FREEING POWER OF THE ARTS

BURNING TO LEARN

MENTAL HEALTH IS NOT TABOO
Contents

Freeing power of the arts
Burning to learn
Mental health is not taboo
Celebrating the best
Creating peace wherever you are
When community spirit rises from adversity
East West to healing: a hero’s journey
Book review: The Adventures of Angy
Like most of us, I am fascinated by stories of change, whether of people overcoming personal challenges, or remarkable individuals who are passionate about supporting their communities. I am proud to be Editor of a magazine showcasing these unheard stories.

As children we were captivated with fairy tales. As we grow older the stories we hear are of real people that either move us to tears, make us smile or inspire us to take action in our own lives. Changemakers shares stories both of personal change and of tackling global issues. Through the power of storytelling, we hope to inspire, equip and connect people with ideas of how to change their own lives and play their part in building a sustainable and peaceful society. We hope you enjoy reading this first issue.

Davina Patel, Editor
comms@uk.iocf.org

Welcome to our first issue

Our writers

Davina Patel
Yee-Liu Williams
Alexander Castleton
Mary Lean

Pete Sherrard
Imam Ajmal Masroor
Peter Everington
Freeing power of the arts

Jodie Marshall is not your average 29-year-old. Over the last seven years she has been using the performing arts to turn around lives in South Yorkshire and the shantytowns of Brazil.

Marshall set up her social enterprise, A Mind Apart, when she was 22. She and her team work with children aged five and upwards, especially those who are not in education and have behavioural problems, ADHD and autism, or are young offenders or involved with gangs. ‘We use performing arts as a tool to reintegrate them back into society and to get them thinking about what they want to do.’

She draws on interactive theatre techniques devised by Augusto Boal, the Brazilian director, artist and activist who founded Theatre of the Oppressed. These promote social and political change, through creating dialogue between actors and audience. ‘It’s about looking at what’s stopping you – what are your boundaries, what are your oppressions – and then looking at how you can change that situation to improve your circumstances,’ she explains. ‘It uses the premise that you can’t change the people who are oppressing you, but you can change you and how you respond, and that may change the oppressor.’ Having studied Boal at university, she spent some months in Brazil using these techniques with street children before starting A Mind Apart.

Marshall is passionate about the arts: ‘They are such a freeing thing. When you look at a painting you get emotion from it and everyone has an opinion. It’s the same with theatre and dance. I believe theatre is a massive tool for social change.’ In general, she says, plays deal with social or political issues that are timeless and anyone can relate to. ‘Take Romeo and Juliet, for example: who hasn’t felt passion for somebody, experienced lust or love? This is where conversations start to happen about the differences between love and lust and how that fits in with the actors’ lives. Suddenly you have a conversation about healthy relationships.’

Marshall’s Christian faith is a source of her passion. ‘I believe we are born to steward the world – socially, environmentally and politically. Everything I do revolves around how can I honour God and steward the world in a better way.’ She worked on a pantomime in the West End for a season. ‘I loved it, but it made me realize that I don’t want to work in commercial theatre because it’s all about money. What am I going to give this audience apart from a night in the theatre? I can affect all the kids on the stage performing.’

Jodie Marshall has recently been appointed as one of the National Coordinators for Initiatives of Change in the UK.
According to *The Guardian*, young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are three times more likely to be unemployed than the rest of the UK population. ‘With 498,000 in that age group without a job, young people now fare comparatively worse than at any point since 1992,’ stated an online report in February 2015.

Burning2Learn (B2L) is Alan Dean’s answer for teenagers in the UK who have great potential and talents but struggle to find work related to their passions. ‘We need to put schools back into the heart of our communities,’ he says. ‘Children are the seeds of the future and if we tend to them, nourish their passions and help them grow then they will flourish.’

