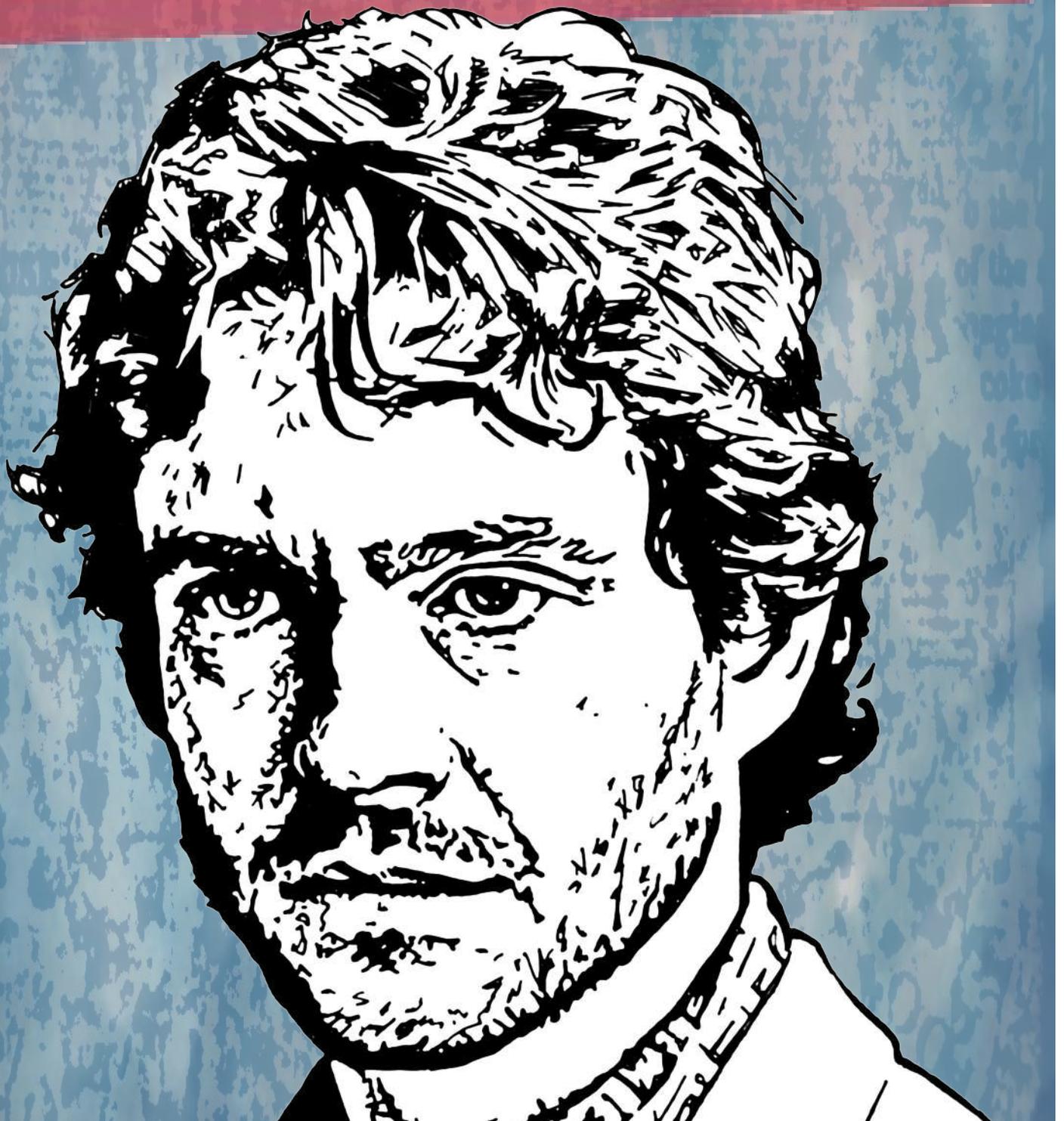


AUTITUDE!



INFO AND ADVICE!
MOVIES! ART!
AND MUCH MUCH MORE!

WELCOME!

We've reached the eighth fantastic issue of Autitude and we couldn't have got here without you!

Autitude is shaped by what matters most to you and showcases a wide range of skills and talents.

