

# LEEDS UNLOCKED

2025 #5

CHAMPIONING  
#LEEDSMEN

STEPPING  
INTO  
AUTUMN

INSIDE...

BOWLING  
& RUNNING

GREEN SPACES

OFF TO UNI

IDENTITY

CREATIVE WRITING

WORDLINK FUN  
& PRIZES

LOCAL GROUPS & ACTIVITIES  
SUPPORTING MEN & MEN'S HEALTH



## PEOPLE TO TALK TO...

### FINANCIAL ADVICE

**MONEY BUDDIES** - 0113 235 0276 - Help with money problems

**GREEN DOCTOR** - 0113 238 0601 - Energy advice to help you save money

### MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

**LIVE WELL LEEDS (LWL)** - 0113 219 2727 - [info@livewellleeds.org.uk](mailto:info@livewellleeds.org.uk)

Citywide mental health support service for people to manage and recover from their mild to moderate needs. Can self-refer.

**MINDWELL** - [www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk](http://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk)

Online support for men's mental health

**LEEDS MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICE (LMWS)** - 0113 843 4388

Talking Therapies for common mental health problems. Can self-refer.

**SAMARITANS** - Free phone 116 123 - Need to talk? Confidential and emotional support 24 hours a day

### SPECIALIST ADVICE

**GAMCARE** - 0113 388 6466 - Help with gambling issues

**FORWARD LEEDS** - 0113 887 2477 - Advice, info and support if you are worried about alcohol or drug use

**LEEDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE** - 0113 246 0401

24hr helpline for men and women

**MEN'S ADVICE LINE** - 0808 801 0327

Help for male victims of domestic abuse

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE** - 0113 222 4401 - [leedsadults@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leedsadults@leeds.gov.uk)

Supporting adults to live well and be independent, short or long term

**THE SILVER LINE** - 0800 470 8090 - A free confidential 24hr helpline for older people, offering information, friendship and advice

**CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE** - 0113 234 4150

(National Helpline - 0808 808 1677) Support for when someone dies

**CARERS LEEDS** - 0113 380 4300

If you are struggling to care for someone

**LEEDS REFUGEE FORUM** - 0113 244 9600 - Support for migrants

### GENERAL SUPPORT

**LINKING LEEDS** - 0113 336 7612 - Linking you to local services & activities

**CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU** - 0113 223 4400

Confidential and impartial advice

**NEW TO LEEDS** - [newtoleeds.org](http://newtoleeds.org) - A guide for migrants to the city.

Over 50 languages introducing all aspects of life in Leeds

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES - CALL 999 / NON-EMERGENCIES - CALL 111

# COME OUTSIDE

## 3-5K SOCIAL RUN & WALK

When we started Come Outside, it was all about building a community where everyone could feel at home in nature, especially those who felt like the outdoors wasn't for them. We wanted to change that narrative and create a safe, welcoming space for people from all backgrounds to connect, be themselves, and discover a sense of belonging.

That's what makes stories like Armani's so powerful. When he first joined us, a leg impairment made it tough for him to run. A 5k was a real struggle, with a lot of walking breaks along the way. But he took the plunge and stuck with it. Week after week, he showed up, pushing through his limits with the support of our community.

Today, just a year later, Armani runs 5ks and 10ks regularly, and he's even completed a marathon! His journey is a perfect example of what our group is all about: finding confidence and joy in the outdoors, no matter your starting point. It's about showing up as you are and realizing that you can achieve things you might not have thought possible.

If you're looking for a community that will cheer you on, we'd love for you to join us outside.

Contact: [comeoutsidecommunity@gmail.com](mailto:comeoutsidecommunity@gmail.com)

EVERY SATURDAY - FREE

MEET AT  
OAKWOOD  
CLOCK  
LS8 1SD

8:45am - MEET  
9:05am - WARM UP  
9:15am - START



## MEN'S GROUPS

Many local and community organisations run groups because they are incredible spaces to interact and have fun, to connect and celebrate.

Whether walking, cooking, gardening, fixing, playing music or sport, singing, or so much more, a group is a great way to meet people and find new hobbies - so get yourself out and busy.

Mindwell is a mental health website that offers so much for adults, our health and wellbeing, here in Leeds with lots of relevant information for advice and support. This QR code takes you straight to the men's groups listed on their website - scan and you might find the perfect group for you.



### BLOKES & SPOKES

Drink Tea, Talk Rubbish, Fix Bikes. Fridays 2pm - 4pm, Denis Healey Centre (Lower Workshop) LS14 6RD. **Contact Mark: 07584 320 392**

### REAL MEN REAL TALK

Talking changes lives. You don't have to handle things alone; a safe friendly space to meet other men, chat, share and go on trips.

