



HOW

THE LIGHT GETS IN



crisis

Winter 2020-21

Photograph: S.R.

CONTENT

Welcome to the first edition of How The Light Gets In, a magazine by members and staff from Crisis Skylight Merseyside, made for members, staff and the wider public. We invite contributions of art, articles, photography, poetry, creative writing and are open to new ideas for content.

Following on from the Members Wellbeing Steering Group that started in 2019 a group of members and staff have developed this project throughout the restrictions to maintain connection, creativity and collaboration, we hope you find enjoyment, inspiration and entertainment in these pages.

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If you would like more information on volunteering please contact: merseyside.magazine@crisis.org.uk.

For further information about Crisis Skylight Merseyside support and learning activities please contact: merseyside@crisis.org.uk or call 0151 218 7000.

ARTICLE BY STE PRESTON

PANDEMIC

While the Covid-19 pandemic has presented challenges to us all in having to cope in the face of continuing restrictions, the slow-down in human activities has had a remarkably positive effect on the natural world. Decreased air pollution due to the reduction in travel - and all kinds of industries - has been noted all over the globe. Satellite imagery from the European Space Agency has shown reduced air pollution over Asia and Europe; and Nitrogen Dioxide {a major pollutant from many industries} levels in the UK have fallen dramatically, with many cities showing a halving of air pollution levels compared with the same period last year.

The reductions in human activities has also led to improved water quality as the drop in boat traffic, from both tourism and industrial usage, has proved very beneficial for our waterways too: the constant churning of the water by propeller blades affects the whole ecosystem of rivers, which settled back into natural patterns in the absence of turbulence, benefitting a whole host of aquatic species of plants and animals.

Such positive news about improved air and water quality will surely be welcomed by everybody; and especially by those of us who have had a chance to slow down from a previously frenetic pace of life and notice our local environment more. Getting out into the, now fresher, air has reminded many of us of what we have been missing; and a recent survey by Vox magazine found that one effect of the pandemic was the resolution from a number of respondents to spend more time in nature.

PLUSSES

Of the other responses received by the Vox survey - of a hundred people from all over the world - reducing consumerism was by far the most common change that people say they will make in their lives post-pandemic. Many felt that their jobs, which defined their lives, and the material gains that constituted their success are now less important and are wondering whether we want to measure progress in terms of consumerism.

People have now learned how to 'make good and mend' after being stuck inside for a while and a lot of people have developed a taste for home-cooked food, having developed cooking skills during lockdown.

People question their previous pace of life which left them feeling stressed and burnt-out and have developed exercise and meditative practices which they say has changed their outlook on life.

Perhaps the most positive replies to the Vox survey, though, were from those people who intended to undertake ethical action and campaigning as a result of the pandemic. They are donating more to charity, trying harder to reduce their carbon footprint and engaging in political activism, with many saying that they want to do more for others - as the global health crisis has revealed to them how inter-dependent and connected we all are.

From: [vox.com/futureperfect/2020](https://www.vox.com/futureperfect/2020) and
www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife



PANDEMIC

PLUSSES



HOPE

LEE HUGHES

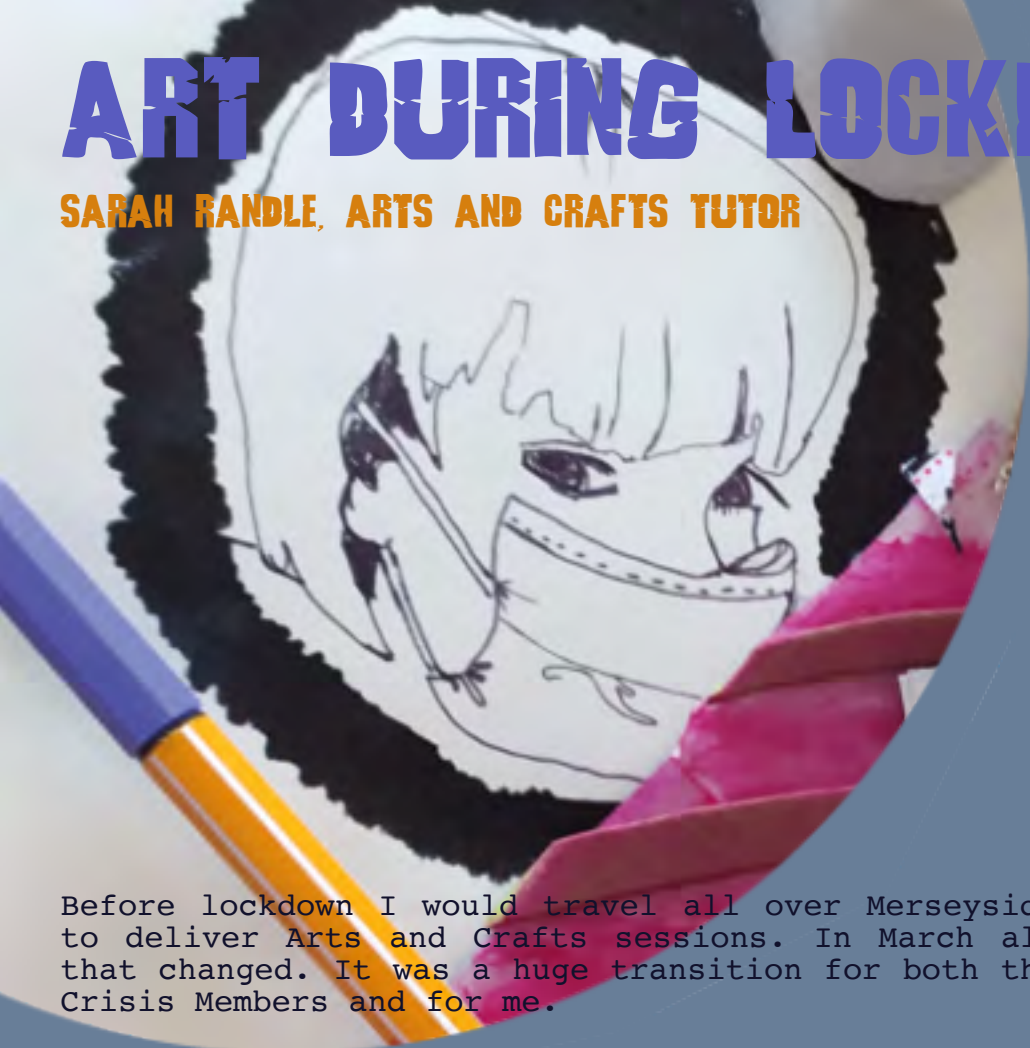
A sudden sign, an instant feeling
Happiness and joy boiling at the seams
Unknowing with excitement, a mystery ahead
A true escape from misery
From darkness and fear it turns you away
A growing smile and warmth within
Without such greatness failure is assured
Don't let go, for a dream can be true
Hold it tight and don't give up
What motivation this does provide
What magic this beholds
All from a little thing called