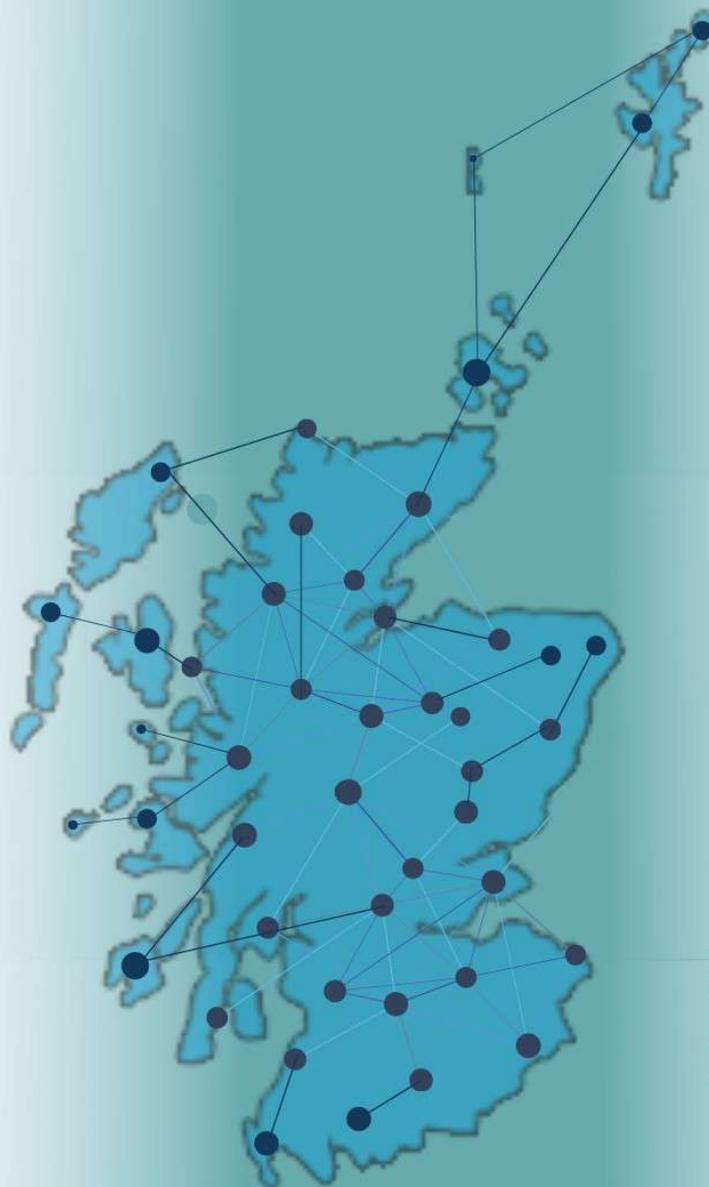
Keep your fantastic contributions coming. Whether it's a poem, a written reflection, a cartoon, a blog, photography or example of another creative pursuit, we would love to hear about it. If you have something you would like to share, please get in touch with us at autitude@scottishautism.org.

To make sure you are updated when the latest edition is released please sign up here – thank you!

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Scottish
autism
WHERE AUTISTIC PEOPLE
ARE VALUED

Click & Connect

Click and Connect allows the autistic community and their families in Scotland to stay connected through the pandemic and beyond.

These groups aim to reduce feelings of loneliness & isolation by providing an opportunity to connect with others online.

Mindful Autism Support Group

Our Mindful Autism Support Group is for autistic individuals and family members of autistic people in Scotland. Run by Jonny Drury, the group will take place every Thursday afternoon, at 1pm - 2.30pm, until 30th September. Each session will run via Zoom and is free to join.

Virtual Art Group

Do you want to explore your creative side? Join our online Art Group taking place every Wednesday, at 5pm - 6.30pm, until 29th September.

The Art Group is open to autistic people and their families and aims to bring people together for creative expression in an informal and safe environment. It offers the chance for a mindful break from the day's worries and can help to reduce stress.

Virtual Choir Group

Our Virtual Choir takes place every Thursday, at 5pm until 6pm, until 23rd of September. This group is for autistic people and their families in Scotland, and all ages and abilities are welcome!

Numbers will be limited to a maximum of 15 people so sign up quick!

We will learn a range of songs over the sessions. The songs will be chosen by you and you will be able to submit your favourite song or a song that means something to you when you register for the group.

Find out more about the groups and sign up for a session [here](#).

Can you teach me as I am?

Autism acceptance in our education systems

9th September 2021
12 noon - 3.30pm



Charlene Tait,
Scottish Autism



Adam Harris,
As I Am

Do you have an interest in autism-friendly inclusive education?

Then you might want to attend an upcoming live webinar. 'Can you teach me as I am? – Autism acceptance in our education systems' will be jointly delivered by Scottish Autism's Deputy CEO Charlene Tait and Adam Harris, Founder of [As I Am](#) on 9th September 2021, 12 noon until 3.30pm.

If you are unable to join the live event, no need to miss out, you can watch the presentations at your convenience using our On Demand Option.

Find out more and buy your place for £25 [here](#).

Scottish
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ARE VALUED



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

(CRAZY ABOUT THE JOB!)

A SERIES BY LEA B.

7. Dog-o-Drama

November 2019.

Bradley [dog]: When will we go for a walk?

Lea [human]: As soon as I have finished crying after Henrik and eating this chocolate – yes, we will go.

Bradley: Too bad. Hey, did I ever tell you that once I was considered for guide dog training, years ago?

Lea: Humour me...

Bradley: Paw-swear! I just fell out at the part where they suddenly open an umbrella to your face. I started to quote a weather forecast instead of standing still.

Lea: ...

Bradley: Sorry, I thought this would cheer you up but now I see the error of my ways, you are crying even more. Silly me! Hey, did I ever tell you I was once considered to become an airport bag-searchie doggie?

Lea: O-KAY: let's go for that walk now.

Bradley: Great! So you are feeling better.



Lea: No, I just don't want my talking dog to become as unhappy as I am.

Bradley: That is not possible. I'm not interested in married colleagues. Ooooooh, nooo, please, don't cry, miss! It was just a stupid joke! What I meant was that I never had colleagues, so how could I know, right? I only had litter mates but that seemed much less complicated. It was only about deciding who was to sleep on whose belly, who gets the most milk and other nutrition, who gets cleaned first... You know.

Lea: Idyllic. Come on Brad, get your toy and out the door. We will go for a walk and pretend for five minutes that you are a non-talking dog.



Bradley: Okay, sure. Will you eat that piece of chocolate?
'Cause I...

Lea: ...No. It is not for you. Come on Mr Dog, pick up the pace. I only cry in parks, not in the street.

Bradley: So, you and Henrik won't have lunch breaks together again?

Lea: Nope, I don't think so. We don't talk, you know. It is not his fault, he offered me to remain friendly co-workers.

Bradley: You mean, right after you confessed love to him.

Lea: Yeah.

Bradley: ...



Lea: What? What does that face mean?

Bradley: Oh nothing, nothing. I'm just carrying this ball to the park as agreed, hmm, yeah... That man has nerves, my!

Lea: ...

