

Stepping Out Theatre
**ANNUAL
REPORT
2008/09**
www.stepsoutingtheatre.co.uk



LOTTERY FUNDED

Lankelly
chase





CONTENTS OF ANNUAL REPORT 2008/09

3	Reference and Administrative Details
4	Structure, Governance and Management
5	Development Worker's Report
6	Progress on the Aims and Objectives of the Group 2008/09
7	Productions 2008/09
10	Feedback from Audiences
11	Feedback from Performers
12	Reviews
13	Work at Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital
14	Mental Health Staff Training Programme
15	Healing Arts Unlimited
15	The 'All Write Now' Group
16	Our Website
17	Other work
18	Financial Report and Accounts for 2008/09

Graphic Design by Ann Stiddard

Photography by Ian Wilmot, Alan Moore, Toby Farrow,
John Malin and Jose Navarro

Reference and Administrative Details

'Stepping Out Theatre' is an unincorporated association with aims which are benevolent and philanthropic. We are a registered charity who registered with the Charities Commission in February 2007.

Charity Registration Number; 1117912

The group was formerly sometimes known as **'Bristol Survivors' Poetry'**.

The group's name is sometimes lengthened to **'Stepping Out Theatre Company'**.

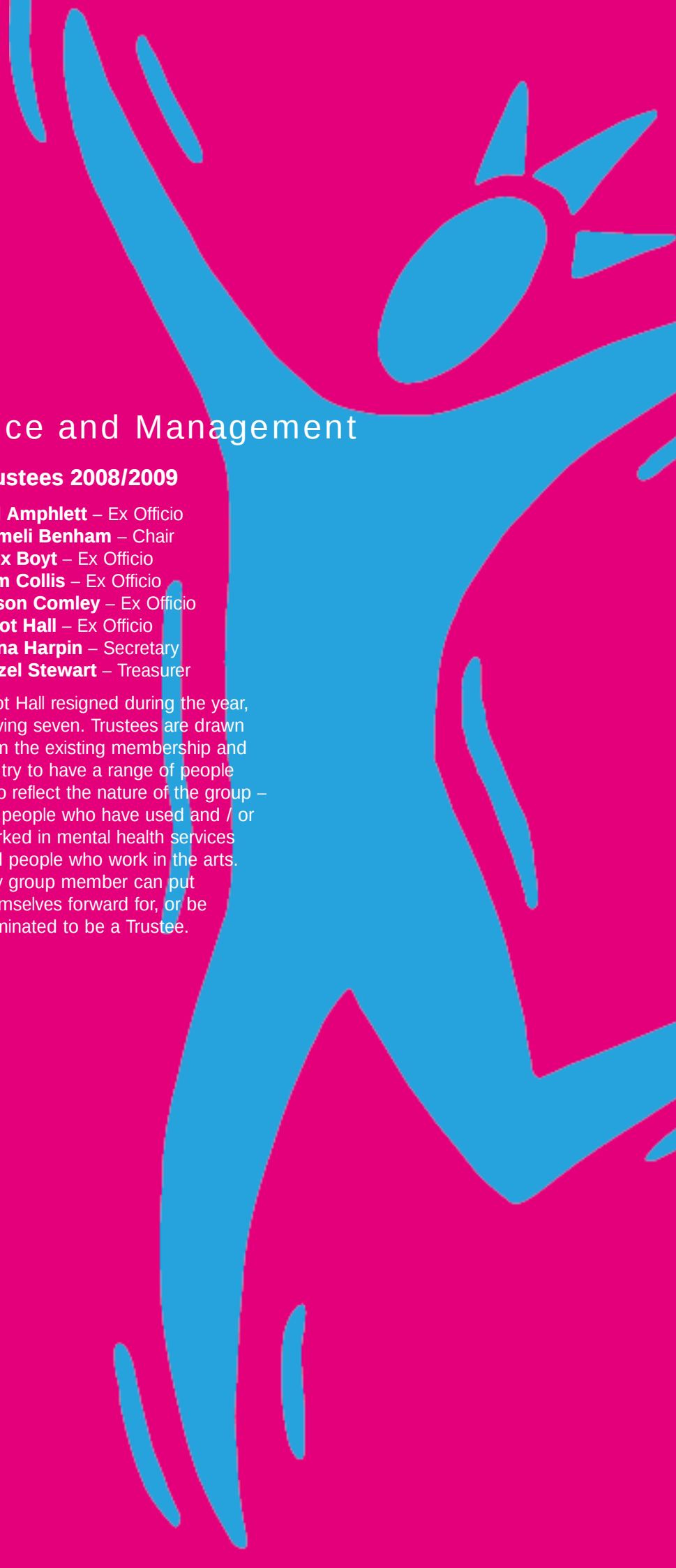
'Stepping Out Theatre' was founded in 1997.

Principle Charity Office 26 Bradley Avenue
Shirehampton
Bristol BS11 9SL
Tel. 0117 9832790
E mail; steve.hy@blueyonder.co.uk
Tel. 07790 980688

Bankers Co-operative Bank, P.O. Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

Independent Examiner of Accounts

Christina Petterson, 3 Windsor Terrace, Clifton, Bristol BS8 4LW



Structure, Governance and Management

Membership

Membership of Stepping Out Theatre is open to all local mental health service users and their allies with an interest in the work of the group. Involvement in any of our productions or activities confers membership. All members are entitled to attend our Annual General Meeting and vote for the election of a group of Trustees who are responsible for running the group. Copies of the group's constitution with more information on all this are available from the Stepping Out Theatre office.

