

Unexpected Happenings

The Flax Gallery | 7th – 31st January 2022



Daffodils and Crocuses
by Stephen Gifford

**“...if you can inspire one or two people in a good way,
then you can inspire the world”**

- Nimsdai Purja | Mountaineer



Unexpected Happenings



Into the forest

by Rene Boyd

Dear Guest,

This exhibition was opened on the 13th January 2022 by The Worshipful the Mayor of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP.

Unexpected Happenings is an exhibition of drawings, paintings, mixed media and photography created during the pandemic on Zoom through weekly workshops with adults who have an acquired brain injury (ABI).

The pandemic made Brain Injury Matters participants feel isolated, cut off and disconnected from each other, family and friends and society. At times there seemed to be no end in sight...

Each week different media were explored with new and unexpected talents discovered.

With pride and confidence the participants are delighted with the opportunity to exhibit a selection of their art works at the Flax Gallery in January 2022.

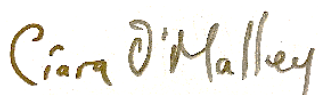
The **Unexpected Happenings** exhibition can be viewed in The Flax Gallery from the 7th – 31st January 2022, Monday to Friday 9.30 – 4.30 and evenings where there are shows on in the Theatre at the Mill, Mossley Mill, Newtownabbey BT36 5QA.

The sessions delivered by the Brain Injury Matters Arts and Wellbeing Service (Studio) were made possible by funding from The Community Foundation – Coronavirus Community Fund.

We are delighted that this exhibition is being shown by The Flax Gallery, Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council at the beginning of 2022.

For more information about Brain Injury Matters please do get in contact with us.

Yours sincerely,



Ciara O'Malley
Arts and Wellbeing Co-ordinator



Dr Jonathan McCrea MCSP
Head of Adult Services

| Artists | Gallery listing and title |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Arturo Galang | 2. Bright Bird 17. Alive 27. Spring |
| Carol Elliott | 1. Tree By Love 31. The Mad Mouse 32. In the Night of Happiness |
| Christine Williamson | 5. Stormy Seas 15. Sunset 24. Stormy Night |
| Kieran Stewart | 6. Feeding Out of My Hand 25. Waiting for a Fish 30. Honeybee Collecting Pollen |
| Leah Batchelor | 4. Roots and Wind 10. Look Inside 11. Bird on a Wire 12. Reflection |
| Lisa Forsythe | 8. Paint with Passion |
| Liz Boyd | 23. Castle in Your Mind |
| Rebekah Nesbitt | 3. Being Free 16. Maturity 28. Box of Flowers |
| Rene Boyd | 9. The Heart of the Art 13. Flowers Amongst the Ruins 14. All Seeing Eye 22. Into the Forest |
| Stephen Gifford | 18. Daffodils and Crocuses 19. Spring 20. Sunbreak 21. How's That! |
| Tony Matthews | 7. Trees Standing Tall 29. Long Walks |
| Trevor Elliott | 26. Senses |

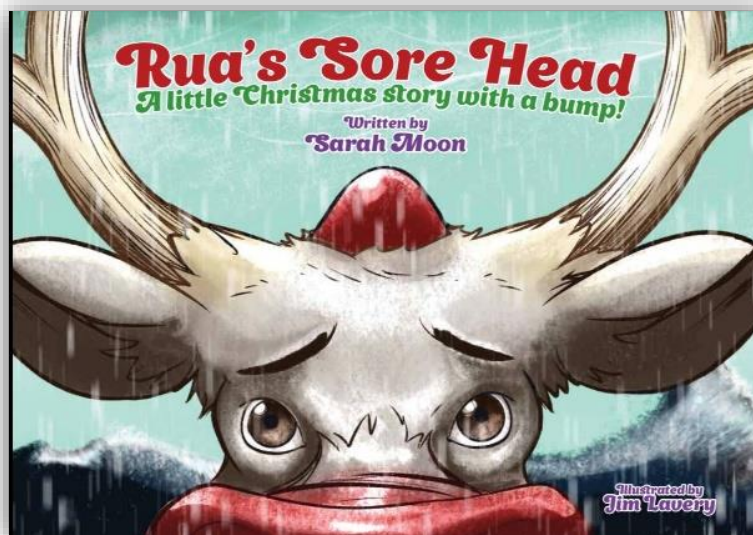
Price of all artworks are on request

Brain Injury Matters (NI)

Brain Injury Matters (BIM) is an independent regional Charity established in 2013 to support, promote and empower those living with acquired brain injury (ABI). We deliver a range of services at home and in community settings led by a team of clinicians and specialist staff with expertise in ABI.