Bradley: I meant: this-toy-has-curves. But... come to think of it, his verbal expression was a bit foggy that day.

Lea: As they could have been since the 1980s, possibly.

Bradley: Yeah, yeah, but what on earth that 'I am a happily married man' meant if before that for months, you know, he was telling you about people's need to change their lives, and that sad face you watched, and the sighs and so on and so forth...

Lea: I have no idea. Maybe he was sighing because he had to listen to me... Hey, let's buy some more chocolate here!

Bradley: I don't support. This is hard for the protective me to watch you eating a diet like this, week in week out, you know. On another note... can I get a piece if you still buy it?

Lea: No.

Bradley: Marshmallows?...

Lea: No. And further 'no'-s for candies, fudge and strawberry laces too. Those are for me. Sweets are bad for dogs. It can get you sick, pal.

Bradley: Sure. Do you still love Henrik?

Lea: Yes. Of course. Why do you ask? Did you spot any divorce papers?

Bradley: No, no, and I cannot read anyway. I just thought... we could buy him chocolate and then he would perhaps change his mind?

Lea: About what? Me?

Bradley: Doh: yeeeeees!

Lea: No way. Humans don't do life like that.

Bradley: Humans are way too complicated.

Lea: Thank you.



Bradley: You are my favourite though. I really love you. Hey, did you hear the joke: a guide dog and a cat are waiting at a crossing place and when the light changes the cat says...

Lea: Geeeeez! Brad, you go to the park alone, I'm going home.

Bradley: Alright, I just...

Lea: What is it? Flatmate.

Bradley: I had this idea of undergoing seeing eye-dog training, joining Henrik daily, finding out what's going on in his life and then reporting back to you. Piece this together. Save the romance! I can't stand the thought of the two of you ending here.



Lea: That is... absolutely sweet of you. But now I am not even sure Henrik and I ever 'started'. Plus, if you become his service dog, then we won't be able to chat like this again. We wouldn't be able to do anything since you would be working for him and everybody would know that you are on duty. Think, Brad.

Bradley: Yeah... I knew there was a catch. Buggers. But then, why not? It cannot be that difficult. I can already walk ahead in a straight line when I follow a shopping bag in the street. Say yes, Lea.

Lea: Oh, really? And what about learning hand gestures and other subtle signs or overwriting will when your captain measured a situation wrongly?

Bradley: Nah, I'm already doing that several times a week; when you decide to turn off the alarm in the morning, thinking why go to work to an office where Henrik is happily employed, I'm jumping on your chest as long as it takes to get you out of the bed. Smart, right?

Lea: Thank you very much. That is, indeed, useful. But still...

Bradley: Okay, okay, here's plan B!

Lea: Lord, give me strength...

Bradley: I will become your emotional support dog.

Lea: You mean... for my autism?

Bradley: Could be for that, yeah. And also for your brave but unsuccessful love confession, terrible new boss and intense nostalgia. I will make you happy and well-balanced.

Lea: You're already making me happy but I will consider your offer. You know that it is a lot of training though, right?

Bradley: Sure thing. No problem. A Mars-bar?... Never mind. Uhm... We could write about this whole beautiful one-party love story.

Lea: What do you recommend, wise canine?

Bradley: New York Times, of course! 'Ms L. and Mr. B. presents!' Opening quote?

Lea: "I shall be consumed in what I am trying to shun", of course!

Bradley: Euripides. Hm, sweet. But perhaps a tad bit too intense for the New York reader.

Lea: But it IS intense, all this stuff that I feel! How about this then: "We cannot fight for love as men may do/We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo". That one?

Bradley: Oh, good old Will Shakespeare, how befitting here. I liked the way you have been 'woo'-ing though. You were polite, patient, observant, it had style, it was moving, you were funny, devout, it was...

Lea: Hey! Earth calls Brad! In any case, shouldn't we gear up to New York Times with, I don't know, a local magazine first?

Bradley: I will consider. Perhaps a digital one? Those electronic magazines get distributed widely. Kinda like we do with markings on trees and in parks.

Lea: Thank you kindly, oh all seeing creature of the night.

Bradley: I think I preferred 'good boy'.