Governing Document

Constitution, amended and signed prior to Charity Registration 6th October 2006

Governing Body

A Board of Trustees elected in accordance with the Constitution at the Annual General Meeting

Staff

Development Worker (part time)
Steve Hennessy

Annual General Meeting

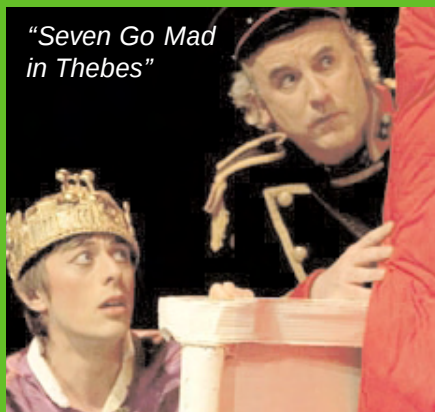
Our AGM for 2008 – 9 was held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday 25th June 2008 at the Southville Centre, Beaulay Road, Bristol. The following eight trustees were elected to serve a period of twelve months or until the next AGM.

Trustees 2008/2009

Gill Amphlett – Ex Officio
Pameli Benham – Chair
Alex Boyt – Ex Officio
Tom Collis – Ex Officio
Alison Comley – Ex Officio
Elliot Hall – Ex Officio
Anna Harpin – Secretary
Hazel Stewart – Treasurer

Elliot Hall resigned during the year, leaving seven. Trustees are drawn from the existing membership and we try to have a range of people who reflect the nature of the group – i.e. people who have used and / or worked in mental health services and people who work in the arts. Any group member can put themselves forward for, or be nominated to be a Trustee.

Development Worker's Report



The year started with the good news that we had been successful in obtaining a five year grant from the Big Lottery Fund under their 'Reaching Communities' Programme. This funding came on stream in March 2008 and meant that we had a guaranteed budget for productions and core work of the group until 2013. This was the second year of the funding of the Development Worker's post from the Lankelly Chase Foundation, and this meant that the group had achieved a stable level of funding for both my post and for productions for the first time in its history. 2008/09 was also the second year of our funding from NESTA to continue our work at Fromside Medium Secure Hospital as part of their 'Arts in Psychiatry' Programme.

With the security that this funding provided, the group was able to spread its wings and mount a record-breaking number of productions during the year – five in all. Several of these productions were toured between more than one city and several of them toured to mental health settings also. (See Productions 2008/09 for more details)

- The group continues to grow and thrive and is in better shape financially, and as a producing company than it has ever been. I believe that this year it has well and truly lived up to our claim to be the leading mental health theatre group in the country;
- We now offer services to more mental health service users than ever before. We have offered more regular workshops than ever before, including new regular monthly drama workshops at St. Werburgh's Community Centre and monthly drama days at Fromside.
- Our productions have become more ambitious, diverse and successful than at any time previously.
- We have achieved high audiences for these productions – among people who use and work in mental health services as well as the general public.
- We have received some of our most enthusiastic feedback ever from these audiences – as our website demonstrates.
- We are having the artistic merit of productions increasingly recognised by reviewers who see the shows. In the year 2008/09 we did not receive a single bad review for any of our five productions, and in February 2009, the group achieved our first ever five star review (in 'Venue' magazine) for our production 'On The Edge'.
- We successfully negotiated a new co-production agreement with Frome based group 'Dreamweavers' which meant that we were able to spread the costs of several high profile projects and keep our own costs for these much lower than they would have been.

We are now regularly touring many of our productions outside of our home base in Bristol. We are forging new links and audiences as a result of this. In 2008 – 09 we performed in both Cardiff and London.

2008/09 was our second year of operation as a registered charity. We have made the transition to our new status successfully.

This very successful year was overshadowed by two deaths that reminded us of the difficult place that many of our members negotiate in their struggles to carry on and to be creative. In April 2008, Jerome Hedebe, a service user and musician who was due to take part in our big production died suddenly from a drugs overdose. The production of 'Seven Go Mad in Thebes!' was dedicated to him. And then in October 2008, it was with deep sadness that the group learned of the tragic early death from liver disease of Ian Wilmot who had been a member of the group since its founding in 1997. Ian was a former trustee who had appeared in most of our big productions and was the photographer for almost all of the group's shows. A talented, highly creative, popular, but self-effacing individual, Ian will be particularly remembered for his gallows humour and will be sadly missed by his many friends in Stepping Out Theatre. The next big Stepping Out production will be dedicated to Ian, and work on this will begin in 2009.

Progress on The Aims and Objectives of Stepping Out Theatre 2008/09

As part of the process of charity registration for the group, which was finally completed in February 2007, we were required by the Charities Commission to reformulate our aims and objectives in a way that accorded better with our new charitable status. The resulting wording was;

- 1) To relieve the conditions of mental health service users through the medium of theatre.
- 2) To advance the education of the public about mental health in order to raise their awareness, by producing plays which deal with this issue and counter negative stereotypes of people with mental health problems.
- 3) To advance the education and training of mental health service users and their allies to develop their creative talents, build supportive networks and produce high quality theatre on mental health themes.

As the Development Worker's report makes clear, we can claim to have made considerable progress towards these aims this year.

