Asylum: The Magazine for Democratic Society

Phil Verden
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Asylum was first launched in 1986 at 50p per issue but free to ‘inmates’. Influenced by the anti-psychiatry movement it captured and capitalized on the zeitgeist that was the evolving consumer/survivor/ex-patient/activist movement and the promise of a revolution in mental health care. The first edition included an interview with Ronnie Lange and a discussion of the democratic psychiatry movement in Italy. The revolution may have been fairly subdued but a stream of volunteers over the years kept Asylum alive and a virtual staff for a range of disparate organizations and individuals from within and outside psychiatry including the critical psychiatry, hearing voices and paranoia networks, mind survivors and mad pride. Asylum has come to represent is the tolerance of many voices, differing viewpoints, and a commitment to self-help and mental health service reform.

In 2007, Terry McLaughlin, the executive editor of many years stood down due to Illness and passed away. Asylum has just been re-released in digital and paper form. It is distributed by PCSS Books (www.pcss-books.co.uk), purveyors of a range of interesting and provocative articles that I think will appeal to, or more importantly, will provoke discussion between service users, carers, professionals and activists alike.

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