HOPE

Lee reads his poem:
<https://youtu.be/GdzBYT3sb0c>

ART DURING LOCKDOWN

SARAH RANDLE, ARTS AND CRAFTS TUTOR



Before lockdown I would travel all over Merseyside to deliver Arts and Crafts sessions. In March all that changed. It was a huge transition for both the Crisis Members and for me.

We were now confined to our own rooms. Crisis provided the technology to keep members connected and to ensure they were able to access sessions online via Zoom. During this period members have created some amazing art work, experimenting in several areas such as origami, pottery and block printing.

We focused on a series of projects, the main one being A Place Called Home. we had a discussion as to what 'home' meant to us. One of our members: Karl Smith touchingly titled his piece: Home is the Essence of Life. Another member, Lee Hughes created an artwork on fabric depicting a cloud above him raining keys. During lockdown Lee was housed as part of the 'Everyone In' project.

Crisis worked in partnership with Liverpool City Council to ensure that every homeless person in the city secured a home or temporary accommodation during this period.

During lockdown it has been heartening to see members support each other creatively and emotionally throughout sessions, developing confidence, relationships and the sharing of ideas using Zoom as a virtual platform.

It has been a difficult time of fear and uncertainty for everyone, with social distancing making the old way of working impossible. At Crisis we have had to think outside the box to ensure members are physically distanced but certainly not socially distanced.

Now more than ever, it is important to cultivate and sustain human connection, and our weekly online arts sessions have generated a sense of purpose and community throughout the group.

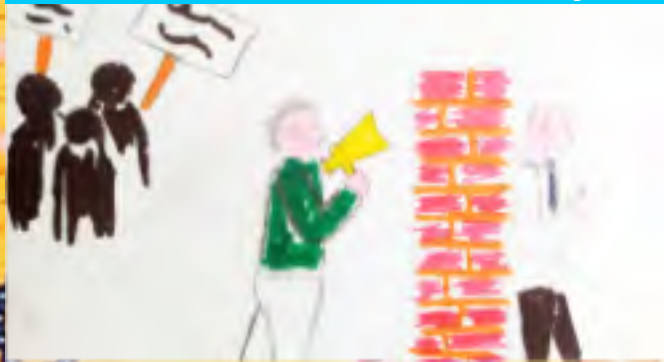
Having a creative outlet on Zoom has been a great opportunity to discuss and reflect on current issues, inspire and encourage each other whilst developing our creative skills. This has enabled our members to thrive and flourish.

However challenging the current situation has been, it has no doubt been the most rewarding time for me personally; allowing me to support members and watch them develop and grow in confidence.

It always has and always will be, an absolute privilege to work for Crisis, supporting members and campaigning for change on the journey to ending homelessness.

ART DURING LOCKDOWN

Artwork: Lee Hughes



Artwork: Lee Hughes



Artwork: James Ryan



Artwork: Fatima Kianoush

THE IMPORTANCE OF BREATH

JESSICA SAWYER

YOGA AND RELAXATION TUTOR

There are many practices that we can learn which have a great impact on our wellbeing.

There are breathing exercises for creating heat in the body, cooling the body down, releasing tension and toxins, balancing the hemispheres of the brain, energising and revitalising, calming the body, and helping with sleep difficulties to name but a few.

It seems so simple but actually coming home to your breath in full presence is allowing yourself to fully Be, fully present in the moment.

Breath is the key, Breath is life.

It is the easiest, quickest way to come back into the present now moment.

This now moment is all we've got. All else is mind – if we are thinking then we are not present. If we are worried then we are projecting into the future or reflecting on the past. Presence takes practice. We are faced with so many distractions in our busy lives that it can be hard to be still. The more we practice mindfulness the easier it becomes. Like everything worthwhile, taking time and dedicating to this practice will reap so many benefits and could change your life for the better (and probably the lives of all those close to you also).

**THIS IS THE KEY TO
LIFE**

**LITERALLY OUR LIFE
FORCE**

STAY GOLD

BY FIRST AID KIT

Album Review by Andy

First Aid Kit are two sisters from Stockholm, Sweden. Their work embraces beautiful harmonies and a mild country tang.

Their third album Stay Gold has many high points. Every track is a delight. The opener Silver Lining is an upbeat song with glorious harmonies.