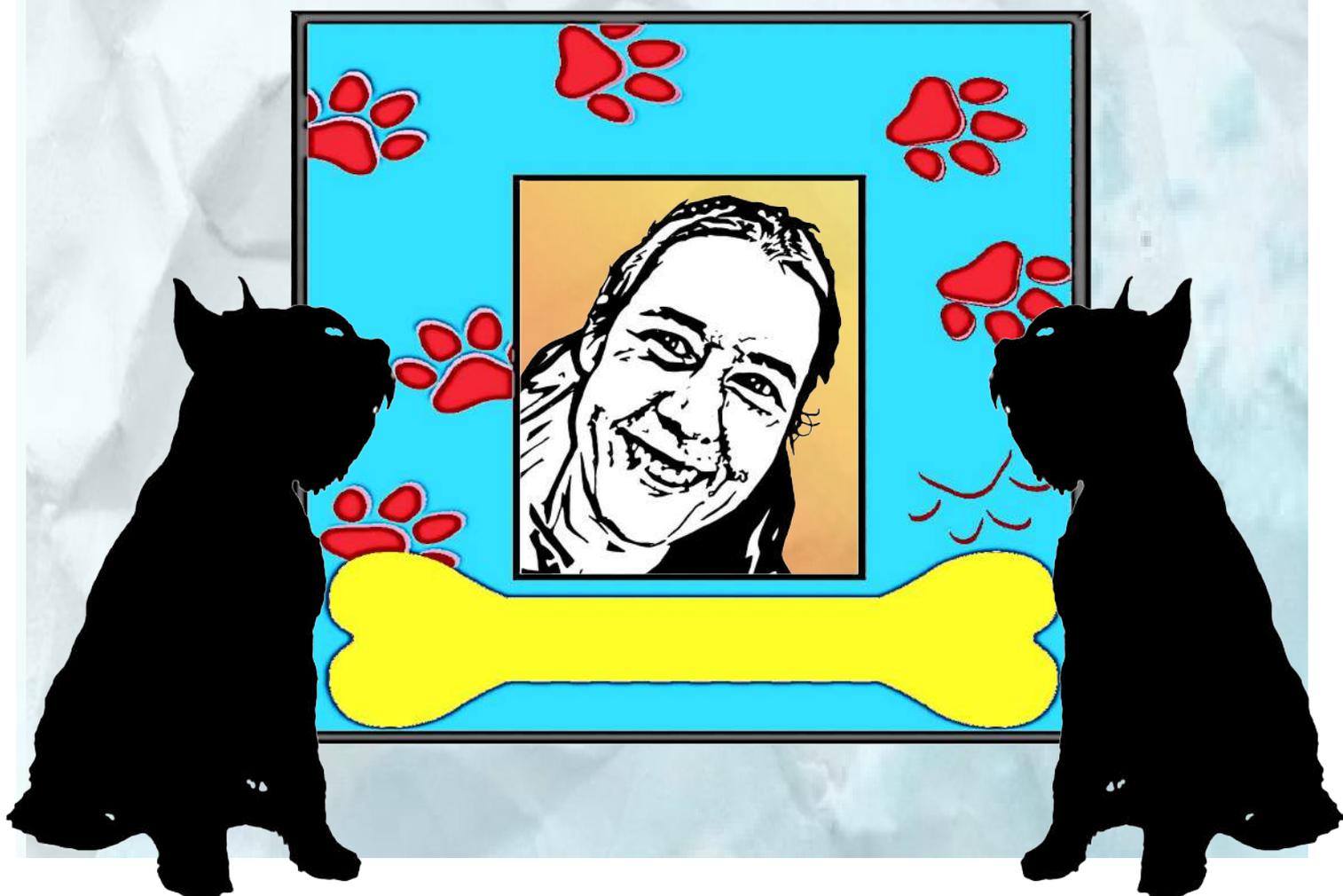
Lea: By the way, thanks for sitting through all those counselling sessions with me, 'Good Boy'. I really want to get to the bottom of this, why I cannot love and accept myself so fervently as I do onto others.

Bradley: You are most welcome. I think you just haven't offered enough treats to your Inner Puppy yet.

Lea: Point taken. My 'pack' back then wasn't so supportive of the unsuspecting, undiagnosed autistic me. Thanks for the wisdom though, Brad.

Bradley: Anytime. So... what about some toffees for me?

Lea: Still no...



Poem by C.D

My Child

You are almost three years old.

Without thinking I leave you downstairs,
three paintbrushes in your hand,
black dots,
blue, red scattered smudges on the paper.
Careful to avoid the table,
no marks on your hands.

Minutes pass
a flicker of panic eases its way into my consciousness.
I descend fearing mess, destruction.

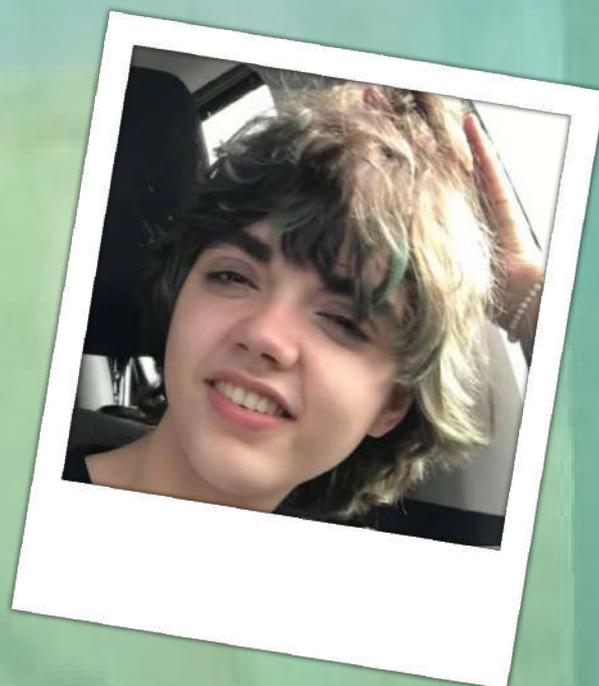
I stop.

Struck for a moment, actually,
by a desire to find paint everywhere
to see your freedom,
an expression of troublemaking delight
across your face.

But you are not that child.

You are still where I left you.
Clothes immaculate,
caution in your eyes,
concentrating in a way that makes my heart swell
yet weep a little too.

I am daughter, sister, Funny
I wonder when i'll get a Big enough bedroom of my own
I hear car
I see the sky
I want to learn, wonder when?
I am daughter, sister, funny
I pretend I am the owner of a nail bar
I feel fizzy
I touch fluffy teddies
I worry about nothing
I am daughter, sister, funny
I understand difference between lamas & alpacas!
I say "I don't understand!"
I dream Big and colourful
I try to do my best
I hope I will do the Pennine Way
I am Ellice Stephanie Murray



Time now for some more of our readers creative endeavours as we showcase their fantastic ...

ARTITUDE!

Gordon Sparling.



