

# JANUARY

## Writing from online 'Zoom' workshops (send anything to share)

People write at home and exchange work via email, post and regular online 'Zoom' meetings, Tuesdays at 10.30. (Apologies, some items reformatted to save space):

### Seeds (Sheena)

A seed, a start, a germ, a beginning, but of what? An idea, perhaps a new idea? If the conditions, like the soil, are right, or at least suitable, it might germinate, show signs of life, grow, sprout and flourish, but then if there is too much water, or too little, the weather too hot or far too cold and if sown in the wrong place or the wrong time it can wither, collapse and die. It's such a gamble, thrown by a random hand. You need faith, and hope and luck. Luck that fickle chancer, totally unreliable. You cross your fingers, consult the oracle and pray.

### Offloading (Jane)

I have a lot to offload, my brain is so full  
But I don't like to put this all on others' hearts to pull.  
Sadness, worry, the whole shebang,  
A cacophony of emotions, looking for a cure  
For which there are no potions.  
To make my burdens halve, perhaps it's wise to share a  
Little, to trust the strength in those around me  
And perhaps my problems will slowly whittle.

### Reminiscences of St. Edward's – All in a Night's Work (Marion)

Megan was on night duty. It was a warm summer's night in June on the night the bats came out, but Megan didn't expect so many of them. They must have had a nest under the pelmets. Round and round they flew! Megan was terrified of bats. Forty patients were waiting to be put to bed, they didn't bat an eyelid. "Oh! Look at the birds!" they said.

Megan put a bath towel over her head as she'd heard they could get in your hair. She'd better lock all the patients in the day room and ring for help. They all looked so unconcerned, she thought, and what could they do with all these bats and the patients all batty! "Have you got vampires?" said the Night Duty Officer. "Don't worry, it's all in a night's work," she said.

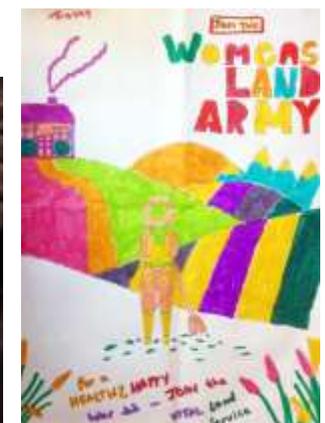
### Offloading (Mary)

My latest problem is Google is refusing to acknowledge my existence. I'm getting emails, but there is a resolute refusal to answer them. So will this even arrive? I've also got a bad back. Then the tax man has written to say I did not give details of my student loan on page 5. Well since I'm over 60 I wouldn't be entitled to a student loan (found this out some years ago when thinking of studying). They assured me it was neither sexist (a man could have one if he was under 65) nor ageist (ageism hadn't yet been invented). If I don't return the page by 24<sup>th</sup> Dec I will be fined £100. I wrote on each line of the page 'I am not a student' and 'not applicable'. Was tempted to say 'I am not a robot' but thought it was risky.

**Party Pants (Marlene)** I wasn't rushing – let's face it, what for? – but I went down like a professional skater, outside Trinity Church. So used to dancing/stepping out of the way of humans, I headed in to walk by the church steps and down I went, quite gracefully. I couldn't move so lay like a beached whale. I raised my head, saw several people nearby. 'Will someone help me please?' Nothing, until a gentleman came to my aid. Donning his mask, I could tell he wasn't quite sure what to do. I suggested I roll onto one knee and using the step and his help we managed to lift me to my feet. Wow. I thanked the lovely man; he suggested I report the algae I slipped on to the church when it reopened. Party pants? Just glad I wasn't wearing some. Beware pavements slippery in the rain. I'd been nursing lower back pain (stupid Hoover); so how's my back? Better thanks, than it's been all week.

## Photos and artwork, plus a view of the back door at the Health Centre which we'll – hopefully – use in 2021.

Thanks to Becca, whose art-packs have inspired many of these images.



## JANUARY DETAILS

### You, our participants

currently contribute to our rent at Bank House and help keep our 'virtual' services going with donations, large and small, in cash and in kind.

You are also supporting one another through this time.

#### Party pants (excerpt) (Pauline)

When I think of Party pants I see frilly pink knickers, the sort worn by toddlers at 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> birthday parties. Or Victorian underwear such as ladies bloomers, which to women seem preposterous, ridiculous, though to men I'm sure they're far more alluring. On a lighter note, I recall sitting on an ants nest with my best friend, Lynn. We were 10, picnicking by a grassy banked, babbling brook. Talk about dance and squeal - we sure had a party; so did the ants.



#### Contact details:

c/o Leek Health Centre, Fountain St  
Leek, ST13 6JB

(Andy currently collects mail weekly)

**Phone: 01538 528708** (this number isn't currently connected so, for now, please use the mobile number below)

**New mobile: 07760 138395** (use WhatsApp if possible, as Andy's mobile signal is poor at home)

Email: [info@borderlandvoices.org.uk](mailto:info@borderlandvoices.org.uk)

Website: [www.borderlandvoices.org.uk](http://www.borderlandvoices.org.uk)

Borderland Voices contact **Andy Collins: working from home**

#### Paint (fragment, to be completed) (Mark)

I am all the paint that has ever flaked from all the art that was ever made; I am the cinnabar red, orpiment and white that writhed across the knotted beasts on the prow of the Oseberg Ship as she rode the Northern Sea, bound for Orkney.

I'm the gold-leaf fleck in Schinkel's eye as he admired the pristine white purity of the Acropolis entablature, content to propound the convenient lie that bright colours did not shine out under the harsh Aegean Sun ...

#### Sliding into wrinkles (Bill)

Try as you might, come what may, much as you would like to you can't keep at bay the on-going journey, so live for today.

The wrinkles can't harm you, they tell their own story: of worries and sadness, joy and gladness. So wear them lightly, they don't matter so much. Shed not a tear at the spider-web's touch.



# Borderland Voices

23 years of arts for mental wellbeing



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

## Newsletter

# JANUARY 2021

# A HAPPY NEW YEAR

**Zoom writing every Tues 10.30: All welcome, contact Andy.**

You'll find all of **Becca's art packs** on our website. To join our **occasional Zoom art sessions**, contact **Andy**.

Our **new address** is on the back of this newsletter.

**Our beautiful 2021 calendar** costs just £3 (£4.40 incl. P&P). Contact **Andy** to arrange a copy.

**Thanks** to all who've sent **photos and artwork** for the newsletter during 2020 and **many grant funders** who've helped us maintain virtual services. Let's hope we can meet face-to-face in 2021.