The second track Master Pretender is a complex track with a clarinet undertow.

Heaven Knows is another upbeat delight with a catchy chorus and insightful lyrics. The lyrics include such gems as 'you spent a year looking in the mirror' and the poignant 'you are better than this'.

Another stand out track is Cedar Lane, poignancy turned up to 11 and a heart-breaking refrain of how could I break away from you. Like the end of a good film all these songs end well and don't fade out unresolved.

So stop lying to yourself and buy, beg or steal a copy of this album if you haven't already.

Check out the official video of Cedar Lane:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKmit_uQrSQ&feature=youtu.be

ARTICLE BY MERVAT

THE POET

21 MARCH 1923 - 30 APRIL 1998

He was a Syrian diplomat, poet, writer and publisher. His poetic style combines simplicity and elegance in exploring themes of love, eroticism, feminism, religion and Arab nationalism.

Born in Damascus; when he was 15, his sister who was 25 years old when she committed suicide, because she refused to marry a man that she didn't love, in her funeral he decided to fight the social conditions, he is known as one of the most feminist of his time.

He began writing poetry when he was 16 years old, at his own expense he published his first book of poems it was a collection of romantic poems, entitled (The Brunette Told Me) while he was a law student at the University of Damascus in 1944. He graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Law in 1945, after that he worked for the Syrian Foreign Ministry, serving as Consul or a Cultural attaché in several capital cities, including Beirut, Cairo, Istanbul, Madrid, and London. Then he was appointed Vice-Secretary of the UAR for its embassies in China. He wrote extensively during these years and his poems from China were some of his finest. Over the course of a half-century, Qabbani wrote 34 other books of poetry, his poems also have translated into English, and other foreign languages.

NIZAR QABBANI

Throughout his life he experienced many hard times and suffered from long term sadness which began in his childhood when his sister killed herself.

He married twice in his life, from his first wife Zahra he had a daughter and a son his name was Tawfiq, he died due to a heart attack when was 22 years old when he was in London. Qabbani eulogised his son in the famous poem (To the Legendary Damascene, Prince Tawfiq Qabbani), his second marriage was to an Iraqi woman called Balqis al-Rawi. She was killed in 1981 in the Iraqi Embassy in Beirut.

Her death had a severe effect on Qabbani, he expressed his grief in his famous poem *Balqis*. After her death he didn't marry again, and he left Beirut where he had his first publishing house.

Then he used his publishing house in London to express his sorrow and to criticise the Arab countries that he saw were run by dictators, like his famous poem (O Sultan).

He moved between Geneva and Paris, eventually settling in London where he spent the last 15 years of his life. He died at the age of 75 and was buried at home in Damascus.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES

ARTHUR BRITNEY JOESTAR

My name is Arthur Britney Joestar and I'm a refugee. We are currently living a difficult situation worldwide. You may be struggling with many things, isolation, stress, new restrictions, laundry, grocery and missing loved ones. Sometimes we need some good news to make our day a little bit better, so I'm going to tell you mine.

I came to the UK back in 2017 to claim asylum due to persecution in my country for my sexuality. You might think in this era being LGBT is something usual, but there are many places where it is illegal, or people persecute gay people because it goes against a religion or political idea.

I suffered so many things back there. People threw rubbish at me on the street and also bags of urine, to make fun of me, because for them, being LGBT was something that took away any rights I had.

I've seen many friends being killed and we could not even ask for protection. In 2011 I was brutally assaulted by the police because they thought "I was too gay" and they wanted to teach me "how to be a man". So they beat me up, and left me for dead on the street.


I have always been an interesting person with a special personality. I love to bleach my hair in different colours, but when I was younger, I started to be afraid of what could happen to me. I never left my hair to grow, because I felt scared of the repercussions. It was difficult to hold all of this inside me and eventually I was left with no other choice but to flee my country.

I would like to say that the asylum process was something that made my life easier, but the truth is the system is designed to find an excuse to kick you out of the country. In May 2018 I got my first interview. The case worker from the Home Office asked me about my childhood and how I grew up. When we eventually came to the reasons why I came to England, she just passed on to the next question, she didn't care about any detail. That was an 8 hour interview. I got a letter 7 days after the interview saying that I had been refused asylum.

I went to court in November 2018 and revealed everything again. Sadly once again, the Judge didn't look into all the details and she refused to grant me protection. According to the Judge, the incidents that I suffered were harassment rather than persecution, and they never gave me a reason why I wouldn't be at risk in my country after all the evidence I presented. (Meaning they found it acceptable for me to be beaten by the police for my sexuality and abused in the streets.)

While my case was advancing, I started to do volunteer with many charities, to use my time in something productive, I became involved in the local LGBT support group, Many Hands One Heart. I also worked with a natural environmental charity from the Wirral called Earth Moves. Finally I started to find support for one of my dreams - learning about music - with Crisis and my music tutor Tony.

Physically, my appearance also changed. Without the fear of the attitudes shown to me in my home country, I felt confident to explore my gender identity. I let my hair grow and I started to define myself as non-binary, because I love the best of both of sides of the spectrum: I love gorgeous long blond hair, along with regular man clothes, and a touch of spice with my nail polish.



We tried to appeal with the Upper Tribunal, but unfortunately, they said there were not enough grounds for an appeal, so my case was completely closed. I felt hopeless, and couldn't believe that my new life and gender identity could be ending. Fortunately, my solicitor found that my new appearance and gender identity evolution was actually new evidence that had never been taken into account.