- 1) Mental health service users have been offered a diverse range of therapeutic creative activities, as well as training bursaries to help with their own creative development. They have also been offered membership of a supportive network and a busy programme of shared activities. Lack of funds had prevented a large scale production in 2007, but we put on a large scale production in April 2008 which was enormously successful.
- 2) We mounted five productions all of which raised public awareness of mental health issues and challenged negative stereotypes. These plays were performed in front of hundreds of people in Bristol, Cardiff and London.
- 3) As well as producing five high quality theatre productions on mental health themes, this year's work offered more new education and training opportunities to service users and their allies to build their creative talents in the way we do best – by creating good theatre.



Productions 2007/08

Diary of a Madman

In March and June 2008, this adaptation of Gogol's famous short story was revived after its successful run at the Blue Elephant in London last year. In a new departure for the company, it toured psychiatric hospitals and other venues. Performed in television rooms, recreation rooms, pool rooms, gyms and many other unusual locations (including a yurt in Cardiff!), it elicited some amazing responses from staff, service users and general public alike. It was staged in every ward at Fromeside, as well as Southmead Hospital, Callington Road Hospital and 2 drug / alcohol hostels run by NOVAS. It was revived again for 2 performances on October 10th, World Mental Health Day in London in the atmospheric location of the Old Operating Theatre – a medical venue that was in use when Gogol wrote the original story. This performance was jointly organized with London group Mental Fight Club to celebrate the end of their 'The Play's The Thing' project and launch the End of Project Report. This was a mental health theatre project dealing with suicide and suicide prevention. Free copies of the Project Report are available from the Stepping Out Office.

Audience feedback and reviews for this production continued to be superb whenever and wherever it was performed. The show has now notched up an amazing 46 performances.



"Seven Go Mad in Thebes"

Seven Go Mad in Thebes!

First produced in 2003, 'Seven Go Mad in Thebes!' featured songs composed especially for the show, live Arab dance and a large cast. Billed as 'A pastiche of Greek tragedy, Enid Blyton, political satire, mental health polemic and sheer, unadulterated silliness', the production was a joint effort between Stepping Out Theatre, Chrysalis Theatre and Dreamweavers. It was the longest ever run of a large scale play - nine performances in three different venues, including a special performance inside Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital. It featured an almost completely new cast of 30 performers, many people new to the group, and just a few who took part in the original production.

The performance inside Fromeside was a hugely ambitious undertaking, but went off without any problems on the night. An audience of 54 patients and staff watched and cheered at the first large scale piece of theatre ever performed inside the unit.

This new production of the play was dedicated to Jerome Hedebe, a musician and service user who attended early rehearsals and who was due to take part in the production, but who sadly died before the performances took place.



"Writing in the Margins"

Writing in the Margins

In collaboration with long term partners Theatre West, Stepping Out helped to mentor and provide dramaturgy for over thirty writers, many of them service users and first time writers. These writers all produced fifteen minute plays to enter into Theatre West's 'Writing in the Margins' competition. The competition aimed to get new voices heard in the theatre. Eight scripts were shortlisted and four of these were produced for a two week run at the Alma Theatre in October. Two of these, 'Karaoke for One' and 'One More Trick' were by group members Jimmy Whiteaker and Alex Boyt. The production was the biggest Box Office draw of the Theatre West season and received excellent reviews. 'Karaoke for One' was subsequently performed inside Fromeside.

On The Edge

Under a co-production arrangement with Dreamweavers, Stepping Out undertook to produce the other four short scripts shortlisted in the Theatre West 'Writing in the Margins' competition. The four writers concerned had all received dramaturgical support and mentoring from Stepping Out. 'Thursday Coma' and 'Your Time Starts Now' by Crysse Morrison, 'Walter's Monkey' by Jimmy Whiteaker and 'High Rise' by Judith Farrar and Angie Dean, directed by Pamela Benham and Chris Loveless received a two week run at the Alma Theatre in February. Once again, reviews and audience feedback were excellent, and the production was a Box Office success. It is hoped to take these productions further in 2009.





The Vagina Monologues

For the second year running, with a mixture of service users and experienced actors and performers we produced Eve Ensler's celebrated piece drawn from real interviews in which women talked frankly to her about their experiences of love, sex, childbirth and abuse, about being mothers and daughters, about being victims of sexual violence.

The performances were a tremendous success and was almost completely sold out for three performances at the Alma Tavern. With the aid of a raffle, an auction and T shirt sales, we raised a considerable sum for our 4 nominated charities and £300 went to each of the following Bristol charities;

Bristol Crisis Service for Women

Offering counselling via a helpline for women and girls in emotional distress and crisis. Has particular expertise in women who self harm.

Next Link Housing and Domestic Abuse Service

Offering safe housing and support services to women who have suffered domestic abuse.



Avon Sexual Abuse Centre

Offering specialist counselling to anyone who has undergone the trauma of sexual abuse or rape.

Womankind – Bristol Women's Therapy Centre

Offering a helpline, individual counseling and support groups to women needing support to work through different problems.

With £120 donated to the V Day Organisation itself, a charity which campaigns globally on the issues raised in the piece, this meant that we raised a total of £1320 for charity. Last year we raised £1132.

The project was rounded off with a performance inside Teign Ward, the only women's ward at Fromeside.



Feedback from Audiences

A selection from some of the audience comments on our five productions this year *



"Diary of a Madman"

Really excellent production – incisive, witty and illuminating writing, brilliantly acted and directed.

A superbly balanced, funny and very touching production. Thank you!

It was just brilliant! Lively, inventive, crazy, full of laughs and performed with such enthusiasm, style and attention to detail, & great casting! Just unmissable! What a gift! Thank you all so much!