- **Children and Youth Services - Family First | Youth Empowerment**
- **Adult Services - Arts, Sports and Wellbeing | Counselling**

We deliver these services in collaboration with, and complementing, statutory health and social care providers including community brain injury teams, stroke teams as well as a range of voluntary sector partners and organisations. Brain Injury Matters also seeks to raise public awareness of ABI. In December 2021 we published and distributed 'Rua's Sore Head' to every primary, nursery and special school in Northern Ireland, and beyond. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-northern-ireland-59615914>



Acquired Brain Injury

An ABI is damage to the brain which occurs after birth and is not related to congenital or degenerative disease.

ABIs can be caused by vascular problems such as a stroke (clot or bleed), brain tumours, infections (meningitis), hypoxia (drug overdose, near drowning), metabolic disorders, poisoning (carbon monoxide), or from a traumatic brain injury (TBI) where large forces impact the brain (road traffic accident, assault, sporting injury or fall).

Symptoms, problems, needs, and challenges - An ABI can be life-altering, sometimes with significant long-term cognitive, behavioural, physical, psychological, emotional, and social consequences. Depending on the nature and location of the injury people with ABI can have a range of problems such as:

- **Cognitive** – memory, attention, concentration, organising, perception, problem-solving, insight, self-monitoring, safety awareness, social judgment/interactions, and communication.
- **Physical** – Walking, physical appearance, sleep problems, fatigue, pain, headaches, dizziness, nausea, balance, coordination, vision, hearing, taste, and smell.
- **Behavioural and Emotional** – Emotional lability, poor initiation, mood change, adjustment problems, aggressive outbursts, disinhibition, poor motivation, anxiety, and depression.



Trees Standing Tall by Tony Matthews

These problems can affect a person's ability to perform activities of daily life and general quality of life. It can impact self-confidence, self-image, self-esteem, and self-worth. Many survivors of ABI experience dramatic and permanent changes in educational and employment prospects, their role within family life, engagement with friends, leisure activities, hobbies and pastimes, their communities, and wider society. The problems and disabilities are often not visible and being invisible, this can present additional challenges for the person, their families, friends, teachers, and as they engage with others in their communities.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

The purpose of the UNCRPD (to which the UK is a signatory) is “to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”



Box of Flowers by Rebekah Nesbitt

This exhibition is an exemplar of **'Article 30 – Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport'** by enabling: “...persons with disabilities to... develop and utilize their creative, [and] artistic... potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.

It will also help fulfil **'Article 8 – Awareness raising'**:

- To raise awareness throughout society... regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities;
- To combat stereotypes... [and] prejudices relating to persons with disabilities...in all areas of life;
- To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.”

Long term health and social support.

The UNCRPD, Royal College of Physician (RCP) guidelines, Northern Ireland Health and Social Care: Brain Injury service standards and quality indicators (NI HSC), as well as academic research, identify the need for long-term community support and continued rehabilitation for those with ABI, explicitly recommending the use of voluntary agencies to this end. The RCP Guidelines for Stroke highlight that service organisations:

“... often fail to meet the long-term... needs of people with stroke [an ABI]”.

Research by Muldoon (2019) highlights the benefits and crucial role of social participation:

“...identification with social groups can protect and enhance health... Identity loss and reduced social support were described as disabling. Engagement in meaningful group activity with others affected by ABI and access to affected peers enabled new group-based resources such as social support. In this way, group activity can be seen as a form of identity enactment that can drive social cure effects. Similarly, adaptation to life after injury was demonstrably linked to social identity processes pointing to the importance of a social cure approach to rehabilitation.”

Stiekema (2020) also concluded that:

“Although the long-term consequences of ABI are frequent and diverse, care and support over the longer term is an under-addressed issue... The overarching need for continuity of care from the transition to home onwards provides important implications for supporting the process of learning how to live well with brain injury.”

Aim of the Arts, Sports and Wellbeing Services

In keeping with Article 30 the UNCRPD our Wellbeing services seek:

“...to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society” and to “...participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities”.

“...to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities”.

As envisioned by the NI HSC we provide a:

“...systemic and holistic approach...” recognising that “...engagement and active participation of people with a brain injury, their families and carers is central to their re-integration, participation and socialisation within the community.”