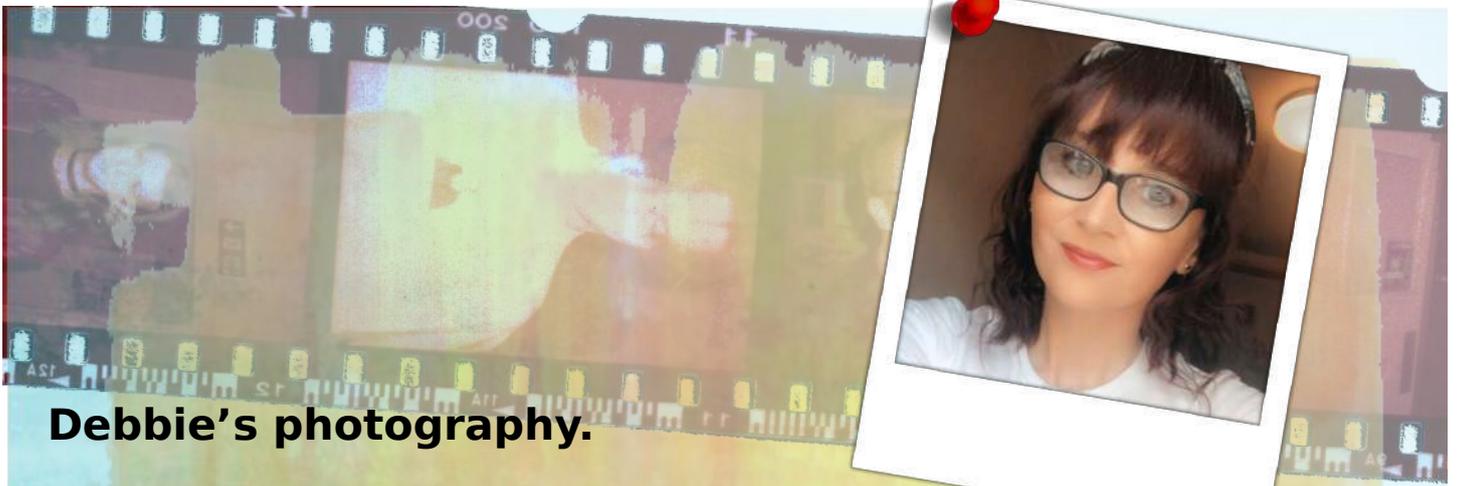
Red Kite cruising over the ruined landscape of a forestry clearing.

Red Kite looking down from above.



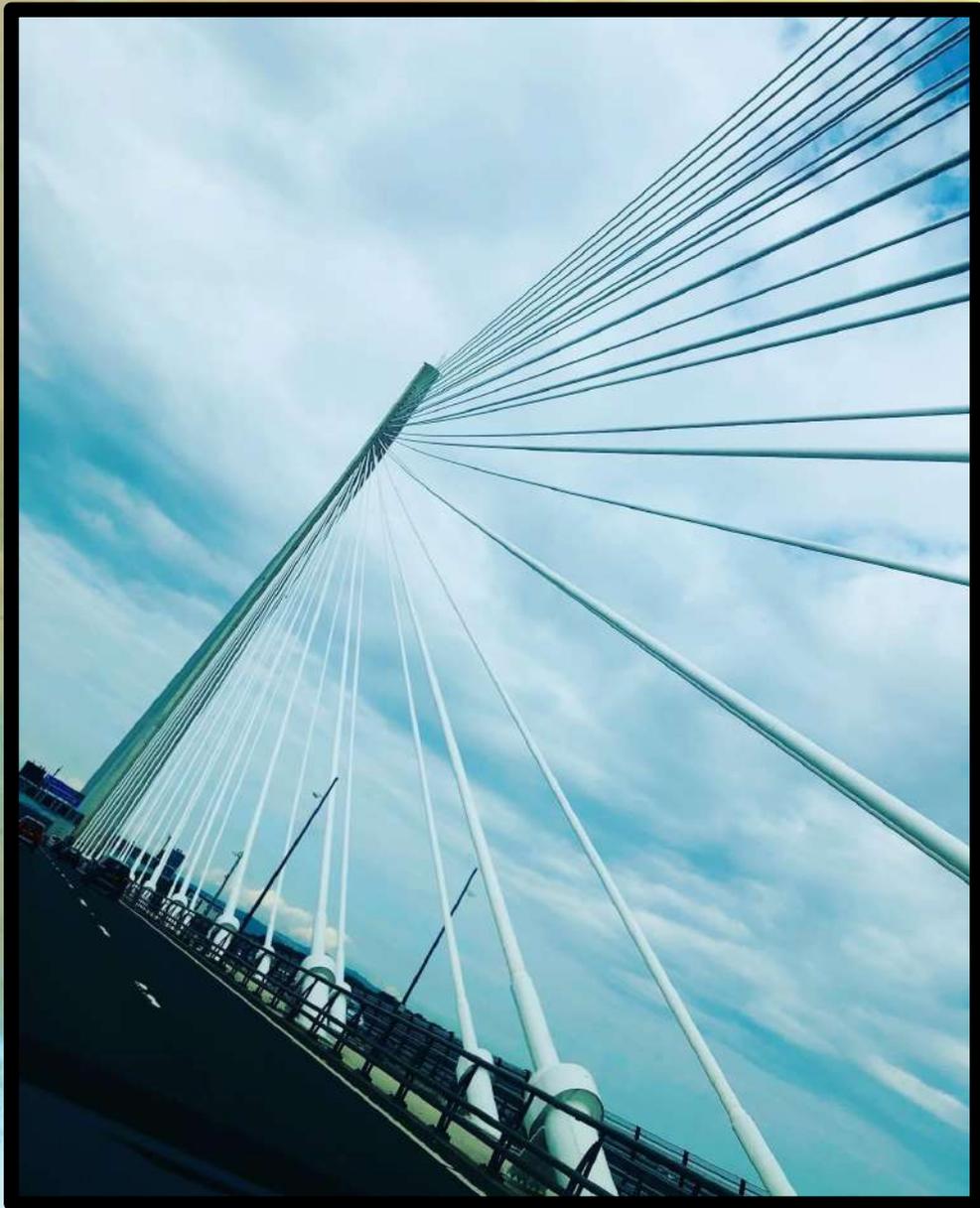


Shhh, I'm pretending to be a hay bale.