The programme, which is based in Kent, helps students learn maths and English through ‘stealth learning’ on the job. Practical tasks in the real world teach them the numeracy and literacy skills they will need in the workplace. The experience also helps them to build relations with employers and companies in fields they aspire to. They learn to appreciate the connection between B2L’s ‘3 Rs’ of respect, responsibility, reward: if they approach people and tasks with respect and responsibility they will reap the rewards.

Dean cites the example of a talented boy with autism who was a competent animator and produced visually appealing work, but could not find funding for university or college because of his lack of maths and English. B2L found him work which helped to improve his literacy and numeracy.

Dean created B2L in 1998, drawing on his experience of mentoring in the construction industry. He took young school leavers or drop-outs to sports events and commercial shows, and
encouraged them to fulfil roles adults would do for a living. For instance, he took a group to the Apple Show at Olympia London and gave them the task of writing an article on any technology they could find in the four hours they were there.

Projects with The Prince’s Trust, Swanley Town Council and Darenth Valley Rotary Club demonstrated that his methods worked. As his work spread, B2L participants visited a wide array of events, including The Guardian Young Reporters Day, the World Superbikes Series, The Big Bang Fair, Grand Designs Live! and The Gadget Show Live. At the World Superbike Series in 2004, the pupils had the opportunity to interview world champions such as Troy Corser, James Toseland, Tommy Hill and Carl Fogarty. B2L’s Junior Media Team then travelled around the world with the series for the whole year. This connection was further strengthened when the riders became B2L ambassadors.

Alan took another group of students to Silverstone race circuit. Their tasks included interviewing drivers and calculating drivers’ times and finishing places on the circuit. ‘My boys have never had an experience like it,’ wrote the Deputy Head of one of the schools involved. ‘On the day they were simply school pupils with no labels. Your generosity in providing such a wonderful base gave them a sense of pride and self-worth that is immeasurable.’ A parent commented, ‘My son hates school but with Burning2Learn he doesn’t realise he is doing school work. After spending two days up at Silverstone he asked me to take him back for the weekend. He wanted to work, even though he didn’t know he was working!’

‘A lot of children I work with do not have good enough role models,’ says Dean. ‘B2L try to be those role models for them and give them people to look up to.’ In 2012, he took part in an After the Riots forum organised by Initiatives of Change, which made clear that little was being done to help young people to face ‘moral challenges’. This is something B2L hopes to address along with its partners: Initiatives of Change, Challenger Troop CIC and Target Your Potential. B2L, like IofC, gives people the opportunity to meet inspirational individuals, in the belief that this will help them to change.

Over the last 18 months, Dean has also begun the Acorn Hub, a branch of B2L which focuses primarily on building relationships with companies and helping young people find work. He believes that we need to ‘restore a sense of community and give back to local businesses’. His hope is that the young people who pass through B2L will support their communities in the way he has supported them.

Feedback from students who have been through B2L suggests that the message is getting through. They say that they feel ‘valued’. One
Year 11 student said: ‘The experience has raised my own self-esteem and confidence in my ability to achieve despite my dyslexia.’

‘The system puts a barcode on you,’ said another. ‘B2L mixed grammar school and special needs together and treated them as people.’

‘Burning2Learn helps kids of any age realise that it isn’t just about grades, it’s about the experience and what you as a person can bring to the task,’ says a third. ‘This isn’t recognised by many other companies. B2L is one of a kind. It’s personal, educational, environmental, confidence-building and inspiring.’

‘It isn’t about the grades, it’s about the experience’
Imagine embarking on a long perilous journey, not knowing whether you or your family are going to live or die. ‘Can I get my family to safety? Where will they go? Do I go with them?’ These were the questions that Abdi Gure faced, when he sent his family out of Somalia in 1991. ‘I stayed back with the hope that the situation would improve.’ Seven years later, hope lost, he too escaped and joined his family in Britain.

Over a million people have been displaced by the civil war and anarchy which followed the collapse of Somalia’s government in 1991. ‘When Somalis come to the UK they are already traumatised,’ Gure says. ‘Many have witnessed relatives massacred in front of their eyes; some women have been raped.’ With the Somalis’ nomadic heritage comes an ‘inner power of resilience’. But there are also high levels of unaddressed mental health issues, often exacerbated by worries around immigration status.