Absolutely fantastic, a proper evening's entertainment with a serious thread that informed but didn't 'depress'. Thank you.

** The reader is referred to our website where we post all of the hundreds of feedback forms which have been filled in by audiences after shows, posted to us, or sent via e mail.*

It was amazing. Wonderful range of voices, ages, talent. Performed with heart and soul. Powerful and inspiring.

Stunning. Affirming. Thank you.

Outstanding. Moving.

A powerful and poignant production. Very well acted.

It left me speechless and happy and sad and every emotion you can probably have.

Very entertaining - a wonderful way to raise awareness of mental illness. Funny and great at engaging the audience.

Extremely thought – provoking for me, as I have used psychiatric services!

I thought they gave an accurate picture of the horrors of psychiatry as it is often practiced, especially the depersonalisation of people. Stinging comments but true. Interesting insights into the co-counselling world also. And often very funny.

Absolutely extraordinary plays.

Thoroughly enjoyable and provocative. Thank you very much!

Powerful – riveting – disturbing. What more can you ask from a piece of theatre?

I found this very sad and touching to watch. The actor gave a brilliant and moving performance. Thank you.

A wonderful insight into madness, the patient's confusion and fear captured beautifully. Comic moments done sensitively. Thank you.

Fabulous whirlwind of wildly diverse influences which was both incredibly entertaining and make a glorious kind of sense. Loved it.

Great fun! Nice mix of myth, madness and social commentary.

Visually stunning. Glamorous. Fabulous.

Great mix of the Greek background with modern themes. Powerful presence of actors and chorus, full of energy and teamwork. Impressive that roles were found for all who wanted to take part.



"On the Edge"

Feedback from Performers

A selection from some of the comments by service users who took part in our productions this year *

"Seven Go Mad in Thebes"



I thought it was absolutely brilliant and I was very impressed by the organisational skills of how Stepping Out is run ...

It was good. I enjoyed the process of the production and the final product ...

I learnt how to completely lose my inhibitions and be more confident in myself and relating to others ...

I made new friends ...

I enjoyed rehearsals, learning the lines, developing a character and performing, and meeting lots of different people ...

Acting for the first time was an amazing experience, but to do it with Stepping Out made the whole thing more than just performing ...

I enjoyed just about everything! Working with new cast members, new interpretations of characters, and new twists to the plot kept the energy fresh and strong ...

Taking the production to Fromeside was a big challenge for cast members, but we rose to the challenge and came away smiling ...

It was something quite worthwhile doing ...

The most moving moment for me was performing at Fromeside. I found it very humbling and valuable ...

Thank you for an amazing and genuinely life - changing experience ...

I was very impressed by the whole ethos, commitment and hard work of the people who ran the production, and the way it is so incredibly supportive ...

Having worked in mental health for 4 years, I was delighted to witness an organisation that really works and is everything it says it is and more ...

I have learnt more about myself, discovered strengths I didn't realise I had and challenged some of my issues. I have also discovered how powerful the process of performing is, that you learn stuff about yourself that may be hard to visualise ...

I have learnt how teamwork, combined with support and encouragement, enables individuals to step out of their 'comfort zones' and explore potential for growth and development of confidence ...

I enjoyed the diversity of the group and the inclusive philosophy and the supportiveness of the whole project. Also loved the play!

I'm moved by the way that so many isolated and vulnerable people have been brought together to be really part of something meaningful. It's an inspiring project and I was amazed at how such a large cast were organised so well ...

** The reader is referred to our website where we post more detailed feedback from performers in our shows going back many years.*



"Seven Go Mad in Thebes"

Reviews

A selection from some of this year's reviews*

Venue Magazine

... Dark, seedy, sexy and troubling;
and a writer and performers to watch.

... Meticulously acted and directed,
Seb Steiger's beautifully understated
portrayal of the lowly clerk's descent
into insanity was one in which every
move and gesture counted.
Outstanding.

... Superb direction ... What
characterises all four plays is efficient
writing, crisp direction, and
therapeutic humour. Remedy for
winter blues available now at the
Alma Tavern. (***** Five Stars)

Bristol Evening Post

... Manages to amuse and provoke
in equal measure ... Chock-full of
bright ideas, a tight group of actors
and a slick series of sets manage to
punch far above their weight. A
quartet of heartfelt and heartrending
conundrums, with the common
theme of people in mental anguish.

The Big Issue

... a hilarious hybrid performance ...
what community theatre is all about
... a comical colourful pantomime
that transforms traditional Greek
tragedy into an ensemble of riotous
humour ... intelligent comic relief ...
each moving moment is followed by
a celebration of dance and
dynamism which lifts the audience
back up.

** The reader is referred to our
website where all reviews of our
productions can be seen in full.*

**“ educational ...
rewarding ...bouncy ...
jolly ... surprising, ...
rewarding ... stimulating ...
entertaining ... original ...
fun ... interesting ...
experimental ... varied ...
it's all good ... supreme ...
out of this world ...
friendly ... surprising ...
sociable ... fancy free ...
life-affirming ... honest ...
invigorating ... interactive ...
delightfully deranged ”**

Work at Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital

2008/09 saw us build on a busy programme of work at Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital. This is being funded by the Lankelly Chase Foundation and NESTA, and in part by the Big Lottery Fund.

