



by Nick Radclyffe
I Love Thunder



Wow - what a hectic few months! We started with the Hanwell Hootie at The Village Inn, where we kicked off with our latest self-penned tune "Highway Maintenance," which is all about our trip to Wales in November last year.

We followed up with "The Guest," another of our own which we've reworked a tad.

It's a great feeling to be writing more of our own stuff and makes all those years of gigging worthwhile. We're able to think more as a band and realise what abilities we all have and how to use those

in our writing. "Highway Maintenance" featured a riff put together by Vinnie, Eric and Keiron with lyrics by Nick and Lee. There's also a backing vocal written especially for Anne.

We had a tremendous crowd in for our set which went down a storm, it was a great way to kick off the Hootie.

As you know, Ealing Mencap was nominated as one of the official charities of the Hootie this year and the funds raised were very kindly allocated to our coffers.

The following week, as a complete contrast, we were

busking in Ealing Broadway Centre as part of their Buskathon, with an acoustic set featuring some quiet songs, some solo spots and then a bit of rock.

We did very nicely as well with our trusty collecting buckets. Beginning to sound a bit mercenary this... We're not like that at all - but you might see where this is all heading in a little while.

Later in April, we headed off to Springhallow School in West Ealing for a workshop with the students from Eagle class, followed by an appearance at the grand opening of their new school.

Vinnie alongside student Kearer performed a wild instrumental on drums and bass, and this was followed by

a rousing version of "Iko Iko" with Nick, Anne, Lee and the whole of Eagle class.

We like to think of this work as 'sowing seeds,' and hopefully some of the pupils will remember this day and decide they would like to play an instrument.

It may not be immediately, but maybe at some stage in their lives they might discover for themselves the joy that playing music or performing with others in a band can bring.

While all this was going on we received an email from our friend Kaja in Norway asking us if we would like to go to Oslo to take part in the 25th Anniversary celebrations of their Dissimilis Festivalen! Well, what else could we say?

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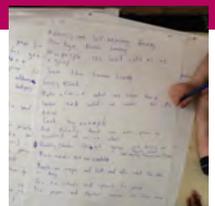
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I Love Thunder Storm Stages from Ealing to Oslo

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Dissimilis created the musical colour coding system that we use with Vinnie and that was how we first came to know of them.

This relationship was further cemented when I attended their conference in 2011 and we became part of their worldwide community.

The money we had earned throughout the month would help and with some additional contributions from both Dissimilis and Ealing Mencap we finally had enough to seize the opportunity. You see why that mercenary bit came in earlier?

A couple of months later, I Love Thunder were all stuck in complete gridlock heading for Enterprise Lodge on June 10th. Sweaty palms and more ensued as we eventually got onto our minibus (with attached luggage trailer) heading off to Stansted for our flight.

Can you feel another song coming on? We're working on it at the moment. It's a funny thing but most of our songs have been triggered by something unfortunate happening to the band. Still, we have to get our inspiration from somewhere!

After a small gig at the Dissimilis Gala dinner on the

Saturday night and a visit to the sculpture park earlier on we hit the main stage on Sunday in Oslo's city centre right opposite the Nobel Peace Centre and had an absolute blast.

It felt incredible walking out onto the stage looking out over at all the people milling about on the seafront.

We played four songs including our two new tunes and old favourites Whiskey in the Jar and Mustang Sally.

We've been invited back to another festival later in the year a bit further north, so time to start saving again... Norway is many things but not the ideal place for a band on a budget!

Over the course of the weekend more than 45 different bands with varying levels of ability took to the same stage. It was an absolute honour to stand up there as part of a truly amazing celebration of music.

Now we're back home and looking forward to a few more gigs before having a bit of a break over the summer.

Have a look at our Facebook page for a few more pics of our various escapades. There will also be a video on its way as soon as we can get all the wonderful footage together."



I Love Thunder at the Hanwell Hootie (Top), busking at Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre (Middle) and onstage at the Dissimilis Festival in Oslo (bottom)



Saying Goodbye to Gabriel...

But thankfully not for too long!

We're sad to be saying farewell to our Transition Lead Gabriel Jones.

Gabriel - pictured here on the left after completing the Osterley Park 10k in 2014 - has been with Ealing Mencap for many years, overseeing a number of different projects for young people in Transition, both in Ealing and in neighbouring boroughs. This includes Project Search, which has gone from strength to strength and you can read about on page three.

The Transition team will now be headed

up by Tom Quilter (see page five for an introduction) who is the new Preparing for Adulthood manager. Project SEARCH will be overseen by Steve Poole at RealMe.

The good news is that Gabriel will be returning to Ealing Mencap in the future, after taking some time off and retraining as an advocate.