We went to court again in February 2020, with a panel of two judges, but being really honest they never asked me any questions about my new appearance. Around a week after this hearing, the home office released an official report of my home country, explaining that it is one of the most dangerous places in the world for the LGBT community and people from there should receive protection. Two days after this, I was again refused asylum.

I couldn't believe that they had said one thing, but in reality, they were looking for ways to send me back there! Still hoping to find justice, we appealed to the upper tribunal again, and this time everything was different. The judge that took the case understood every single detail, and we got our first hearing on July 2020 and a second one in September 2020.

When she told me of her decision, she started to speak in Spanish and she told me that "She wanted to let me know before anyone else, in my own language that she had granted me the right to stay in this country, the right to be who I wanted to be, and the right to be recognised for who I want to be." I couldn't believe it! I was speechless! She also asked me to send my case to the public records, because she thought that as a society, the UK could learn from the errors that were made in my case and could help future LGBT people from being persecuted.

This was a victory for me, and for the LGBT community. I know there are many new challenges ahead, but I'm willing to face them. I fought for 3 years for the right to be myself and for the right to live in freedom. It was a tough journey but it was worth it, and I am grateful for the support I received along the way.

Find out more about Arthur Britney's legal case and victory here:

www.pinknews.co.uk/2020/11/25/non-binary-asylum-seeker-el-salvador-upper-tribunal-transphobia-home-office/

www.freemovement.org.uk/non-binary-identity-can-form-basis-of-asylum-claim-upper-tribunal-finds/

ENJOY NATURE



HUMAN CONTACT



I missed a lot of education
 due to hospitals
 and children's homes
 The education I got
 was one of
 pain and abuse
 Unadulterated, unchecked
 pain and abuse
 which led to
 hatred
 anger
 confusion
 and fear
 An overload of emotions
 that I did not have the
 skills
 to break down
 and assess

I have spent decades
 on and off
 being homeless
 I tried to integrate myself
 into my community
 but could not afford to live
 If you cannot afford to live,
 you get eradicated
 from society
 Thrown in the gutter
 To die
 like vermin

I have run away
 from authority
 for most of my life
 Distrust has become the norm
 Isolation
 is how I survive.

Being homeless for me
 and many in my position
 became normal
 acceptable.
 We were made to believe
 it is where we belonged
 My only wish at these times
 My only hope
 Was to never wake up

In 2016 whilst on my way
 to the gutter once again
 I needed to end this existence
 of pain and despair
 My anguish and fear
 of ending up
 back on the streets
 made me realise
 I had suffered
 Enough

My mind
 fractured
 my body
 broken
 It was time

By chance
 I spoke to someone
 Who in turn spoke to me
 Like a human being
 I am an isolationist
 who craves human contact
 It was this human contact that
 saved my life

Karl reads his poem:
<https://youtu.be/utgtEAfbpf0>

Photograph: Tony Reilly, Music Tutor

HUMAN KINTSUGI

**There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in**

Leonard Cohen

You may have been wondering where the title of the magazine came from. It's from a Leonard Cohen song 'Anthem'

The full lyric runs:

Ring the bells that still can ring

Forget your perfect offering

There is a crack in everything

That's how the light gets in

I like the hope that spills out of the lyric, like light through a crack. The line 'Forget your perfect offering' calms me. Particularly at this precise moment: I'm currently writing this article when I should be editing the final proof of the magazine before it goes to print. I'm worried that mistakes will pass me by. But the lyrics have provided me with a disclaimer: 'Forget Your Perfect Offering'. This magazine, will not be perfect, nor would we want it to be.

The lyric also reminds me of Kintsugi ("golden joinery"), a Japanese art of putting broken pottery pieces back together with glue mixed with gold. It is built on the idea that in embracing flaws and imperfections you can create an even stronger, more beautiful piece of art.

Like plates and cups, people can crack and sometimes break too. But can they be made stronger and more beautiful? I believe that they can. At Crisis we help to put people back together. But we only supply the glue – the members themselves come up with the gold. The most rewarding part of my job is observing this transformation; watching our members become Kintsugi.

Karl Smith, whose poem 'Human Contact' appears on the previous page is a perfect example of human Kintsugi. The poem depicts how he was broken, but it doesn't describe how he was transformed. Karl has truly turned his life around. During his time with Crisis he became a member ambassador for our organisation, raising awareness of homelessness and advocating for the homeless community. He's due to leave our service soon, as he's stably housed but he's continuing to work with us to strengthen our service – to make sure that our members' voices are heard and that we place their needs at the centre of everything we do. He is determined that no one else should have to experience what he has been through. He's passionate about creating positive change to end homelessness for good.

I wish with all my heart that Karl didn't have to experience the loneliness and horror of life on the streets. But his experiences have strengthened his compassion, empathy and anger for the situation that homeless people find themselves in. He is a stronger, more resilient and more beautiful person than before. Like a Kintsugi artwork, he is shot through with pure gold.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH CRISIS

My experience with Crisis has been very helpful and productive.

I first became involved with Crisis in 2018 when I was in a hostel for the homeless in Birkenhead; I attended the Crisis on-site photography sessions. This course introduced me to all the courses, training and help and advice that Crisis can offer.

I still enjoy and participate in the photography online-sessions today and I've learnt a great deal from them. Our photographs were displayed at the Crisis end-of-term meeting at the Adelphi Hotel and are permanently displayed at a hostel in Birkenhead, Wirral. Some of the Crisis member photographs are now on display at the Linda McCartney Exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

From participating in the photography course, I became aware of the wide-range of advice, help, support and other courses that Crisis provide.