We ran a programme of monthly drama workshop days aimed at giving current Fromeside inpatients the opportunity to enjoy a range of different approaches to drama, to develop their own creativity, and to build their skills and confidence generally. These have been a great success. Workshops run this year have included mask work, Forum Theatre work, a fooling workshop and a lot of high energy physical fun, games and improvisation workshops. Feedback from the workshop days was enthusiastic. Here's how service users summed up a workshop day they took part in on July 25th 2008 which included a performance from Live and Lippy.

We have also brought in a number of different productions and performers, including;

- Diary of a Madman was toured around the wards of Fromeside, with a total of ten performances in March inside the Unit.
- Seven Go Mad in Thebes came into Fromeside for a special performance in April.
- 'Karaoke for One' from our 'Writing in the Margins' production was performed at Fromeside in November.
- Performance duo 'Live n' Lippy' performed at Fromeside in July and ran a performance poetry workshop.
- Three local musicians came in to Fromeside to take part in a gig in support of the launch of the launch of a CD of music by singer / songwriter Jonathan Little (stage name), a current inpatient at Fromeside.

The CD of music 'Cartoon Shoes' which Stepping Out co – produced with local groups Dreamweavers and Mind Your Music has been a great success, and was covered by the local music press. Copies are available from the Stepping Out office. We are currently working towards producing a poetry anthology with another Fromeside service user.



"Karaoke for One"

Mental Health Staff Training Programme



We were approached in 2005 by the Avon and West Wiltshire Mental Health NHS Trust to help devise a training programme using drama that could help their staff to gain experience of dealing with the conflict situations which arise regularly on wards. After a series of meetings with Ward Managers and others, and after consultation with front line staff about the issues that cropped up most often in their work, we put together a one day training programme which uses three trainers from the Stepping Out group who roleplay the part of patients in difficult staff / patient scenarios.

The training days have been a great success and we have now been running them for three years in Bath, Weston – Super – Mare and Bristol. As this work has continued, we have made improvements and refinements to our original programme. We have received overwhelmingly positive feedback from mental health staff about how useful and enjoyable they have found these training days. The Trust have indicated that they will be asking our group to provide more in the future. Here is a selection of comments received from staff who went on the Training Days in 2008;

The scenarios were very useful - good in enabling appreciation of skills which are possessed, but not always recognised.

Very enjoyable training session. Thoroughly worthwhile and should be an essential part of training.

Role playing made you think about how you handle situations. Discussion was very fruitful.

A very interesting training session. 10 out of 10.

Very good once I overcame my initial embarrassment.

Gave me great encouragement for the work I do.

Everything I learned was helpful.

The training provided me with good feedback on my nursing skills and this has given me confidence.

Helped me to learn more about de-escalating without using C and R.

... Very enjoyable and enabled us to look at numerous situations exploring various issues that arise often in Ward settings. Steve, Elliot and Eliza made it a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere.

More feedback from people who have been on staff training days run by Stepping Out Theatre can be seen on our website.