Gure’s concern about these needs – and the trauma and stigma associated with them – led him to train as a ‘psychodynamic counsellor’ at Birkbeck College, University of London. Within the Somali community, he says, mental health is ‘taboo’. ‘The concept of mental health, stress or depression does not exist in Somalia and there is no vocabulary to describe this state of mind,’ he says. ‘If we see our relatives or friends acting in strange way, walking in the street naked, talking and rambling, we believe they must be crazy. Speaking to a stranger about your life is not part of the culture and seems odd. Individuals are either “mad” or “sane”: the belief is if you are crazy you will never recover.’

When Somalis exhibit such mental health symptoms back home, they may seek help from elders, religious leaders or traditional healers. Somalis do not believe mental health can be treated through medication. Seeking help from ‘outsiders’ is considered ‘shameful’, he explains. Mental illness in the Somali community is viewed as an uncontrollable spiritual problem, and a sign of weakness. Individuals do not know how to get help, and are often reluctant to take medication. ‘Sufferers confine themselves within their families and remain silent,’ says Gure. ‘Social isolation further intensifies mental health problems.’
Abdi Gure

‘Somalis have an inner power of resilience’
People come to me when everything is exhausted and the world around them has collapsed."

Somalis are often misdiagnosed with schizophrenia and unnecessarily sectioned, says Gure. He sees this as a symptom of a medical profession under increasing pressure: the doctor is saying, ‘I have no time for you... but I am clinically covered’.

A large proportion of Britain’s 300,000-strong Somali community lives in the London boroughs of Harrow and Brent, where Gure’s Somali Hayaan Project is based. ‘Hayaan’ is a nomadic term, which means ‘moving on to a better place’. The project, launched in October 2010, grew out of the Somali Mental Health Advocacy Project (SARP) – a three-year research-based project funded by the Kings Fund. The Somali Hayaan Project is sponsored by Mind in Harrow and Brent.

Gure describes himself as a ‘cultural brokerage advocate’, helping Somali refugees move on with their lives. Because of the range of barriers that Somalis face in getting effective and appropriate treatment, advocates have to bridge the cultural divide between patients, family and frontline welfare services, acting as ‘interpreters, facilitators and confidants’.

The Hayaan Project also seeks to reduce the sense of isolation experienced by Somalis with mental health difficulties. Common barriers include lack of knowledge about how to access health care. ‘The Somali community have a very poor understanding of “where they are in the system” because it is so complicated,’ he explains. ‘There are many single mothers, the elderly struggling with language, climate and understanding the ways of the British system.’ The project acts as a ‘community hub’, recruiting and training a team of ‘peer educators’ from the local Somali community.

At a fortnightly meeting of Hayaan in Brent, which I attend, community leaders engage in a lively discussion about the plight of 20 homeless Somalis living on the streets. Gure presides over a crescendo of voices and animated gestures. He introduces a Somali psychotherapist, Sara Abdulahi, to the gathering, stressing the importance of having advocates of both genders, so that issues can be sensitively discussed between people of the same sex.

Abdulahi believes inter-generational issues are a key factor in mental health problems in the community. ‘The children who are born here and grow up in the UK are very different from their parents. Children become more dominant because they learn the language and the mother and father lose their roles in the family. Boundaries and hierarchies change – which may add to stress and mental health issues.’

As the meeting draws to a close, I ask Gure to sum up his central message. ‘Education is key to understanding that mental health is not “taboo”. Suffering from depression is no different from any other illness and it is possible to get help and counselling. It is a false belief that if you have mental illness “you are mad”. Medication can help people recover and live a normal life in the community.’

Hayaan fortnightly meeting in Brent
The rise of ISIS, and extremist attacks in different countries, have placed Islam and Muslims under an intense media spotlight. Islam is suffering from a bad press, with a non-stop flow of negative stories. Muslims and non-Muslims are all asking what is radicalising so many young people. Why choose terrorism over peace?