Debbie's photography.

My name is Deborah-anne. I'm 42 and diagnosed autistic. I have always loved photography, my camera is always with me anywhere I go. I studied Nc photography at college and i'm currently doing a University HND course. I also love editing photos, crafting, anything Disney, football and wrestling.





Forever I Write - Creative Therapeutic Disposition

We spoke to band members Forever I Write and Charlie about their latest album, what's behind the name and how did they record it?

Read on to find out more...

I started playing music at the age of 16 after teaching myself to play guitar using a Stereophonics chord book. I spent all of my spare time playing guitar, this was my place of escape from the outside social world. I began writing lyrics not long after and once I started composing my own music, I stopped playing other people's music and focused on composing my own.

I'd done an Audio technology degree course and before completing the honours degree something happened in my life, in 2009, where I had to take a year out to reflect and process what had happened. In this time I wrote over 1200 songs in a "freestyle" format, where I picked up a guitar hit record and whatever I sang and played in the moment was the song and I never edited the songs.

I stopped listening to other people's music and I still do not listen to music. This was my coping mechanism for what happened and I was able to process through reflecting on the songs I had wrote to figure out how I was doing on any specific day. This was where the name "Forever I Write" came from and became my name for my music.

After this time period I decided to do a degree in nursing to try and figure out what had happened and to try and combine my music with nursing.

Through the nursing course I discovered I was Autistic and I got diagnosed with High Functioning Autism in 2012.

All the time I spent alone composing my music I needed this to process the world around me and all the social information, and to figure out my own mind.

I joined Scottish Autism as a Support Worker in November 2018 and I first discussed my diagnosis with my manager in November 2019. I instantly began writing songs more about my process, trying to further explain certain aspects of me and my social skills.

The music has always been my therapy and to try to understand myself more and the people around me. I wish to use this album as a fundraiser for Scottish Autism, where people can listen for free or chose to donate money, all proceeds will go to Scottish Autism. I recorded this album, "Creative Therapeutic Disposition" and shared the songs with my friend Charlie, who then recorded all the instruments and vocals for this version of album.

I would like to share what he had to say about the recording process.

"Forever I Write"

"Forever I Write came to me with the idea about taking an album he had done previously solo and allowing me to re-record everything myself, which we would donate to Scottish Autism.

I let some people close to me hear the original version of the last song (I'm me again) and they had criticised the vocals, and basically put it down that Forever I Write was masking over mine and it didn't fit. Having known Forever I Write for more than 12 years now, I had to sit down with Forever I Write over a 3 hour phone call in the middle of the night. What ensued was the basis for how we do this album. By combining Forever I Write's creative songwriting and lyrics with my ability to play different instruments, but, with me singing as the lead vocal we were able to play to our strengths.

The week before we recorded the album Forever I Write had sent me the original version. I listened to it once through on the Monday, and then Sunday so it was still fresh in my mind.



The recording process seemed to come very naturally, and we chose to record for the first time together from the “back line”, which simply meant using his original version as a guide track and recording single tracks over it and removing the original once completed enough. We done drums first (Forever I Write bought an electric drum kit specifically to allow me to do the drums), followed by the acoustic guitar, then lead vocals and finally backing vocals, sung by Forever I Write. After the vocal takes I applied a small, custom effect to make the vocals stand out better. We would often move onto the next song after doing those takes and then in the evening I would add the final elements which were a midi bass guitar and a piano.

My thought process behind this album was that it should just be simple and natural, not over complicated by adding billions of different sounds and instruments to it, because we simply wouldn't be able to recreate that sound if we were to play it live. Therefore one instrument per person and it seemed to work.

We basically got an average of 2 songs done each day between the Monday finishing on the Friday July 9th, which was Forever I Write's dad's one year anniversary, and it was a fitting day to finish the album.

Personally I have found this album and the recording process to be very meaningful. I don't proclaim to be a great musician, more like a jack of all trades, but the one instrument I have discovered is my voice, as I have never thought to just sing in my own natural tone. The result for me has brought me a lot of self-confidence from finding this, and a big appreciation of how much practice it's taken to get to this stage, with lots more surely to follow.