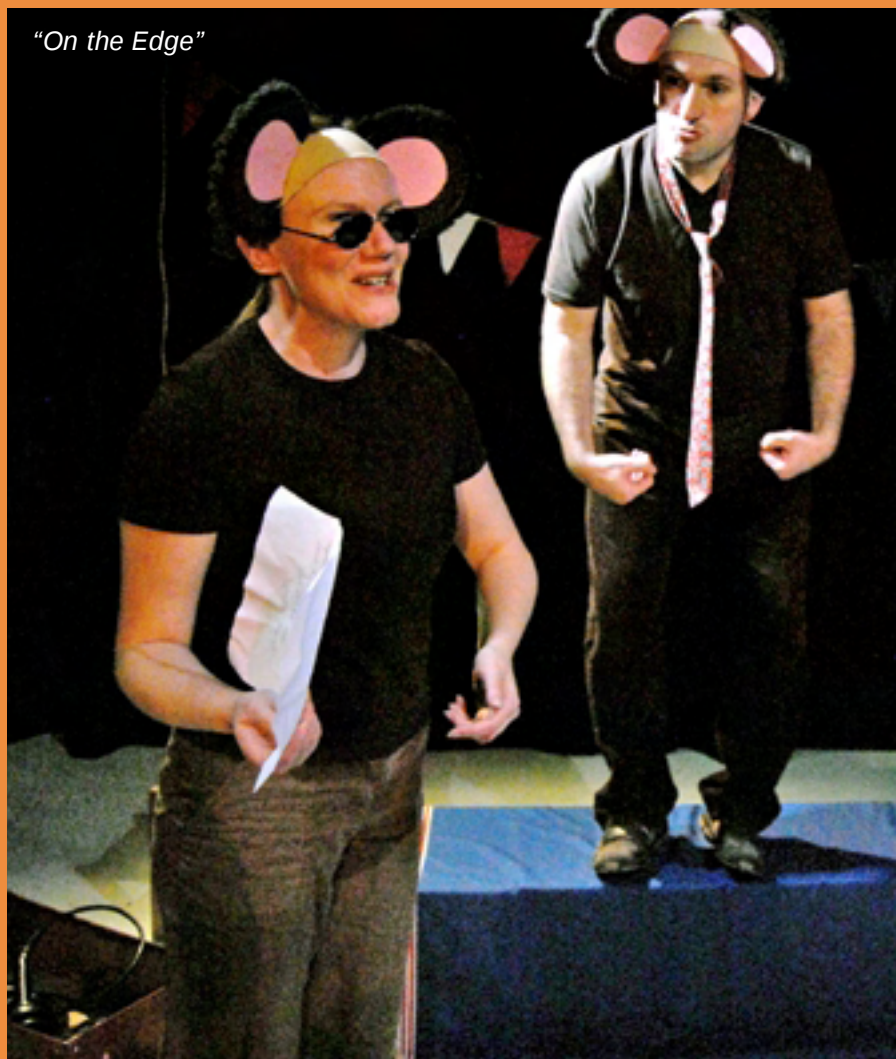
Healing Arts Unlimited

For many years, the group has run a series of trips to the theatre, to listen to music, to visit art exhibitions and to share enjoyment of other creative activities together as a group. These activities are an important part of the service the group offers to its members over the course of the year. They are particularly important during the months after the end of a big production and before the next production gears up. They offer the opportunity for social contact throughout the year. They are a perfect way for people who are interested in joining the group to meet current members. They allow group members to see high quality theatre and other arts events which can inspire and inform our own work. They also allow service users on low incomes and benefits to experience a range of arts activities they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Over the last couple of years, these trips have become increasingly popular and expensive. Because Stepping Out pays for tickets to events, travel, and occasionally refreshments, the cost can be very high. The bill for one single theatre trip in 2005, attended by 22 people, came to well over £200 and we ran eleven such trips in one twelve month period. It was becoming increasingly difficult to fund these trips out of Box Office revenues and small mental health grants and by 2006, with the costs of our large scale productions constantly rising, we had to consider drastically reducing the programme we usually offer. However, early in 2006 we were successful in obtaining an Awards for All grant which included funding specifically for these activities.

Since this grant ran out early in 2007, we have again had to scale down the number of trips and ran only 6 trips in the year 2008/09, all to Theatre West productions at the Alma Theatre.

"On the Edge"



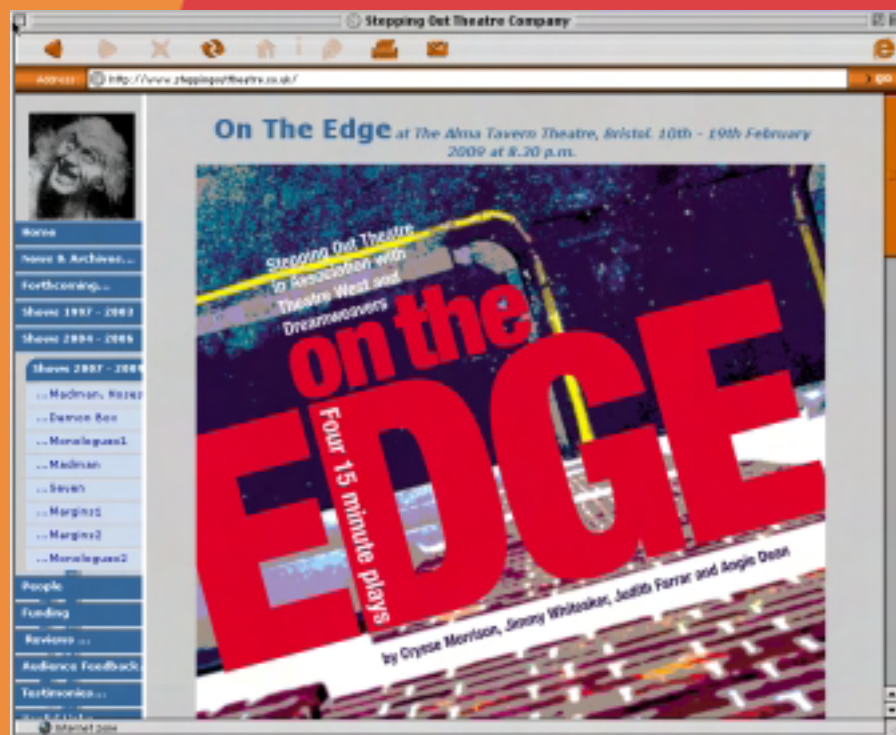
The 'All Write Now' Group

The creative writing group has met up on the last Thursday of the month at Grove Road Day Hospital for the last fourteen years making it our longest running single activity. This group gives people the chance to develop their creative talents over a long period in a supportive environment. It also gives people the opportunity to explore difficult and painful issues in a safe and secure group. It offers continuity for group members throughout the year, and the chance for social contact around a shared, therapeutic activity.

The creative writing group is a place where we often work on material that is subsequently incorporated into our big productions. It also offers more ambitious writers the chance to hear their work read out and receive constructive feedback on how it might be improved. The group has

heard scripts that are in the process of development and poems and prose that are being submitted to magazines and anthologies for competitions or for publication.

In February 2006, the group was relaunched as the 'All Write Now' group. It is normally run by experienced group members, but in 2008/09, we also had guest writers running the group some months, including Angie Dean and Judith Farrar from Kidderminster who were jointly one of the winners in the fifteen minute script competition, and had their play 'High Rise' produced as part of 'On The Edge'.