Referrals from health and social care professionals to our services highlight a range of needs, opportunities and solutions we provide, including:



The Lord Mayor Councillor Kate Nicholl & Graham Hill @Pedal Power

“...Enjoyable, purposeful activity, social inclusion and a new routine, someone outside his family circle he could chat with”

“...improve the overall quality of life and social interactions”

“...build up self-confidence and independence”

“...the opportunity of engaging with others who have similar experiences”

“...to offer exercise and activities that increase social and emotional wellbeing...”

One person who suffered an ABI as a teenager, self-referred 20 years after injury, hoping:

“...Just to have a purpose. Meet people with brain injury so I don't feel alone.”

Feedback from participants and families gave the following insights into the benefits of attending:

“...offers the opportunity to socialise, get out of the house and meet other people with similar experiences of brain injury as themselves...”

“...Enjoy socialising with each other and talking part in the variety of activities”

“Have gained confidence, independence, learned new skills and made friends in a group setting with adults and young people with similar needs as ourselves...”

“...Where our problems are listened to and we can have an opinion on topics other people without brain injury may not understand...”

We seek to provide long term community support and rehabilitation as people: Come to terms with the problems and deficits resulting from the ABI; Rebuild a meaningful life; Create a renewed sense of achievement; Find purpose and community participation; Improve quality of life; Sustain existing and build new relationships and friendships; Develop emotional wellbeing; Strengthen resilience and self-esteem; Engage in meaningful activity and occupation, and; Encourage reintegration into society and culture.

Activities of the Arts, Sports and Wellbeing Services

The Arts, Sports and Wellbeing Services are managed by an Allied Health Professional, supported and delivered by an Arts, Sports and Wellbeing Co-ordinators and volunteers.

Activities broadly include: Creative Arts; Physical Activity and Sports; Leisure; and, Self-care / management.

In **Arts and Wellbeing** the subject matter usually changes every 6 – 8 weeks. Participants are encouraged to initiate activities, develop their own interests and guide the content of the Wellbeing programme. In 2020 – 21 sessions included: Arts and Crafts, Drama, Painting, Dance, Creative Writing, Music, Photography, Yoga, Gardening, Disability Sport NI, Meditation, Mindfulness, Drawing, Printmaking, Sculpture, Mosaic, Choir, Podcasts, Comics (Graphics) and Animation. These are delivered as hybrid sessions (Zoom and in-person).

Participants develop interests and skills and create 'product' to have this work showcased at galleries, arts festivals, cinema screenings, or by hosting concerts and performances either 'in room' or virtually. They also have the opportunity to share their interests, skills and work with family and friends either physically or electronically, by publishing it on online platforms, or inviting them to exhibitions and performances.

Sports and Wellbeing is currently focusing on developing our 'Pedal power' project, delivered in partnership with Sustrans (NI) at their Active Travel Hub, CS Lewis Square, Belfast.

Arts, Sports and Wellbeing Zoom is provided for those attending the Arts and Sports programmes.

Most of these are delivered by external facilitators, experts in their field, and partnerships with organisations, including: Disability Sport NI, Drake Music, Sustrans NI, Arts care, University of Atypical, Una McCann Music, Ormeau Community Choir, Arts for All, Belfast Exposed, as well as the Northern Ireland Mental Health Arts Festival and Eastside Arts Festival.

These activities aim to provide participants with the opportunity to explore, develop and utilise their creative and artistic potential, to engage in recreational, leisure and sporting activities identifying new interests, which opens doors and opportunities to live more fulfilling lives in their own communities.

The peer support of others with ABI also helps mood, guides and develops appropriate social interaction, develops self-awareness and confidence. For some this is the only and/or the most positive social contact they have, which provides invaluable support and friendship.



'I never thought I could do this' @Arts for All Exhibition
(L to R) Ciara O'Malley (Arts and Wellbeing Co-ordinator), Trevor Elliott, Leah Batchelor, Rebekah Nesbitt, Lisa Forsythe, Rene Boyd, Jill McKeown (Assistant Arts and Wellbeing Co-ordinator), Lesley Wilson (Art Facilitator).