We now know that many extremists have been radicalised over the Internet. Young people surf around and watch videos on free platforms. After pornography and violent films, extremism probably dominates the search fields.

We cannot guard the Internet but we can populate it with more uplifting content. Everyone I know struggles to find a platform with well-produced, up-to-date content about Islam and Muslims. If terrorists are distorting the religion, who is depicting the best of what Islam has to offer?

Parents often ask me where they can send their children for good, authentic educational programmes and entertainment. A lot of the current Muslim offerings are preachy, prescriptive and low in production quality. Young western-born Muslims are media- and tech-savvy, and will only watch content which speaks to them at their level and in a contemporary style.

Two years ago I and three other media professionals decided to tackle the issue. We founded Alchemiya to showcase the world’s best video content about Islam and the Muslim world – people and places, past and present, art, history, culture, spirituality, business and much more. It provides a subscription-based video on-demand service with programmes about the very best examples of Muslim achievement.

Today Alchemiya is available globally, and is fast building a customer base of discerning young educated urban Muslims. Currently in beta mode, with a limited selection of 37 titles, the service attracts new subscribers every day and a healthy following on social media. Most of our customers are attracted by our social mission to promote a more positive and balanced image of Islam and Muslims. The management team’s experience in mainstream broadcasting and financial management allows the project to differentiate itself as to quality.

Alchemiya’s content comes from across the world. We take care to select films and documentaries that are relevant to the lives and values of our target audience. We also commission programmes that validate a positive, creative Muslim identity, and foster tolerance through the diversity of our contributors. We promise to build a world-class media company that is globally recognised, and is a conduit for transformational experiences.

Ajmal Masroor is an Imam and broadcaster based in London. Find out more at www.alchemiya.com
Eight women sit around a table in a kitchen in Oxford. We were born in five countries, on four continents: our ages range from 26 to 61. Four of us have children at primary school: our weekly meetings have been timed to fit into the precious three-hour window when the two youngest are at nursery. Over eight weeks, we share our stories and the challenges of our daily lives, and explore what it takes to create peace in our homes and communities.

Our Creators of Peace (CoP) Circle is one of hundreds which have taken place in the last ten years. They are the main tool of IofC’s Creators of Peace programme, launched in the 1990s on the inspiration of Anna Abdallah Msekwa, a Tanzanian women’s leader and cabinet minister. She challenged women to ‘create peace wherever we are, in our hearts, our homes, our workplace and our community. We all pretend that someone else is the stumbling block. Could that someone be myself?’

Some peace circles take place over weekends; others, like ours, as a series of weekly meetings. They enable women (and occasionally men) to meet across racial, social and age divides and to engage with each other and the world around them. Usually, the process is transformative; sometimes it leads to common action in the community.

Already this year, Barbados and Zimbabwe have been added to the list of over 40 countries where CoP circles have taken place. Participants in a peace circle in a poor high-density suburb of Gweru, Zimbabwe, in March were so hungry that the organisers ran out of food. One woman, whose husband was unemployed, asked, ‘How can I have peace when my children are unable to go to school because we cannot pay the fees?’ By the end of the circle she had joined up with another woman with the same problem, and the other participants were planning...
to raise money for them to start a secondhand goods business.

Iman al Ghafari, a teacher from Syria, encountered Creators of Peace while she was living in Canada. On her return to Damascus, she began to run circles in the shelters for those who have lost their homes in the fighting. It’s not been easy. ‘People don’t want to listen to anything other than revenge,’ she says. ‘Every time the violence escalates, they come to tell me that this proves that peace is impossible.’

For women like Hasnaa, whose husband was killed by a rocket in the street in Damascus, the circles have been a source of healing and empowerment. ‘All I felt was pain, anger and sadness until the day when I attended a CoP Circle,’ she says. The circle broke through her helplessness. ‘I’ve learned about forgiveness and how I need to put a limit to my pain so it doesn’t control my life any more. I want to help other women who went through the same situation to be stronger.’