Our Website

Throughout 2007-09 our website at www.steppingouttheatre.co.uk has been an increasingly important resource for group members, funders and those wishing to find out more about the group. The key to any successful website is regular updating and our website is updated very frequently. During our busiest periods in and around production times, the website is updated daily and at all other times it is rarely updated less than twice a week. The kind of information that can be found there now includes;

- An account of all the work we have done, what we are currently doing and future plans
- Details of all forthcoming social activities and how to access them.
- Rehearsal schedules and performance schedules for productions
- Feedback from audiences while a production is in progress - this is usually added daily
- Feedback from participants in a production once it is over
- Reviews of all our productions past and present, usually posted as soon as they appear in print, and occasionally before
- Feedback from other people using the group including mental health staff who take part in training days run by the company
- Notice of forthcoming meetings and the AGM
- Digests of the group's activities over the previous twelve months and its plans for the coming year
- News of projects and activities with other groups which members of the company are involved in
- News of funding successes

The website is attracting an increasing number of visitors all the time and this has resulted in us being contacted by many more people who are interested in joining the company, by writers whose work deals with mental health themes and by mental health staff who wish to refer clients to our group.

Other Work

Stepping Out Theatre Company has many members with a wide range of creative interests and an increasing part of our work has been supporting and assisting these people in setting up groups of their own and helping them to raise funding and to further their creative interests with other like-minded individuals.

Over the last few years we have played an active role in helping to set up and support the following groups;

Chrysalis Theatre

Our 'sister' theatre company works with users of HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol services. It was originally set up by Stepping Out group member David Carter with support from Stepping Out Theatre and it now runs a programme of workshops and productions involving service users from its target groups. To date, we have mounted five co-productions with Chrysalis Theatre, and there are plans for others.

Mind Your Music

After help with setting up his own group, former Stepping Out Secretary Elliot Hall now runs this thriving mental health music organisation. They offer a very busy programme of workshops and gigs throughout the year in addition to organising concerts, touring and recording CDs. They have just received a three year grant from the Big Lottery Fund. They were our main partners in producing a CD of music by Fromeside singer songwriter Jonathan Little.

Nurabia

Arab dance has been an interest of many women in our group over many years, and has featured in most of our productions. We have helped these women to set up their own group and obtain funding for an exciting range of dance workshops and performances. In return, the new group continues to train and support women who want to try out this exciting form of dance and perhaps even perform in one of our productions. We have given out bursaries to enable Stepping Out group members to attend Arab dance courses in Egypt and Turkey for the last three years.

Drastic Productions

With support from Stepping Out Theatre, group member Liz Clarke set up her own drama group which has run a series of workshops and drama activities for a diverse range of different groups in and around Bristol including schoolchildren and young people.

Progress Cymru

After working with us, professional actor Simon Winkler was so impressed by the work Stepping Out was doing in Bristol, he wanted to set up a similar group in his home city. With support from Stepping Out, Progress Cymru is now firmly established as part of the theatre scene in Cardiff. Our close links with this group led to us co-producing our last but one play with them. We were able to involve members of their group in that production which toured to Cardiff after its Bristol run. Because of our close ties with their group, our last show toured to Cardiff also.

Boil and Bubble

Chair of Stepping Out, Pamela Benham, is currently running this company, with occasional support from Stepping Out Theatre which will increase opportunities for older people to act, direct and write for the theatre.

Dreamweavers

We helped Stepping Out Treasurer Hazel Stewart to set up this new group which runs a number of different creative projects with people in recovery from physical and mental health problems. Dreamweavers has been particularly involved in collaborating with Stepping Out on the work at Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital, and was also a co-producer of two of our stage shows this year.

Fallen Angel Theatre

We helped Associate Director of Stepping Out Chris Loveless to get funding for his own company, Fallen Angel which will be involved in work in London and Bristol over the coming years, some of it in collaboration with Stepping Out Theatre. As well as working on 'On The Edge', Chris directed superb productions of Anthony Neilson's



'Normal' and a new musical version of 'Dracula' over the last year. He will be directing two new productions for us in 2009/10.

In addition to work with the above groups we strengthened our ties with other mental health arts groups in 2008/9. Our links with Mental Fight Club were strengthened by a joint event we organised with them in London for World Mental Health Day. Our links with Cuckoo's Nest Theatre Company were strengthened when we helped them to bring their production of 'Lark Rise' from Kidderminster to Callington Road Hospital in February 2009, where it received an enthusiastic reception from an audience of 40 service users and staff.

Financial Report and Accounts 2008/09

In the financial year 2008/09, the group received a total of £49,880 in income. This was up from £29,891 in the year 2007/08.

The main reason for the big rise was that this was the first year of our new five year Big Lottery Fund grant. This was the highest figure achieved for income in a single year in the group's twelve year history.

The Lankelly Chase Foundation continued to fund the Development Worker's costs plus associated costs of our work at Fromeside Medium Secure Unit at £15,000 per year. There is only one more year to run for this funding, and this could present problems for the group in the year 2010/11. We received two instalments of our grant from NESTA (total of £10,000) towards our work at Fromeside. We have now completed the work we were contracted to do at Fromeside with NESTA. The remaining instalment of our grant will go to pay our external evaluator Prof. Steve Onyett, to produce a report about our work.

As in previous years, the Development Worker was responsible for raising a considerable amount of funds from other sources, including a large Awards for All grant towards our next large scale production (£10,000) and a considerable sum in contributions towards the costs of co-productions from other companies (£2,780). Mounting five productions meant that this year also saw us raise the largest sum in our history from Box Office revenues, an amazing £7,038.

Most of our income went to fund the five productions with their ambitious performance and touring schedules (see Productions). We also gave out a considerable amount to mental health service users for training and education (£1,324). The accounts show a small paper deficit over the year of £2,361. This is because two production took place in the last fortnight of our financial year and some of the costs of these were spread over 2 financial years.