I've attended many courses at Crisis. These include health and wellbeing, meditation and relaxation, yoga, renting ready, guitar/music tuition, creative writing sessions. All of these courses have provided excellent learning and social opportunities. The courses offered by Crisis involve an eclectic mix of practical courses to enjoy as hobbies and courses to provide information and solutions to homelessness.

I have also been involved with helping in campaign planning. This involved us meeting to discuss what has been helpful, regarding homelessness, and providing a forum for us to suggest where improvements to council/government homelessness policy can be made. We've met with local councillors, contacted MPs and reviewed local council homelessness policy to ensure that it is up-to-date, effective and reflective of meeting the needs that need to be addressed.

I've also enjoyed being part of this magazine group, writing articles and discussing ideas about content and about how we would like the magazine to look and feel.

Crisis, its knowledge and experience, courses and tutors have provided an excellent opportunity for me to learn, engage and move forward. Crisis has been invaluable in providing help and support during and after homelessness and my experience with them has provided many other opportunities to learn and engage further.

JOHN MCGLONE

Walker Art Gallery

Liverpool

Autumn

2020



LINDA MCGARRINEY

St6 Preston

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW

The first thing you see as you enter the exhibition is Linda's signature writ large in bright neon tubing with a playful circle over the i in Linda instead of the usual dot. This sets the tone for the display of her work which reveals the enjoyment she had in experimenting with photographic techniques always with a sense of fun.

The exhibition shows the progression of Linda's work, which itself portrays a history of popular culture of the period, with icons of music and art captured in every shot. From rising to fame after her photo of the Rolling Stones on New York's Hudson River made the front cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine in the Summer of love year of 1966. Her work continued through the heyday of flower power right up to the birth of Punk, with shots of Tracey Ullman and Siouxsie (She of the Banshees) in New York in 1982.

Frank Zappa, Andy Warhol and Twiggy sit alongside photos of Ginger Baker, Eric Clapton and Neil Young, while informal portraits of the lady herself taken by Jim Morrison and Graham Nash attest to her acceptance within the freewheeling culture of the time. There are, of course, many pictures of The Beatles too and the pictures of family life with Paul and their children shows the warmth and intimacy of their life together.

Insights into her personality are on view throughout the exhibition, and I was attracted to a display case which contained her A4 diary from 1970, in which she had earmarked a fortnight for a visit to Scotland, complete with sketches of farm buildings and a cartoon sun in the sky. I can imagine the pleasure she took in anticipating the trip as she drew. The case also contained one of Linda's cameras and several are on view at various points in the exhibition. With exhibits of techniques such as sun printing and polaroid colour transfer. The exhibition also records a history of photography during the period of her career.

Linda came to Liverpool many times whilst accompanying Paul, who loved visiting his old haunts. Looking at the pictures she took of those trips - now presented in a retrospective of her work in the same city - gives pause for thought; and brings to mind a quote of Linda's featured in the exhibition:

"Looking out from deep below my eyes, I capture moments in my life"

WALKER ART GALLERY - HOME EXHIBITION

We were delighted to be asked by the community team at the Walker Art Gallery to contribute a series of photographs to run as a parallel exhibition to the Linda McCartney retrospective.

Our members attend weekly photography workshops with tutor Tony Mallon, who leads outreach sessions in hostels across the city region. Members rose to the challenge admirably and Tony was able to compile a series of photographs for the group to exhibit.

The contrast between both exhibitions is stark: Linda's beautiful, intimate images focus mainly on the luckier members of society, celebrities, artists, musicians. The exhibition also features images of Linda's idyllic family life on a Scottish farm: The McCartney family home. These photographs contrast sharply with the images featured in our exhibition, which document the harsh reality of the unloved, temporary hostels that our members sometimes find themselves 'housed' in.

Our exhibition provides a counterpoint to Linda's but there is much common ground too. These links are most evident in Linda's portraits of marginalised communities which were inspired by Dorothea Lange. Linda helped to make those people visible – which is one of the things that we try to do at Crisis: ensure that marginalised members that we work with, are seen and feel seen.

Some of my favourite images of Linda's are the intimate family shots. Paul bathing the kids, or pulling faces to make them laugh.

Photograph: Lee Hughes

Linda shielding one of her daughters against the cold, in a Wirral promenade shelter. The warmth of family life captured beautifully. Images of animals feature prominently in Linda's exhibition as well as our own. These too are family members. Two of our images feature a tiny baby budgie born during lockdown and a member's beloved Staffie – the title of which is 'Home is wherever you are'.

It's been an interesting and enjoyable experience working on this project with the Walker. Many members of the homeless community are made to feel unwelcome in arts venues. Staff at the Walker have welcomed us in, sent us tickets to exhibitions and provided our members with the opportunity to participate in a photography masterclass. Our work goes up on the 1st of October and our members are looking forward to coming along and seeing their work up in the same Gallery as Linda, JMW Turner and John Everett Millais.

I'd like to thank Tony Mallon – our photography tutor and all our members for their hard work in producing this work. It's a tough call to create art in hostel settings. But Tony and our members always strive to work imaginatively with everyday objects close to hand, and to use these objects creatively. These photographs largely depict the institutional settings that members find themselves placed in. Not a home exactly, more a temporary holding place. As we emphasise in our programme notes: The 'homes' in this exhibition are temporary, we need to make them permanent. Please support us and help to make this a reality.

Check out *Home* and see the exhibition photos:
www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/stories/home-all

AUTHOR - ASHLEIGH NUGENT

INTERVIEW

How the Light Gets In welcomed our first guest interviewee Ashleigh Nugent. Ash talked about his new book *Locks*, with Crisis staff Helen and Tony R and with members Ste, Andy, John and Lee.