Sixty peace circles have taken place in Kenya, some of them in intercommunal flashpoints such as Baringo County where clashes over cattle rustling, grazing and water have cost lives. Eighty-one women from different sides of this conflict have taken part in peace circles since August; and in May they came together in an emotional reconciliation meeting. In Burundi, some 20 peace circles have taken place and include training with alternative food and sanitation technologies.

And in Britain? London, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Bradford and Oxford have all had peace circles – in some cases several. Eighteen months after the one in my kitchen, we are still meeting regularly. Mary Zacaroli, a writer, campaigner and mother, says, ‘I met some extraordinary women. Some had come from outside the UK and had difficult, sometimes traumatic backgrounds. Others were just living with the usual stuff that life throws at you. I learnt that peace is not flabby or wishy-washy. It’s muscular and assertive and messy.’

For more information about Creators of Peace in the UK visit uk.iofc.org/creators-of-peace and internationally visit iofc.org/creators-of-peace
Easterhouse is where my roots are,’ says Ian Monteague, chair of Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse (FARE), a community charity based in one of Glasgow’s toughest areas. He has lived and worked in Easterhouse for most of his life, and knows the anguish of relating to an alcoholic father, the challenges of gang culture and the crippling impact of ‘social discontent’.

At the age of 15, Monteague had a ‘vivid awakening’ to the fact that ‘things needed to change’ and ‘I needed to do it’. He started to attend public meetings and dared to ‘frame questions’ to those in power.

Monteague is guided by his Christian faith, and knew early that his ‘calling’ was to work at community level, although he could have had a career in politics: ‘I hope the rhetoric comes from my faith. Politicians work from a distance and from a height.’ Instead, he trained as a teacher. His first job, at the age of 19, was as a youth worker with the Easterhouse gangs – a job that nobody wanted.

He is fervent about ‘supporting people into work’. People need to feel valued, he says, and where high unemployment destroys vision and hope, a vicious cycle results. ‘The job scene is not about money, it’s about self worth.’ Everyone has a gift, and a responsibility to exercise it. His commitment is to ‘awaken that spirit’ in those he works with.

FARE was set up in 1989, by local people who were frustrated about the lack of amenities in Easterhouse, an estate which hit the news in 2002 when conditions there moved Conservative Party leader Iain Duncan Smith to tears. Most of the charity’s projects focus on youth. StreetwYze provides an eight-week course for children in the last year of primary school, to help them ‘understand what temptation may come their way’. FARE’s Mer Tae Me PSD programme works with young offenders and groups on the periphery of gang violence.

When community spirit rises from adversity

There’s more to Glasgow’s Easterhouse estate than deprivation, Ian Monteague tells Yee-Liu Williams.
Gang culture, Monteague says, draws on the human need to belong. FARE’s projects help young people to see that ‘there’s more to me than being in a gang’ or ‘there’s more to me than being deprived’. The projects’ success is based on working and standing together in ‘spiritual energy’.

‘We have worked with a number of agencies - the police, fire and rescue,’ says Monteague. Anti-social behaviour and crime has reduced overall by 55 per cent since 2007, according to Scottish police statistics. ‘It just illustrates what is possible through collaborative work.’ FARE’s focus has moved from reacting to gang culture towards being more proactive in schools so as ‘not to slide backwards’.

Monteague is currently securing funding to roll out the Easterhouse scheme to other parts of the UK. ‘When people are heard, they are like seeds. At some point they will germinate. Even in times of social deprivation community spirit can rise from adversity.’

[Website URL]
Mike Sarson, the founder of East West Detox, is an unassuming, quietly spoken man, with a slightly faltering rhythm to his speech: a vicious assault, at the age of 25, left him with brain damage which affects his short term memory. He has a power point presentation on his computer screen to ‘fill in the gaps’ in our interview. But he doesn’t use it. Not once. The injuries he sustained may have stopped him leading a ‘normal’ life, but they have caused him to lead an extraordinary one.