Stepping Out Theatre - Reserves Policy

'Reserves' or 'free reserves' is the term generally used to describe that part of a charity's income that is freely available for its general purposes. Reserves are therefore the resources the charity has or can make available to spend, for any or all of the charity's purposes, once it has met its commitments and covered its planned expenditure.

Restricted funds cannot form part of Stepping Out Theatre's reserves as the spending of these funds is laid down in the funding applications and signed contracts upon which they were granted. For this reason, although restricted funds may be carried across at the end of an accounting year, they do not constitute free reserves.

It is the policy of Stepping Out Theatre that any unrestricted income which the charity is in possession of may, at the discretion of the Trustees, be spent in any way which advances the causes of the charity. These free reserves may also be carried over between accounting years, for example when the group is trying to build up reserves in order to finance a large production. Building up of

reserves is sometimes a prudent measure, but should not be seen as an end in itself, and for this reason, it is Stepping Out Theatre's policy to have reserves set at a maximum of half of the charity's annual income.

One slight anomaly in this year's accounts is that Awards for All paid their grant of £10,000 for the accounting year 2009/10 in on the last day of the accounting year 2008/09. It should be noted that the £10,000 carried over between the two years is not part of any reserves. It is rather an item of restricted income for next year received before it was expected.

Receipts and Payments Accounts, Stepping Out Theatre Company 1st March 2008 - 28th February 2009

Section A - Receipts and Payments

Receipts (Restricted)	Restricted	Unrestricted	TOTALS 2008/9	TOTALS 2007/8
Lankelly Chase Grant (1)	£15,000		£15,000	£15,000
NESTA Grant (2)	£10,000		£10,000	£3,000
Comic Relief Grant (3)	£0		£0	£5,000
Big Lottery Fund Grant	£15,000		£15,000	£0
Receipts (Unrestricted)				
Contributions to Co-Production Costs - Dreamweavers (4)		£2,405	£2,405	£0
Contributions to Co-Production Costs - Chrysalis Theatre		£0	£0	£2,950
Contributions to Co-Production Costs - In Extremis		£0	£0	£1,962
Other Co - Producers' Contributions (5)		£375	£375	£150
Payments for Drama Workshops		£0	£0	£275
Small Mental Health Grants		£0	£0	£200
Charitable Donations		£0	£0	£500
Box Office Receipts (6)		£7,038	£7,038	£694
Interest		£62	£62	£160
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£40,000	£9,880	£49,880	£29,891

(continued)



Section A - Receipts and Payments (continued)

Expenditure	Restricted	Unrestricted	TOTALS 2008/9	TOTALS 2007/8
Salaries, National Insurance & Pensions (7)	£12,073	£0	£12,073	£11,921
Rent (incl. Theatre Hire)	£5,000	£597	£5,597	£2,478
General Running Expenses	£1,500	£322	£1,822	£1,268
Miscellaneous Production Costs	£3,500	£29	£3,529	£3,163
Training	£2,000	£937	£2,937	£708
Travel for Staff and Volunteers	£2,000	£2,937	£4,937	£2,708
Childcare and Subsistence		£1,192	£1,192	£851
Promotional Materials	£1,000	£111	£1,111	£1,585
Theatre Trips		£1,585	£1,585	£1,035
Charitable Donations		£1,132	£1,132	£0
Freelance Workers and Artist s	£12,927	£3,329	£16,256	£3,535
TOTAL REVENUE PAYMENTS	£40,000	£12,171	£52,171	£29,252
Fixed Asset Purchases	£0	£70	£70	£80
TOTAL PAYMENTS (See notes to Accounts)	£40,000	£12,241	£52,241	£29,332
Net of Receipts / Payments	£0	-£2,361	-£2,361	£559
Cash funds last year end	£15,500	£881	£16,381	£600
Less: Increase in net monetary assets	-£5,500	£1,500	-£4,000	£15,222
Cash funds at year end (28th February) (8)	£10,000	£20	£10,020	£16,381

Section B - Statement of Assets & Liabilities at end of period (See Notes to Accounts)

Cash Funds	£10,000	£20	£10,020	£16,381
Other Monetary Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0
Investment Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0
Assets Retained for Charity's Own Use	£0	£1,151	£1,151	£1,081
Liabilities	-£ 10,000	-£1,000	-£ 11,000	-£ 15,000
NET ASSETS	£0	£171	£171	£2,462

Signed : Pameli Benham (Chair) 23rd March 2009

Christina Petterson (Independent Examiner) 23rd March 2009

Treasurer's Notes

- 1) Funds received from the Lankelly Chase Foundation were treated as a restricted fund used only for the purposes stated in the original grant application. I.e. Employing a Development Worker to carry out a programme developing the work of the group, in particular in relation to Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital.
- 2) Funds received from NESTA were treated as a restricted fund used only for the purposes stated in the original grant application. I.e. Employing the Development Worker and freelance workers to carry out a programme developing performances and other work of the group at Fromeside Medium Secure Hospital.
- 3) Funds received from the Big Lottery Fund were treated as a restricted fund used only for the purposes stated in the original grant application. I.e. Funding productions and core work.
- 4) Co - producer's contribution to various productions from Dreamweavers.
- 5) Contribution towards work at Fromeside from Mind Your Music and Progress Cymru.
- 6) Box Office revenue from productions of 'The Vagina Monologues', 'Seven Go Mad in Thebes', 'Diary of a Madman' and 'On the Edge'.
- 7) Total salary costs for Development Worker
- 8) Carried forward balance includes next year's £10,000 grant payment from Awards for All.