From everyone here we wish Gabriel all the best of luck, a restful and rejuvenating break with a successful re-training period, and look forward to welcoming her back in the Autumn.

Interns Graduate Employment Scheme

Second year of Project SEARCH sees 11 finish course



The successful Project SEARCH year two graduates after receiving their certificates

The second year of Project SEARCH in West London has seen huge success with 11 interns graduating the programme.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 Hotel, with hotel general manager Meredith Bevan welcoming parents and family members of the interns to a celebratory afternoon tea.

The benefits of taking part in Project SEARCH West London have already paid off for four interns; one has entered into paid employment, whilst three others have had job offers and should be starting shortly.

Building on the first year of the scheme, the interns this year had more opportunities to develop their work-based skills.

Roles in maintaining the grounds with gardening and landscaping experience,

as well as chances to develop computer skills in the back office of reception were added this year, on top of the opportunities to experience working life in food preparation, customer services, and housekeeping amongst other things.

The third year of Project SEARCH at the Hilton will start in September, with Ealing Mencap, Hammersmith & West London College, and the hotel continuing to work in partnership to provide more young people with the opportunity to begin their careers.

With the success of the year two interns and the recognition at a national conference (see story on the right of this page) the bar has already been set very high for everyone taking part in year three. We're sure that the new interns will rise to the challenge, and will be graduating this time next year, ready to begin their careers.

Project SEARCH wins award for employment



Project SEARCH has won a national award for outstanding levels of employment outcomes.

The award was presented at the Project SEARCH European Conference in Bath which was held at the end of June. Employment Consultant & Job Coach Steve Poole (pictured above, far left) collected the award on behalf of Project SEARCH West London.

Representatives from Project SEARCH schemes across the country attended, offering the chance to share experiences and best practice from the many different locations that run the programme.

The project - based at the Hilton London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 Hotel - saw 75% of the interns who took part in 2014-15 achieve paid employment.

The interns, all young people with learning or other disabilities from the Ealing area, took part in the year long programme to gain employment skills and real work experience.

Congratulations to everyone who was involved - a well deserved award that stands as testament to all of the hard work that was put in by staff and interns alike.

RealMe group end up in Court...

... just for a visit though!

Customers from RealMe spent a day at the Supreme Court in Parliament Square recently.

They had hoped to see a trial, but unfortunately none were scheduled to take place that day.

They made up for the disappointment of missing out on a trial by visiting the different courtrooms, taking pictures and even pretending

to be judges, creating a courtroom drama of their own! They also visited an exhibition which explained more about the work and history of the UK's highest court as well as the history of the building.

The next day the group made their own newsletter with articles about what they had learned from their visit. Looks like they had lots of fun!



RealMe customers in room three at the Supreme Court

Travel Training Students Put to the Test

Codebreaker challenge checks skills have sunk in

by Kelly Spicer
Travel Training Hillingdon



In half-term we arranged a day out to celebrate our students' achievements and all their hard work. We played a Codebreaking Game around Uxbridge which builds on the skills they have already learned during their time with us in Travel Training.

Two teams of played against each other, following clues, speaking to "safe" people, and getting on and off buses in order to break the code. Afterwards we all went for some much needed lunch at Pizza Hut.

And thank you to Oxfam in Uxbridge High Street for helping us with one of the clues. We had so much fun and it was a great way to put into practise all the skills that the students had learned!"



A few of the participants competing in the Hillingdon Codebreaker Challenge

Interns Look to the Skies for Customer Service Training

Visit to BA HQ gives insight into cabin crew training methods

As well as graduating in June with flying colours (see page three), Project Search interns also received some first class customer services training with British Airways staff, at BA's head office near Heathrow Airport.

The visit was arranged by the Hilton, and saw the interns take part in role-play sessions and scenario exercises, and were shown how BA staff would be trained to handle challenging situations with customers on board an aeroplane.

Project Search Job Coach Jai Upadhyaya said: "The interns loved the day with British Airways. It was a great way of learning while having fun at the same time.

"The practical skills of delivering good customer service will be something that they can take with them and use in the future."



Project SEARCH interns get put through their paces as British Airways cabin crew for the day

Personal Assistant Service
Support designed just for you



Customer Guide

Ealing
mencap

A Care Quality Commission Registered
Service No. 1-131465413

**RealMe
PA
service
receives
positive
feedback**

The RealMe Personal Assistant service received a glowing review recently, after offering 1:1 support for a customer whilst her parents went away on holiday.

Her father said: "We would like to thank you very much indeed for the really excellent way you looked after C while we were away.

"She really enjoyed her time with you supporting her, and was very happy with everything you did for her.