Ste: So you said you were an angry black lad Ash and then you went to Jamaica, to where your Dad was from and not long after you're thrown into a dungeon unjustly. You seem so positive after that, you were angry at the racism you came across but when you got out you were positive, you wanted to make a positive difference? I was wondering: How did you react to that? Does that come through with the work you do now with people in prison? Can you pass that along?

Ash: Yes and yes to everything that you said. The company that I run is called RiseUp. I started that company for the very reason that I was diagnosed with ADHD. So I didn't get on very well in school, and also obviously there was the whole race thing, throughout the 80s it was pretty direct the racism.

People often think the Jamaica situation is maybe what turned me around, but it wasn't. I had my 17th birthday banged up in Jamaica and spent the next four years after that becoming even more of a scally and a criminal. At the time I was two and a half stone heavier than I am now of pure muscle, I had a skin head, big muscly weightlifting guy, thought I was dead hard. That was all a reaction to... kind of self fulfilling prophecy if you like. So what I do now is work with people teaching them how to overcome those barriers that society or family or the system or the schools may put in your way. How to understand what it is that you
doing, even in difficult situations.

really want out of life. And why some people try to attain those things in negative ways that are short term and don't last, and indeed how to feel the way that you decide to feel, at any given moment, no matter what other people are doing, even in difficult situations.

Ste: That's a great philosophy I wish we could all follow it. Brilliant, thanks.

Ash: Pleasure.

Lee: Now, just from what you're saying there, obviously with what you've gone through in the past and stuff. Now your inspiration to write did it come from those events or was that kind of inspiration already there beforehand?

Ash: I'd say both and I've got to be honest, so I don't know if this sounds a bit mystical or weird, but I always wanted to be a writer. I always wrote stories and poetry from as far back as I can remember, from the time I could write. I didn't start studying to become a writer until I was 21. But I wanted to be a writer, and I felt.. that's why it says at the beginning of the book, something had to happen, loads of things had happened to Increase.

This Increase character in the book is an older cousin who's had lots of life experience. I felt, even though I'd had those experiences, I didn't feel that I had had worthy experiences compared to other people, so I wanted to make stuff happen. So in a way, I hold myself responsible for creating the situation that I found myself in, because I knew that I wanted some crazy stuff to go down. And then some crazy stuff went down, and while that crazy stuff was going down, I got stabbed numerous times, I got knocked out with a big stick across the back of the head in an underground stinking dungeon in a third world country, and I watched a couple of people die while I was there. But the whole time I knew if I survive this, this is going to be my first book. What I didn't know was that it would take me 20 years of hard study, just to get

to the point whereby I have the skills and the confidence to actually write a book. So I made it happen in a way. Does that sound weird?

Lee: No, sounds good that, that's quite impressive actually.

John: I only got your book the other day, and I've started it.

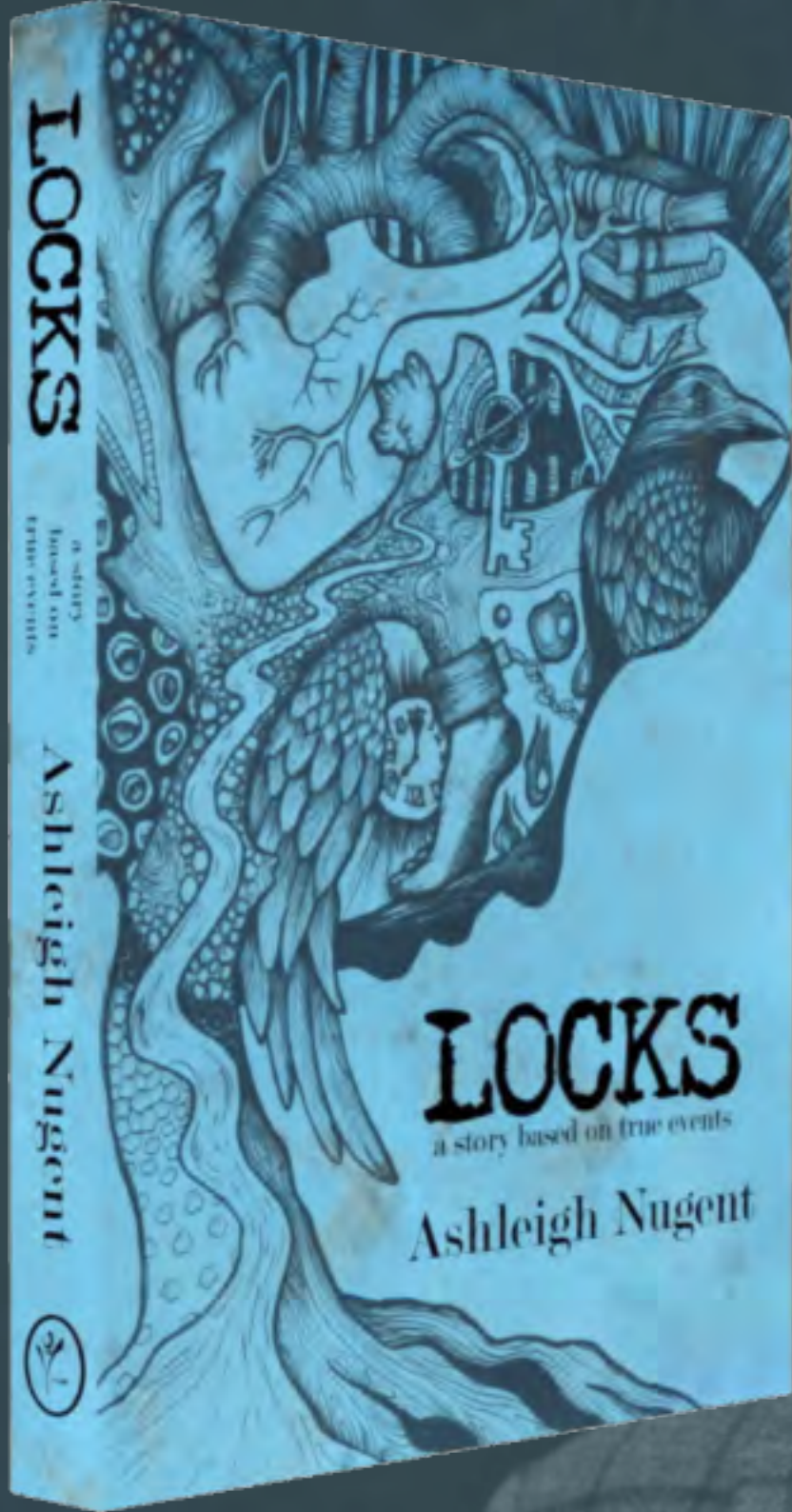
Ash: Oh good!