His charity, East West Detox, sends drug addicts from the UK to Thamkrabok Monastery in Thailand, for what may be the world’s toughest drug rehab programme. Patients are told that this is a once-only chance: if they relapse they cannot come back. New arrivals take a vow of total abstinence, their possessions are confiscated and their communication with the outside world is cut for the first five days. The treatment is not easy; a 5 am start and the consumption of herbs, which cause instant, projectile vomiting. This is complemented by herbal steam baths, nutrition, counselling, work, art and mindfulness meditation for relapse prevention.

TV documentaries on the programme have tended to focus on the vomiting, days of no sleep and the agony of withdrawal. But Sarson is keen to point out that this is more than aversion therapy. ‘There is also a ritualistic element. The first time you take the herbs the projectile vomit comes out black. You take them for five days – but the fifth one is clear. So there is a symbolic cleansing. It’s really powerful; a letting go of all the negative stuff that you’ve held onto for years.’

Another important factor is the distance from home. Sarson sees the trip as ‘the journey of the hero’. ‘It has parallels of going on a pilgrimage to somewhere special like Lourdes. In the UK you could just escape rather than fight. But at the monastery you can’t do that. You have to go through a certain amount of discomfort to become the hero. No pain, no gain.’

Before founding East West Detox in 1997, Sarson worked with the National Health Service as an addictions counsellor, using drama therapy and meditation to help addicts to talk about their relationships and childhood experiences. This was a holistic approach that dealt with the causes of the addictions rather than just the symptoms. He found himself becoming increasingly disillusioned with the ‘over-medicalised’ system in the UK. ‘We were told to get them fast-tracked onto medications, as it was
more cost-effective. The whole thing was geared around putting heroin users onto methadone, which is more difficult to withdraw from than heroin. Everybody working in drug/alcohol services had to work like that.’

He encountered the programme at Thamkrabok during a holiday in Thailand and saw in it the holistic approach he was seeking. It was radical but seemed to be very effective; well over 100,000 people have been through the programme during the past 50 years, from all over the world.

East West Detox sends around 80 people a year to the programme. Although it is notoriously difficult to research the long-term effectiveness of drug-treatment programmes, anecdotal figures suggest that out of all the patients sent to Thamkrabok by East West Detox, 60 per cent are still drug-free after a year. The figure for UK-based programmes ranges from 4 to 12 per cent.

Sarson talks about addiction with a familiarity that comes from personal experience. After the attack in 1975, he spent weeks in hospital and had several operations. He was put on painkillers, tranquillisers and eventually anti-depressants. ‘Before the attack, I had a really promising career as an actor. After the attack I was traumatised for such a long period that I became addicted to these medications. Underneath there was all this anger and resentment. Why me? I became the victim. Then I started self-medicating.’

The turning point was an encounter with Nicholas Broadbridge, a Benedictine monk who was running healing workshops at Douai Abbey near Reading. Broadbridge told Mike that unless he forgave the people who had attacked him, they would affect him for the rest of his life. ‘I could really see his point. I didn’t want to carry on with all this anger and resentment, blocking it all by taking all these drugs. So I went through this process with him, healing the memories.’ After that, he says, the negative energy and emotions went away.

I tell Sarson that I’m interested in this connection between forgiveness and addiction. I had a preconceived image of elderly monks, tucked away from the modern world, shuffling around in the shadows of a dark monastery. So I am pleasantly surprised when, five minutes later, I am talking directly to Broadbridge, now in his eighties, via a video link on Sarson’s computer. ‘Every addiction has a spiritual starting point and a spiritual conclusion,’ Broadbridge says. ‘By spiritual I don’t mean religious but each one’s inner spirit.

’The starting point is primarily a lack of love, from whatever cause. This means that the adult addict is always looking for the love which he or she missed out on in earlier life.’

