

Thursday 10th August

We set out from Mary's house and made our way through a busy Croydon and were met by lots more curious onlookers. Some more big hills around Crystal Palace but as we made it through Camberwell we were greeted by Creative Routes for a demonstration outside the Maudsley psychiatric hospital, which has recently implemented about 4 million pounds worth of cuts to user-friendly services. We were joined by Gem the dog and a giant sheep called Dolly. Baaa rmy! Then on to Bedlam, now the Imperial War Museum (fitting). Aidan Shingler and the Kiss It! crew were there plus many people from across the country. We had a dance at the Mad Hatter's Tea Party, and made some speeches.

We've come along way but we've still got a long way to go... to a peaceful mental health service. Madness is a creative way of dealing with pain, brutalising someone does not help them. We need to listen deeply to people in crisis. Psychiatry is effecting more and more people's lives. 400,000 prescriptions for Ritalin (an amphetamine based drug) for children last year. We know that labelling and drugging people does not work - we have to speak out. The Government still plans to extend compulsory treatment powers into the community (Community Treatment Orders - CTOs). Directly and indirectly coercion kills. We who have experienced and witnessed forced psychiatric treatment, we are the flame of the candle - it's hot but we can illuminate the way for things to change if we we tell our truths.