Recent showcases

Arts for All | 16th – 23rd Aug 2021

'Never thought I could do this' | Drawings, Collages and Mixed Media

<https://twitter.com/JonnieMcC/status/1471952691144368132?s=20>



East Side Arts Festival | 5th – 13th Aug 2021

Coffee Contemplations, Dreaming, Going Places, I'm Not Leaving, Jasper, Mike's Double Life, The Attic, The Awakening, The Secret Of The Old Clock | Short stories

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLX7VTQx0OEHQ1Ar4OtNzzAZKDsYPHfNVB>

'Waiting' | Dance https://youtu.be/ghyrM_eNe1E



NI Mental Health Arts Festival | 10th – 16th May 2021

'Looking through our eyes' | Photography | <https://www.nimhaf.org/brain-injury-matters-belfast-exposed>

'Unexpected happenings' | Paintings, drawings and photography | <https://www.nimhaf.org/brain-injury-matters-arts-for-all>

'Let your imagination flow' | Animation | <https://www.nimhaf.org/brain-injury-matters>

'Loneliness' | Creative Writing | <https://www.nimhaf.org/kieran-stewart>

Expressions of Life Podcasts | 20th May 2021 – 15th July 2021

<https://open.spotify.com/show/2qunbUeqhTL2EKI8BwJXNQ>

East Side Arts Festival | 6th – 16th August 2020

'Inside Our Heads' | Animation | <https://youtu.be/DVMqGKaiJpY>

Northern Ireland Mental Health Arts Festival | 18th – 24th May 2020

'I take a journey' | Film | <https://youtu.be/bAplVFPLfSY>



Look inside by Leah Bachelor

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Muldoon OT, Walsh RS, Curtain M, Crawley L, Kinsella EL. Social cure and social curse: **Social identity resources and adjustment to acquired brain injury.** *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 2019, 49(6), 1272–1282.

Odumuyiwa T, Kennedy M, Norman A, Holloway M, Suffield F, Forrest H, Dicks H. **Improving Access to Social Care Services Following Acquired Brain Injury: A Needs Analysis.** *Journal of Long-Term Care*, 2019, pp.164–175.

Stiekema APM, Winkens I, Ponds R, De Vugt ME, Van Heugten CM. **Finding a new balance in life: a qualitative study on perceived long-term needs of people with acquired brain injury and partners.** *Brain Inj.* 2020 Feb 23;34(3):421-429.

Dams-O'Connor K, Landau A, Hoffman J, St De Lore J. **Patient perspectives on quality and access to healthcare after brain injury.** *Brain Inj.* 2018;32(4):431-441.

Lannoo E, Brusselmans W, Van Eynde L, Van Laere M, Stevens J. **Epidemiology of acquired brain injury (ABI) in adults: prevalence of long-term disabilities and the resulting needs for ongoing care in the region of Flanders, Belgium.** *Brain Inj.* 2004 Feb;18(2):203-11.

Turner BJ, Fleming J, Ownsworth T, Cornwell P. **Perceived service and support needs during transition from hospital to home following acquired brain injury.** *Disabil Rehabil.* 2011;33 (10):818-29.

References

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<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0924/4392/files/rehabilitation-followingacquired-brain-injury.pdf?15599436013786148553>

Royal College of Physicians (2004) **Vocational assessment and rehabilitation after acquired brain injury – Inter-agency guidelines**
<https://shop.rcplondon.ac.uk/products/vocational-assessment-and-rehabilitation-after-acquired-brain-injury-inter-agency-guidelines?variant=28591077818446> (accessed 4/11/2020)

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

Royal College of Physicians (2016) **National clinical guideline for stroke**
[https://www.strokeaudit.org/SupportFiles/Documents/Guidelines/2016-National-Clinical-Guideline-for-Stroke-5t-\(1\).aspx](https://www.strokeaudit.org/SupportFiles/Documents/Guidelines/2016-National-Clinical-Guideline-for-Stroke-5t-(1).aspx)

HSCNI Brain Injury: Service Standards and Quality Indicators
http://www.hscboard.hscni.net/download/PUBLICATIONS/ACQ_UIRED%20BRAIN%20INJURY/Pathways/Service-Standards-and-Quality-Indicators.pdf

Clements (2019) **Direct Payments for Disabled Children and Young People and their Families – Report** by Cerebra and the University of Leeds.
<http://www.lukeclements.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Final-Report-02.pdf>

NICE guideline on Stroke rehabilitation in adults In development [GID-NG10175] Expected publication date: 14 December 2022
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ng10175/documents>



Brian Collins @Pedal Power