John: I knew that I'd get into it when you said about Mr. Motivator and Gary Wilmot. So I'm about hundred pages into it.

Ash: Are you? Good on ya!

John: When I was a teenager I used to have quite long hair and a bit of a hippie look about me. I used to get into loads of fights and that because there was also the Mod thing going on, but it was just an image, purely, it wasn't representative of me. So it's just going on from that and going on from your book and your experience.

If you take the Equality Act and if you consider all those nine protective characteristics whether it's race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, do you think that we as a society have got better with appreciation to differences, more appreciative, or do you think it's still there latent and yet we hide it and don't show it as much? Any thoughts on that?



Ash: Yeah, latent is a very good word, isn't it? Throughout the time I was writing the book, it took me eight years, I was thinking, God, when this comes out, people are going to think that I'm talking about some archaic time. The young people are going to say, what's he on about, we don't recognise this racism stuff, this isn't our experience of the world, you know.

I could not have predicted that the very year that I was bringing this book out that George Floyd and BLM were going to happen. I had no idea that all of a sudden race and racism was going to be at the forefront of everybody's mind. I've been arguing with people for years, trying to tell them that we still live in a racist white supremacist world. Now, in some ways, things have got better. I think, with regards to race, John, this whole racial hierarchy has been 500 years in the making. So people say, why are we talking about the past? Why are black people always talking about slavery? That was ages ago? No, it wasn't ages ago. It's now and we're just at the back end of that process. So how long it will take before we get any kind of equality at the end of a 500 year process? Who knows, John?

But yeah, you know, and I just wanted to say when you were talking before as well, I don't know if you know the film Quadrophenia about the mods and the rockers, that's one of my three favourite movies. I love The Who. I can't wait to show me son that and The Wall. Quadrophenia and The Wall, let's go!

Full interview: <https://youtu.be/rVrTwgllzzY>

For more information about Ashleigh and his work check out his wesite: www.riseupcic.co.uk

Locks can be purchased from: www.newsfromnowhere.org.uk

TIME OUT OF MIND

STE PRESTON



I half-woke, in the half-light,
To the calling of a tiny bird,
Little licks, lifting me from sleep
Leading to longer riffs
That drew me upward and out
And sent me spiralling and
Soaring with ringing trills;
Cascading and swooping
In thrilling arcs of joy,
As though this minute sentinel
Was giving me a free flight
As his sound claim bounced
Between back-entry brick
And rain-slicked cobbles;
Then, suddenly, I remember
I'm Me: and the world comes
Pressing, and - in a flash-
Like a genie back in his bottle,
I'm clapped back in my head.
But the recall of my timeless
Flight remains, and I'm
Reminded whenever I hear
The early warming

Ste reads his poem:

<https://youtu.be/utgtEAfbpf0>

Photograph: J.W.

3 BILLBOARDS

FILM REVIEW: ANDY

3 billboards is a boss film . Both the acting and the script are superb. The story revolves around the mother still reeling from the loss of her daughter who was murdered outside town. The case has never been solved and the mother feels not enough is being done to bring her daughter's killer to justice.

To encourage the local police to act the mother , played magnificently by Francis McDormand , takes over 3 billboards outside town on the road on which her daughter was murdered. The billboards are left rotting so she hires them at a bargain rate.

The mother's anger is directed at the popular local police chief played by Woody Harrelson. A fair and pragmatic man the police chief juggles his remit with the casual racism inherent in the community.

The local community do not approve of the billboards , showing blatant hypocrisy and lack of love for a fellow human's suffering. The scene with the local reverend is particularly poignant.

The mother's frustration grows and just when you think she is lost a big twist occurs that will make you cheer. There are further twists and surprising friendships in a very entertaining and thought-provoking film.

Go and see this film as soon as you can.

OUTSIDE EBBING, MISSOURI



MY FAVOURITE ANIMAL

Actually I can't say that I have or prefer an animal over the others because each creature has got certain and different characteristics that make it special.

As an example I like the sincerity and loyalty of the dog, I like the cat's fur and face, I wonder how a bird can live all his life in a small cage, I respect the patience of the camel and the giving of the cow, I can watch the funny monkeys or the horses race for a long time.

I am going to tell you about the **Arabian Camel**, which has been known for centuries as the Ship of the Desert and was considered to be the most beautiful of animals in Arab culture. The Arabs used to load the camels with goods and take them as the fastest form of transport on their long trade journeys from South to North and other destinations. One journey like this could take more than one year, for example the Hajj trip took 8 months from Damascus to Makkah and they were sometimes walking day and night on the camels' convey. And the camel was never tired or thirsty.