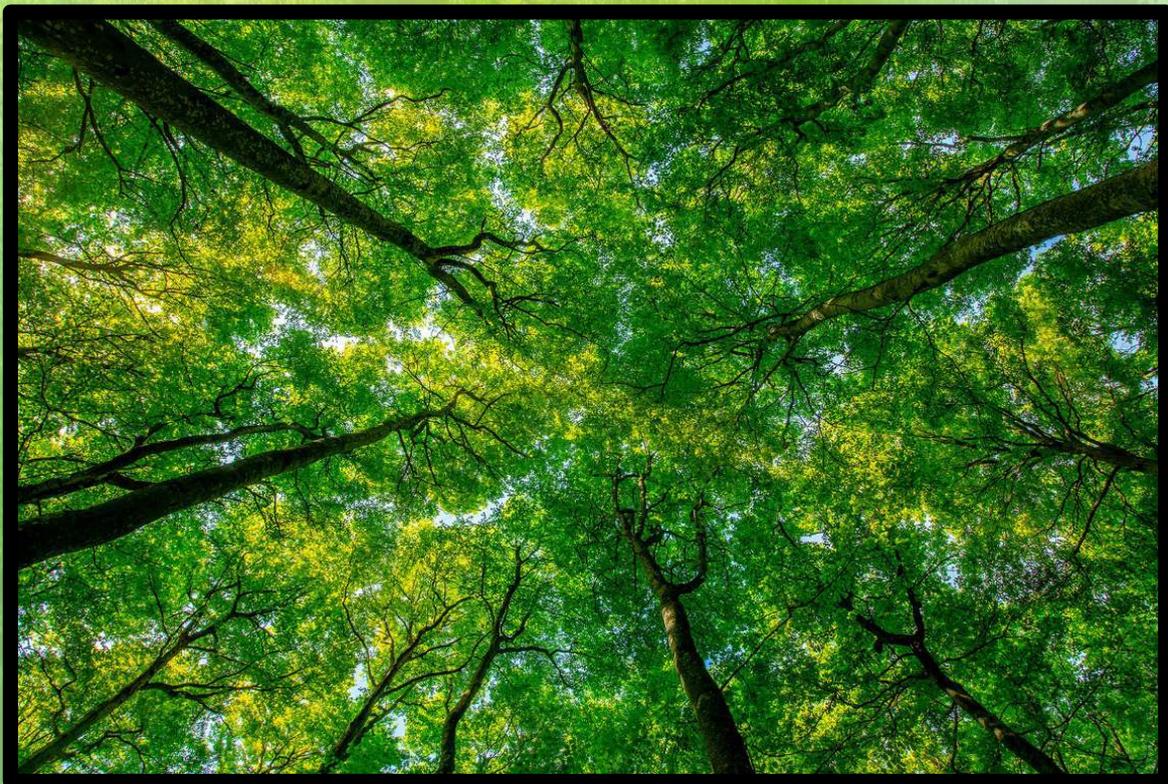
Once the album was completed and mastered by dropping the bass guitar volume in tracks 3 and 8, the end result left me basically in tears due to how natural sounding the album was and how the music and lyrics basically hit home with me. What Forever I Write has achieved in his metaphors and words I genuinely have felt and it has brought me a new found perspective on life, which has brought me to be a much happier person. I've let friends and family hear this album and they have all felt what I felt.

The best way I can sum up the end result of this album is that it helped me to find myself again after a lot of personal trauma. I hope it can do the same for others. I'm looking forward to the next one."

Charlie.

**You can download Creative Therapeutic Disposition
here: [Forever I Write \(bandcamp.com\)](http://bandcamp.com)**

**Forever I Write are raising funds for Scottish Autism,
when you download the album you can if you wish
donate £5 to Scottish Autism by **texting
FOREVERIWRITE to 70085.****



**Texts cost £5 plus one standard rate message and
you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and
fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to
give £5 but do not wish to receive marketing
communications, text FOREVERIWRITENOINFO to
70085.**

Callum is the first ever volunteer in Morrisons Supermarket in Dumbarton. Here he reflects on what this experience means to him:

“I have a job, I'm going to work, new friends at work, I have coffee in canteen after work. I'm exhausted (after my work day).”

So so lovely. Callum does push ups standing up against kitchen worktop, he has always done this, now he says it's muscles for work.



Well, if I'm going to keep my word about reviewing every Daniel Craig James Bond film, I'll eventually find myself in a difficult position when it comes to Quantum of Solace. Many Bond fans don't like it and would probably see no issue with my skipping it and jumping straight to Skyfall. But I didn't take any short cuts and at least I can say that for the first time I watched it all the way through with no breaks.

QUANTUM OF SOLACE



Quantum of Solace was released in 2008 and was the second Bond film to star Daniel Craig in the role, with Marc Forster of Finding Neverland and Stranger Than Fiction fame taking over from Martin Campbell as director. Forster claimed he wasn't a Bond fan before Casino Royale.

We begin with a car chase that has no impact whatsoever apart from being an attempt to get the viewer's attention. It also demonstrates the way Forster will direct the rest of the film, mostly using the technique called 'shaky cam' that is supposed to look more realistic but often makes it hard to get a clear grasp of what's going on. But I'll get more into that later. Despite being shot at and trashing his car as usual, Bond succeeds in bringing Mr White (Jesper Christensen) to an MI6 safe house in Siena, Italy for interrogation and that's all just in the pre-title sequence.

Bond along with M (Judi Dench) interrogate Mr White and Christensen does his best to act amused that MI6 have no idea who he works for. That is, until M's bodyguard Mitchell (Glenn Foster) is revealed to be a traitor, shoots Mr White, Bond chases and kills him, and we are treated to more less-than-admirable camerawork.

Bond does some more investigating and finds and kills another man called Edmund Slate (Neil Jackson) in Haiti.

Not long after that we have a new Bond Girl in Bolivian Secret Service Agent Camille Rivero (Olga Kurylenko) and our two main villains: businessman Dominic Greene (Mathieu Amalric) and his deposed dictator cohort General Medrano (Joaquín Cosío). They have plans for Bolivia's water supply and Bond has to put a stop to their plan, but due to personal connections to the mission, his professionalism is called into question.

Positives first: Daniel Craig's second attempt at Bond is fine, he seems a little more aggressive because of what happened in the previous film, but some moments of charm and humour wouldn't go amiss either. Judi Dench as M is really just there so Bond can have someone to talk to as an equal and does her job well.

Basically, anyone who was in Casino Royale is perfectly fine in their roles.

Many of the newcomers don't offer much. Amalric especially is not threatening in the slightest despite his unusual-looking eyes. Mads Mikkelsen as Le Chiffre in the previous film had charm and charisma, but this guy has none. Giancarlo Giannini and Jeffery Wright reprise their Casino Royale roles but are really just there to maintain the notion that this is a sequel to Royale. I was surprised to see David Harbour appearing from time to time – he's actually not too bad in the role of a CIA section chief, but I only noticed him because he's since become familiar as Jim Hooper in Stranger Things.



