diagnosed at 26)

Tolkien, the world of elves and Asperger syndrome

I believe in elves: I believe that they live among us and that their existence is based on fact. I was inspired to this conclusion during the movie blockbuster *Lord of the Rings*. After watching the films and re-reading the novel recently I felt compelled to draw parallels between Asperger syndrome (AS) and the world of elves or faerie.

Aspects of AS and this connection with elves are very much mirrored in Tolkien's own work. In *The Hobbit* Bilbo Baggins is seen as eccentric by his peers, despite being the epitome of ordinariness and respectability. Frodo seems to possess heightened awareness and, when he sets off on the quest of the ring, this brings further AS traits into focus. He has the capacity for single-minded concentration amounting to obsession that will see the tasks through. From the start he shows little

or no attachment to those around him. Frodo does not form relationships, has no love interests and continues to lead a largely solitary life on his return, eventually leaving altogether for the Grey Havens.

Many of these features are reflected in Tolkien's own life, with which AS individuals may identify. The creation of other worlds is one such feature and in *Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* Tolkien created an entire other world, complete with its own languages and detailed family trees.

From childhood he had a fascination for other languages and codes and invented many of his own throughout his life. He produced finely detailed artwork from a very early age including, at the age of four, a drawing of the small hairs around a leaf of seaweed. However he was aware that his

attraction to fine detail was an obstacle to finishing a piece of work. During the writing of *Lord of the Rings* he found that he often became caught up and bogged down in detailing Middle Earth. He reflects this story in *Leaf by Niggle* in which Niggle, an artist, becomes so focussed on painting a single leaf that he is unable to move on from this to complete a painting of a tree. Similarly, those with AS are frequently attracted to and hindered by fine detail.

Jane Watts

Please note that this is just a short extract taken from a much longer article written by Jane, who has Asperger syndrome. The original article was first published in 'Amon Hen 185' The Tolkien Review.

AU apologises for not being able to publish the article in its entirety.

DANDA

Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association run by and for adults with Dyspraxia, AD(H)D, Asperger syndrome etc

DANDA holds regular groups in London for people with the above conditions. We meet on the third Tuesday of the month.

DANDA is also organising a conference for people with neuro-diversity in London on Saturday July 2nd. One of the highlights of the conference will be a talk by Jessica Peers, author of *Asparagus Dreams*

who will be launching and talking about her new book.

Other talks and workshops will include neuro-diversity in the workplace, and an introduction to assertiveness training.

For more details please call Mary on 020 7435 7891.

A childhood in Hackney – my memories

Regular AU contributor, Michael Feldman, who has Asperger syndrome recently moved from Hackney, where he's lived for most of his life, for a quieter life in Essex. Michael is very happy in his new home but still has some wonderful memories of his Hackney days. Below is a small extract from an article Michael wrote about his childhood in Hackney and the people who touched his life.

At the age of five, my father was delivering leaflets on Wrens Park Estate near where I used to live. My father, a councillor for the area, was canvassing for the Labour Party. While he wasn't looking I wandered off and caught a bus going towards Aldgate. For some unknown reason, I was hoping to get to Southend. Fenchurch Street Station nearby has a regular service to this famous seaside resort.

Having caught the bus, the conductor must have realised that I must have ran off and stopped about 25 yards or so from Hackney Police Station. Fortunately, my father found me. He was making his way to the police station and, fortunately, caught up with me. He must have been worried about my disappearance. I can remember him saying, 'You mustn't run away like that again,' before taking me back home.

My first school was Southwold. Autism was hardly understood and I was always

getting into trouble. The teachers never understood and sometimes they would hit me, thinking that I was being naughty. In fact, I was hyperactive, had autism and, eventually, had to have medication to calm me down.

1966. I was 15 years old. A beautiful woman walked into the grocer's shop. She was out of this world. Lovely brown eyes and long brown hair, I fell for her straight away and would have loved to have had the 'front' to speak to her and try to strike up some sort of friendship. Instead, I finished my shopping and made my way home.

From then on I was thinking about her all the time. Later, I learnt that the girl I fancied was called Jean. To try winning her over, I did such weird things. These being: waiting outside the grocer's, then giving her a smile as she came out of the shop; ringing my bicycle bell to attract her attention, and displaying a polythene bag with a picture

of the famous pop group, The Monkees.

Perhaps the saddest moment of living in Hackney was when I was young. A girl named Tina had lost her father. Even before her loss, I could tell that she was the sensitive type from the moment I first saw her. When I did get to know Tina, she came over to my house with a friend to see some photographs. She looked withdrawn and sad because of her loss. This upset me and that night I cried my eyes out for her.

At the time, perhaps because I was much younger, I didn't care too much about how other people felt. Then my behaviour was much worse and, at times, people made fun of me. With Tina I couldn't help being sensitive.

This event, like losing my own father and my sister Barbara in 2001, continues to haunt me even to this day, 33 years on.