Thursdays 6pm, Woodhouse Community Centre, LS6 2NY.

**Email: [adamtaylorvolunteering@gmail.com](mailto:adamtaylorvolunteering@gmail.com)**

### READY FOR FREE YOGA?

Improve your flexibility, posture, strength & balance - offering mental clarity & stress relief. Wednesdays 10am - 11am, Tobin's Gym, Stanningley Rd, LS12 3AP. **Email: [jonathan.parker@barca-leeds.org](mailto:jonathan.parker@barca-leeds.org)**

### WALKING PHOTOGRAPHY

Exploration & creativity in nature, parks in Leeds. Learn tips and techniques to enhance your skills. Free, no fancy gear needed, smartphone is fine. One Sunday per month.

**To book your place, email: [jonathan.parker@barca-leeds.org](mailto:jonathan.parker@barca-leeds.org)**

### HOLBECK TOGETHER MEN'S GROUP

Join this new men's group - chat, play games and unwind in a relaxed, friendly space to boost your wellbeing and have a laugh. Fridays 10:30am - 12:30pm, Ingram Gardens Community Room, LS11 9SA  
**Contact Chris Darcy: 07731 033 770 / [chris@holbecktogether.org](mailto:chris@holbecktogether.org)**

### MAN TALK MEN'S WELLBEING SUPPORT GROUP

(for men in the Burmantofts, Harehills & Richmond Hill PCN) Have a brew & a chat in a free, safe, friendly, non-judgemental space. Mondays 2pm-4pm, Bellbrooke Surgery, LS9 6AU  
**Call the Care Coordination Hub: 0113 240 5080 or contact your GP**

# CREATIVE WRITING!



## WAREHOUSE OPERATIVE POSING AS A WRITER

BY TOM PRIESTLEY

In the words of Charles Bukowski: *"It began as a mistake."*

Writing has hounded me for the past 17 years. I finished my first novel when I was 18, and much to my surprise, I drew interest from a London publisher. Ecstatic, I agreed to cough up the £4000 required for proofreading, editing, and the eventual promotion of what I was sure was going to be an international bestseller. After two payments, the company collapsed, leaving me with nothing but a bank loan accumulating interest by the hour.

I kept writing. Years later, an old friend convinced me to attend an Open Mic night. Skeptical, but curious, I went ahead, and now, for the past ten years, moving from one job to the next and surviving on minimal wage, I recite my poetry in various locations around the country.

Although I once pictured myself as the next Hunter S. Thompson, living in a haze of drunken, drug-addled debauchery, I now write for the therapeutic elements it awards me whilst I sweep floors, pack boxes, and unload delivery vans.

*"Practice any art, music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to experience becoming, to find out what's inside you, to make your soul grow."*

## THE DARKNESS OF LIGHT BY MARTYN ALLEN

I see a beam of light looking down at me, it's like a godliness that's checking me out. It's flickering, faster & faster, light flickering off like a burning piece of cinder, or dead weight, cracking under the pressure of its own heat.

It's flying about, fluttering out of control, looking at it, the closer it gets to me. I hold my finger up to it, hoping it may see it. Its zig zagging motion is still happening, but it's getting closer. It's about to land on my finger, I feel it would be safer if I cupped it in my hands for a safer landing. It lands delicately, softly, hardly a feel to it, almost like it's floating in my hands.

My hands feel soft, but warm, my blood pressure going at a steady pace. I uncover my palm to see what it is, its angelic light beams out its light to me. What is it showing, and why? Is it trying to tell me something?

A whisper comes to my senses, a soft whisper at the back of my senses, a voice I don't know of, telling me, keep living, loving & being who I am.

The light of the moon all around me illuminates, a tomb, my skeleton, my soul commuting, and I rot as I lay here, old as time itself.

## GET INVOLVED WITH LEEDS UNLOCKED

Send in your writing, poems, photos of Leeds, new and old, and of your creations, doodles, drawings or word games; all things that either inspire you as a man, or are simply fun, interesting and lovely. And we will always credit you!

**Email: [lawrenceg@space2.org.uk](mailto:lawrenceg@space2.org.uk)**

**Phone/WhatsApp: 07784 951 318**



STEPPING

OUT...

## RODLEY NATURE RESERVE

*I live in Rodley so I may be biased...* we have the most wonderful oasis of calm right on our doorstep. With the help of my five-year-old son Alfie, I've recently come to appreciate it even more, finding new ways to bond with him at the same time.

It all started with some frogspawn I spotted on a walk over Howarth Moors. It sparked memories of childhood and the fascinating metamorphosis of tadpoles into frogs. Naturally, I told Alfie and we agreed to explore more together.