Apart from all that, this is truly a lesser Bond film. Bond is meant to stand out from the crowd of spy action thrillers, but thanks to the 'shaky cam' style of directing it's impossible to distinguish this from one of the many Bourne clones that came out around the same time. If this hadn't been a Bond film I think it would have been forgotten very easily.

The 'shaky cam' reaches its peak with a sequence in an opera house where there is a lot of running, screaming, gunshots and complete silence, but no clear picture of what is actually happening.

The violence in this film is unusually brutal, yet also somehow bland and uninvolved – another product of the studio thinking that the way forward was 'dark and gritty reboot'.

Films like Casino Royale (and Batman Begins) did make heavy use of this approach but both of those films took the time to have the occasional joke. There's very little of Bond's signature charm, humour or sophistication to be found here. Basically, any time there is, 'action shaky cam' is not far behind.

Around the time this film was being made, there was a writers' strike in the USA which had quite an impact on TV and film. Two notable examples were this film and season seven of the tv show 24, which got a special set in Africa and then a full season when the strike was done. Quantum chose a slightly different approach. Bond scriptwriters Neal Purvis and Robert Wade, along with Paul Haggis, are credited with writing the script. But when the strike hit, the film had to be finished somehow so Forster and Craig himself worked on it together... and look how that turned out. No wonder there is just scene after scene of Bond going from one fight to another.

The pacing is also unbearable. The runtime says 104 minutes but due to many scenes of boring conversations it feels longer. Even the climax feels underwhelming and not particularly earned.

Not to mention the new characters are fairly bland, from the villains to the main Bond Girl who has a tragic backstory but any sympathy for her can only feel superficial.

David Arnold is back to do the score, but of course I want to focus on the main theme song Another Way To Die by Alicia Keys and Jack White. It's perfectly fine and nowhere near as bad as many will tell you, but I can only hear Keys' voice on it. I know White wrote the song but I can't hear him doing much. I think I might have preferred the supposed rejected theme by Shirley Bassey entitled No Good about Goodbye.

Forster took the basic starting point of 'dark and gritty Bond' and came up with just another bland, generic spy thriller with lots of shaky cam. Oh, and complete with unnecessary and pretentious stylised fonts for just about every new location Bond visits. It feels weird to say this, but the tie-in game for the PS3 that featured the completed material of the Casino Royale game was way better than this film, which really says something about the quality.

I know Quantum of Solace has its fans somewhere, but if you want to watch something that actually feels like a Bond film, this is best avoided at all costs.

Andrew Moodie.



Personal Reflection on Beginnings of Open University Journey

I developed a passion for English after a friend of mine introduced me to the power of writing and at that point I knew I wanted to pursue my interest, so I resolved to look into studying with the Open University. As all my past learning came from school and college, I had many unanswered questions swirling around my head and, at times, I began to wonder if this new learning environment would be right for me. I decided that if I was going to take what I perceived as a leap into the unknown that I needed to have something tangible to hold onto. I needed clarity. I then began to research, taking on the role of a detective almost, asking questions which encompassed things such as forms of assessment, how it differs from a conventional university and what it would entail.

Though I still harboured doubts about my ability and, while I found it challenging to dispel them, I had hit the submit button. Finally, I had found the courage. I had applied to the Open University. When I look back over that period in my life it has prompted many fruitful reflections. Studying more generally has tremendous therapeutic benefit for my own mental wellbeing. Nature's own antidepressant can be in the form of intellectually stimulating work. Further feeding your curiosity, the whole educational experience leaves you infused with a great amount of excitement and stimulation, and it has got to be the intellectual equivalent of heavyweight physical activity.

Thriving on order and approaching things in a structured way makes learning aptly suited to my mind. I like to pull apart the assignment question, breaking it down and looking at its component parts, what it's asking for, starting by outlining the general theme before moving to give a more expansive view. It can be a bit like going for a ski on the Swiss Alps, beginning with that broadest, most general view of the surroundings before moving down where the more detailed aspects of the landscape can be appreciated.

The Open University – the product of a belief that the opportunity of education should be spread – illustrates this in its openness and flexibility. Open University students, diversity personified – different by background, by disability, by geography, and by their education journey, but united in their shared objective. Incredibly, although by its very nature the Open University is distance learning, it brings together people who can be otherwise very apart. Pursuit of academic education, and the advantages that flow from it, should be available and open to all who can meet that standard.

Fast paced sensory and social environments demand more and more brainpower, and these demands can be a demanding feature of face-to-face learning for some autistic people. As attention turns to learning the cup may already be full, leading to overflow, and potentially jeopardising education success. Students with disabilities, encompassing a broad range of conditions, may benefit from the inherently distinctive nature of the Open University. Experiences vary among people, more so for autistic people, whose skills and disabilities can be like ocean waves. Great highs and lows that make life difficult in ways few know. For some autistic people face to face learning may act as rocket fuel, allowing them to thrive. Besides, law requires that universities make accommodations for students that need them so that is not the issue.

This is about recognising that sound decisions come, and people can only thrive if they have a thorough understanding of their own preferences and needs as an autistic learner, and indeed person. What a liberating notion for people with disabilities, and a good one to end on...

Gordon Barlow.

SPECTRUM SUPERSTARS!



Name: Stephen Wiltshire MBE.

Age: 47.

**Occupation: architectural and
landscape artist.**

AUTITUDE NEEDS YOU!



Well that's it for issue 8!
Hope you've enjoyed it!
Don't forget to send your contributions to
autitude@scottishautism.org