It is known as a jealous animal, it never forgets an insult, it is very shy and patient, sometimes venomous and the females are known as kindly.

The Arabian camel is also known as a Dromedary. It has one hump where the body stores up to 80 pounds of fat, which the camel can break down into water and energy when sustenance is not available, this gives it the ability to travel up to 100 desert miles without water. Also camels rarely sweat but when camels do refill, a very thirsty camel can drink 30 gallons of water in only 13 minutes.

Another adaption they have is bushy eyebrows and two rows of eyelashes to protect their eyes from the sand or the desert's storms, big and thick footpads help them navigate the rough rocky terrain and shifting desert sands.

The ancient Arab Bedouins made their tents out of camel hair and used to rely on the camel's meat and milk to survive. In addition to this, the textile industry also uses camel hair to make expensive products like rugs and clothes.

Throughout the ages the camel was considered such a beautiful animal in Arab culture, that in some Arabic countries they still hold annual camel beauty competitions. These are not just about beauty, but also about pure breeding. A cross-bred camel can easily be spotted by the experts judging the camels.



MIRACLE MICROBES THAT CAN FIX THE PLANET

ARTICLE BY STE PRESTON

Bacteria, single celled micro-organisms that are amongst the most ancient life forms on earth, may be our unlikely saviours in providing solutions to mankind's most pressing problems. Laboratories all over the world are competing to produce bacteria which consume pollution, harvest waste and generate electricity.

Earlier this year, a team at Manchester university modified bacteria to break down human waste through fermentation - producing propane gas as a by-product ; Whilst a study from the University of Massachusetts has developed a method of feeding microbes electrons, thereby causing them to produce material which can be turned into bio-fuels. In further work from this same team, tiny 'hairs' have been harvested from another type of bug which can generate electricity from the air. Harnessing this principle, they have developed a device they call 'Airgen' and work is on-going to scale up the technology for commercial production: the team claim that Airgen will outperform current production models of solar panels and - unlike their light-powered counterparts - will work in darkness too.

In addition to producing green energy, bacteria will eat anything containing carbon, and so can be used to purify water - producing energy as a by-product. There are also microbes that can be persuaded to produce protein, suitable as food for humans or animals, and those which can consume the carbon dioxide accumulating in our atmosphere.

With billions of bacteria found in just one teaspoon of soil, the diversity of forms amongst this group is surely limitless: Bacteria have been found at a depth of five-hundred metres in rocks at the earth's surface, and one sample from the ocean depths was recently revived after a dormancy period of one hundred million years. The realisation of the vast commercial potential is driving burgeoning research into microbiology - and the uses to which bacteria can be put are limited only by our imagination. So don't let worries about the future bug you - when the solutions are all around us.

Based on BBC Science Focus Magazine [online] August 2020

CHRISTMAS CALENDAR

Share some festive cheer with the Crisis team over Christmas.

2020 has been tough, so this Christmas we are celebrating the fact that we have survived one of the worst years on record. That's something we can all be proud of.

We'd like to welcome you to join us in spreading a bit of Christmas cheer. We've lined up a programme of festive activities to keep you entertained over the holiday period and we'd love to see you.

Please call your lead worker and let them know which activities that you'd like to take part in. Go on... you know you want to.

If you do not have your leadworker's number call 0151 2187000 and we'll pass it onto you. Hope to see you all over Christmas. Best wishes from all of the Merseyside Skylight Team.

12 Dec	Crisis Carol Concert – Facebook Live <i>Join in with your favourite Carols and find out what we've been doing to support you this year.</i>	Contact leadworker for Facebook link
29 Dec	Reading Group: <i>Read and discuss short stories and poems over a relaxing cuppa and a mince pie.</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link
29 Dec	Relaxation session <i>Feeling frazzled? Take some time out to relax and unwind with the wellbeing team.</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link
30 Dec	Christmas Craft Session <i>Feeling crafty? Get your creative juices flowing with our Christmas craft session.</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link
30 Dec	Crisis Quiz <i>Pitch your wits against staff and members in the battle for the Christmas Quiz team Crown. Prizes for the winners!</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link
31 Dec	Wellbeing Café <i>Enjoy a chat and some festive games over a hot chocolate and some delicious mince pies.</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link
31 Dec	Sing-a-long-a-New Year! <i>Join music maestro Tony for a Karaoke singalong and music quiz to welcome in 2021 with a smile.</i>	Contact leadworker for zoom link

Need Help or Support?

If you are not already a member of **CRISIS** – please contact us on: 0151 218 7000

For help with housing please contact the following:

Liverpool Housing Options: 0800 7316844
www.liverpool.gov.uk

Wirral Housing Options: 0151 666 5511
www.wirral.gov.uk/housingoptions

St Helens Housing Options: 01744 675150
www.sthelens.gov.uk

If you feel that your current situation is putting you at risk of violence, abuse or harm contact:

Careline: Liverpool: 0151 207 7617
Careline: St Helens: 01744 676 370

Need something to eat?

Free food is served in the following places:

Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Sunday
(Hot food is served)

The Missionaries of Charity (The Sisters)
55 Seel Street
Liverpool
L1 4AZ

Every evening at 5pm at the top of Bold Street.
Opposite the bombed out church

Sandwiches, sweet snacks, tea and coffee and occasional hot food. Food served on first come first served basis – it's advisable to get there as close to 5pm as possible.

Hope Project also completes nightly circuits around city centre offering food and drinks.

The Crisis logo, featuring the word "Crisis" in a white, sans-serif font on a dark red rectangular background.