He mentions how most people in recovery follow the 12 step program and the 11th step is meeting God through prayer and meditation. But although he sees the meditation as a vital step, he adds another stage, ‘the healing of memories’. In his workshops he gets people to talk about their early life, to find out who they have been blaming, however subconsciously.

Broadbridge teaches that by not forgiving, we block our ability to
receive love. This causes pain, anger and an emptiness, which we try to fill with external things, and this, in turn, becomes the addiction. ‘The answer will always be forgiveness and love,’ he says. ‘That will set you free.’ Sarson talks of asking God – or a higher power, ‘if you don’t have a God’ – to forgive those who have hurt you.

Broadbridge says, ‘It is important to realise that it is the love that does the healing, not the forgiveness. The latter unblocks one’s relationship with God. Addicts are trying to take love but you can’t take it, you just receive it.’

Broadbridge’s workshops now form an important part of the post-rehabilitation of people returning from Thamkrabok. So does meditation. ‘Taking chemicals affects the chemistry in the brain which becomes busier, so people get stuck even more in their heads,’ says Sarson. ‘When you have cravings, your mind is constantly going off thinking about your next fix.’

Meditation helps them to live more from their hearts than their heads, and to observe and accept thoughts and emotions without trying to control them. ‘By practising every day, when you come off the drugs, you don’t go back to the pit, to the despair.’

Sarson realises that opening oneself up to love again through forgiveness, accepting experiences without judgment, in the moment, is an incredibly useful tool. Not just for former drug addicts but for everyone. ‘In the West we are all constantly dwelling on the past and projecting into the future. By connecting to the here and now, learning to live more in the present moment, we are all able to connect spiritually to our daily lives.’

He has started teaching mindfulness meditation in several schools, not just to the pupils, but to teachers and even to the children’s parents. ‘We teach children how to keep calm, how to keep things simple. We are all living in our heads too much and the kids really get it. Teachers have noticed that the children listen and concentrate more, behave better, and interact better.’

I ask Sarson how he now feels about the appalling attack that nearly killed him all those years ago. ‘I can look back on it now and accept it as a life changing experience. Through forgiveness I can reconnect to the love. I can accept everything even more because that experience has led me to where I am now.’ Against all odds, Sarson picked himself up and started a new life. Over the last 20 years, through his charity and working with people like Broadbridge, he has helped more than 1,500 other people to pick themselves up and start new lives.

www.east-westdetox.org.uk

‘Unless he forgave the people who attacked him, they would affect him for the rest of his life’
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The challenge of The Great War produced some adventurous British women, whose stories are being unearthed in these centenary years. This one is about the Honourable Angela Manners. Sixty years before, the Crimean War had made the nursing pioneer Florence Nightingale a national heroine. In 1863 the newly founded Red Cross had introduced an element of humanity to European battlefields.

At one level it was extraordinary that a 25-year-old society girl, daughter of Lord Manners, should succeed in establishing a Red Cross hospital unit to care for the British wounded in Belgium. At another, it was natural that she thought ‘Thank God I am a nurse’ on the day war broke out, and took a patriotic initiative.

Michael Henderson has done a brilliant job trawling the records and presents a stirring narrative. It includes the pathos of the thousands of wounded, the news of her brother’s death on a separate battlefield and her imprisonment by the Germans. Yet the story is suffused with the joy of teamwork found by a band of women, with one male surgeon, in an outpouring of voluntary service under fire.

The challenge of Moral Re-Armament, like its successor Initiatives of Change, has also enlisted many adventurous women. Angy encountered it after World War II with her husband, Colonel Malise Hore-Ruthwen.

The two of them and their three children gave the rest of their lives to the faith-based struggle for peaceful change and reconciliation, still so sorely needed in the world. The postscript of the booklet is written by their surviving daughter, Sally Baynard-Smith. She writes of her family’s transition from privilege to purpose: ‘The vision of a different kind of world from that in which we grew up has been the driving force of our lives.’

*The Adventures of Angy* is available for £3 at [www.uk.iofc.org/books](http://www.uk.iofc.org/books)