Michael Feldman

New 2005 publications catalogue now available

For a free copy contact the Publications Department
020 7903 3595
publications@nas.org.uk

**AUTSCAPE 2005: creating space for people
with autism www.autscape.org**

Ammerdown Centre, nr Radstock, Somerset
Tuesday 26th - Friday 29th July 2005

Autscape 2005 is a conference organised for and run by people with autism. Held in a peaceful rural retreat centre surrounded by extensive and picturesque grounds, it will serve as a retreat, an educational conference, a social gathering, and a foundation for a formal organisation to carry the event forward. Autscape is a conference that really turns the tables on the usual autism conferences!

The aims of Autscape are to:

- serve as a haven created by people with autism
- provide a venue where the majority of speakers will have autism
- Create possibilities within the conference for people to communicate and socialise with other people with autism on their own terms
- educate and inform on issues arising from within the autistic community
- promote advocacy and self-advocacy
- promote acceptance of people with autism in their own environments
- enhance the lives of people with autism through empowerment, advocacy, and a nice relaxing time.

We hope to encourage self reliance and foster self respect among our delegates. The environment, schedule, content and rules of conduct are designed to encourage full participation of people with autism. This year's Autscape will take place in the UK, but participants and presenters from elsewhere are welcome. Non-autistic people are also invited to attend and participate. All we ask is respect for 'autistic space', a non-judgemental attitude and an open mind.

Full details will be available in April. If you would like to stay up to date on Autscape's development, subscribe to our mailing list by going to:
<http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/autscape>
or visit our website: www.autscape.org
or write to: Autscape, c/o BAS, 13 Boulton St,
Reading, Berks RG1 4RD.

If you have any questions, please email:
autscape@paradox.freemove.co.uk

Dear John

Since my diagnosis of AS I, like others who have recently been diagnosed, have been on a journey of self re-discovery of some of life's mysterious and confusing chapters that have occurred or are re-occurring in one's everyday life - thoughts or feelings which for us are still something of a mystery and often don't make any sense to those around us. I have found that describing AS to people is very difficult as people who don't have it don't understand what it's like.

Many of us have seen the film *Rainman* and some of us can relate to it. Too much stigma has been attached to people with autism. The public perceives all autistic people to be the same as in the character in *Rainman*, without thinking that autism is a condition that varies in degrees of severity and that people with autism can also suffer from a number of other conditions such as ADHD, ADD, learning disabilities etc. Little is publicly known about these. I believe that with the aid of the media, more should be done to raise awareness.

If a questionnaire was produced and placed in various papers, it would be interesting to see just how much people know and it would also make them question themselves as to whether they might have an autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Self diagnosis isn't a good idea without first getting the right information and it is advisable to anyone to see a specialist before taking it upon themselves to decide whether they have a particular condition.

If there were more help from local government for people with autism, then I believe that public knowledge would grow and more help would prove to ensure that there would be no barriers between the world we know and this world that we are in together.

Daniel

Memory Gardens Islington

Sunday Sculpture Youth Club

Build outdoor sculptures, make barbecues, care for plants, feed wildlife. For children on the autistic spectrum between the ages of eight and 14. Starting 10 April.

12am-2pm every other Sunday. Places are limited. Cost £12 for six sessions in advance or £3 for individual sessions.

Some voluntary work for young people with AS is available. Expenses paid.

Outdoor Living - in association with City and Islington college - a new course for adults

Make dwellings, cook on an open fire, create sculptures and care for the land. Materials used include wood, bamboo, shells, string, bricks, earth, seeds, plants, clay and water. This is a course intended for adults on the autistic and dyslexic spectrum. Based at Legard Road near Arsenal FC, the course is ongoing, running for ten weeks every Thursday morning 11am - 1pm. Free of charge.

**For information on both courses contact Ruth Solomon on 020 8806 1129
Email yellruthtoday@yahoo.co.uk**

Would you like to become a member of The National Autistic Society?

The National Autistic Society (NAS) is the UK's leading charity for people on the autistic spectrum and their families. The NAS runs a membership scheme which can give you information and support. Members of the NAS have a say in how the charity develops through voting at our annual general meeting.

Membership costs from just £5 per year according to individual circumstances. Members receive:

- a welcome pack with membership card information sheets and contact numbers
- *Communication*, the leading magazine devoted to ASD sent three times a year
- the NAS Publications catalogue with over 150 related books and materials

- information on your nearest NAS branch and/or other support
- priority information on workshops and training
- information on our campaigns and lobbying of Government
- an invitation to our annual general meeting and a right to vote in our elections.

If you are not already an NAS member and would like to join our membership scheme, please write your name and address below and return this slip to:

Elisabeth Baker, Membership Department
The National Autistic Society
Freepost NW3 931
London, EC1B 1BR

Please send me an application form to become a member of the NAS

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____



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