Rodley Nature Reserve is a wonderful haven of peace, easily accessible to anyone in Leeds. Spread across several ponds, each with its own hide, the reserve is perfect for wildlife spotting. What began as a frogwatching mission quickly expanded. We found ourselves identifying birds, quietly listening to the sounds of nature, and simply being present.

Over the weeks, we've learned new things, spent quality time together outdoors, and discovered a shared hobby that helps to create memories to cherish; it has helped me reconnect with my inner child and become a calmer, more patient father.

Rodley Nature Reserve is open Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays, and is completely free to visit. To plan your visit, head to [www.rodleynaturereserve.org](http://www.rodleynaturereserve.org)



BY DOM CHARKIN

As we move from Summer to Autumn and as the weather changes, it feels like a perfect opportunity to step out, meet new people and look ahead with hope. See how all our contributors, on both pages of this 'zine, have found something new to do and a different way to view themselves.



## HAREHILLS BOWLING

BY RAYMOND SWALLOW

Raymond shares a deeply personal story of recovery, resilience, and community through his involvement with the Harehills Bowling Club. Following a mental health crisis that left him feeling like he'd "lost [his] identity," Raymond credits the club with helping him rebuild his life. "I was just some monster... I didn't know who I was anymore," he recalls, describing the toll his struggles took on both himself and his family, particularly his young twins.

Encouraged by his wife, Raymond sought professional help. That moment, he says, "was the start of recovery, just admitting I needed help." Around the same time, he discovered the bowling club through a community event. Despite never having played before, he quickly excelled, helping his team earn two league promotions and a cup win in his first season. "I never would've envisaged where this would take me," he says.

More than the sport, Raymond found healing in connection: "It's a family away from my own."

He speaks with passion about the camaraderie and structure bowling brought to his life, especially during winter sessions where 20-30 people still gather regularly.

He's since trained in suicide awareness and first aid, now helping others navigate the dark places he once knew. "Don't be ashamed. Go see your doctor. That's your starting point."

Despite concerns about council fee hikes risking access for vulnerable members, Raymond remains committed to advocating for mental health through sport. "You don't think it'll be you - until it is."

MindWell

Look up Mindwell online, [mindwell-leeds.org.uk](http://mindwell-leeds.org.uk) - offering a wide range of support for your health and wellbeing.

Why not try crown green bowling yourself? Email: [Harehillsparkbc@outlook.com](mailto:Harehillsparkbc@outlook.com)

## P E N S

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Your secret codes at the bank

A quantity of milk or beer

Herb, great as a tea

Not yours or theirs

Red, white or rosé

Clever

Stand

Flower

It smells

A musical sound

## T O T E

## WORD LINK

Change each word, *just one letter at a time*, to get from PENS to TOTE

Complete our Wordlink here - let us know and you'll win a Men's Health Unlocked Tote bag & Pen!

If you liked this Wordlink, get creative and make your own! Send it in and you can win £10 (contact Lawrence, details on the other side)

## LEARNING TO LOVE UNI BY WILL ALWAYS

I wasn't the most academic student in school, so the thought of Higher Education was a little daunting: I ended up accepting that University wasn't going to happen for me. However, I came across Leeds Conservatoire and immediately decided that I wanted to go there.

I was very anxious as I knew nobody going there, but I realised that most people would be in the same boat even if they don't show it. I quickly found a support network of friends and tutors and they have

been so incredibly supportive and are definitely the reason that I'm now able to move onto my second year of studies.

Uni is a very daunting thought at first, and moving is incredibly scary, but I found as long as you go in with an open mind, and you're not afraid to get stuck in with events or societies, then you will be able to enjoy the whole university experience so much more.



## BISEXUALITY

BY LEE PALMER

I have always found it difficult to find a way to reconcile being a man and being bisexual. My frame of reference for these two things has always been that these two areas cannot co-exist. If you're "gay" then you're not masculine or a "real" man.

This has caused me great shame and led me into a pit of deep internal shame, I was constantly at odds with myself and hardwired into suppressing myself. This manifested itself in alcoholism and destructive behaviours.

In the past seven and a half years of my sobriety, I've done a lot of work on myself guided by the support of Andy's Man Club and Safeline, genuine lifesavers for me. I'm slowly realising that instead of my masculinity having a very narrow definition, of only being certain characteristics and looking a certain way, I'm slowly embracing my whole integrated self, creating my own image of what being a man is: this includes owning my sexuality and setting myself free.

Safeline offers free, practical and emotional support, preventing & surviving sexual abuse. They have a dedicated National Male Survivor Helpline 0808 800 5005