"It's such a relief to know that in the future we might be able to repeat the idea of a holiday break with much confidence. Thank you for the opportunity you gave us to have a very good time abroad for the whole week."

The Personal Assistant Service is CQC registered, and available to adults and children living in Ealing or surrounding boroughs. For more information visit our website (short link - <http://goo.gl/ybq3zj>) or call Kathryn White on 020 8566 9575.

Introducing...

Say hello to some new faces at Ealing Mencap

I'm Amy! I started as a Travel Training Development Worker in March.

My first few months have been both challenging and exciting, and I have learned a lot from both the Travel Training team and the wider Ealing Mencap community.

I am based in Ealing but I have been lucky enough to get out and about in Hounslow and

Hillingdon to work with the Travel Trainers there. Since I started, I have been working on AM and PM Travel Training sessions and day placements with Ealing students.

I have also had the opportunity to be involved in bus days in Hounslow and Croydon, and codebreaking games in Hounslow and Hillingdon. I was also part of a team of Travel

Trainers who organised a codebreaking game for Real Me users at the recent volunteer day at Enterprise Lodge.

I have really enjoyed working with the staff of Ealing Mencap and my students - I feel inspired every day by the progress they make and look forward to learning more as I progress myself in my role."



Amy



Jennifer

My name is Jennifer and I have recently joined Ealing Mencap as a Connexions PA (NEET).

I will be working a three day week (Weds-Fri) and will be based at the Westside Young People's Centre.

My role is supporting young people to achieve their full potential by supporting them to

access either further education, employment or training.

I have over twenty years experience in working with different community groups.

My background is primarily as a youth worker, though I do have a great deal of experience in writing and delivering programmes of activities and in coaching.

My most recent role was as a coach/mentor for young people to support them in developing capacity for creating success.

I am very much looking forward to bringing the skills that I have developed over the years to the service users working with Ealing Mencap."

Hello, my name is Lyndsey and I recently joined Ealing Mencap in June as a Travel Training Development Worker.

Already I have learned so much about my role and have seen how important

independence is to the young people we support.

I am delighted to have joined such an enthusiastic team of people who have all been very welcoming and feel fortunate to be part of such a progressive and worthwhile project."



Lyndsey



Paul

I'm Paul and I started as a Travel Training Development Worker in February in Hounslow.

I've really enjoyed my first few months and have learned a lot

from the Travel Training team. Everyone at Ealing Mencap has been so welcoming and it's been really rewarding helping young people build up their skills and confidence when out and about.

We've had some really fun activities, like the codebreaking game, and I've also found it very interesting taking our students to the bus garage to speak to drivers about issues they face."

Hi all, I'm Tom Quilter and I started on the 13th June as the new Preparing for Adulthood manager, taking over from Gabriel Jones. From what I can see and from what I've heard from everyone we've met I've got a lot to live up to in this role! But I have to say I'm really looking forward to taking on the challenge and filling a

pair of pretty huge shoes.

I've met quite a few of you already and I hope to meet everyone as soon as I can. I can say that if everyone's as friendly and welcoming and passionate about supporting children, young people and adults to reach their potential and achieve positive outcomes as the people I have met then I know that this is going to be a

great place to work. It's only been a couple of weeks but I can already see the big difference Ealing Mencap is making and I'm very glad to be here within the team.

If anyone wants to contact me about anything around preparing for adulthood you can reach me on tom.quilter@ealingmencap.org.uk"



Tom

And there's one more new face to meet on the next page...

Introducing...

Last new face for now!



Soniqua

Hi everyone, my name is Soniqua and I have recently joined Ealing Mencap as a new Travel Trainer.

I've just graduated from university, and feel really excited and thankful that I have been given the opportunity to join such a wonderful team and organisation as my first job.

Everyone has been so welcoming and although working with people with disabilities is new to me professionally, I have already learned so much in the past two weeks.

I can't wait to learn and develop more as a travel trainer, and to meet and help more young people towards

Power Group Make Plans for the Future

Training day helps to offer direction



The Power Group deep in discussion

by **Nick Radclyffe**
Power Group



I started working with the group at the beginning of April and we're looking forward to growing and developing together.

In fact, the Power Group have just finished some intensive training with Together All Are Able, a self-advocacy group from the Wirral.

This was facilitated and financed by Certitude as part of their contribution to the Learning Disability Provider Forum.

We used the tried and tested method of listing out things that are working, things that aren't working and things that need to change during our first session.

We then spent the second session working out how we could address the

things that weren't working. We also looked at what we needed to do to make turn our wish-list into reality. We ended up with a list as long as all our arms!

Having compiled the list we proceeded to prioritise the necessary actions. We've ended up with plenty of food for thought, plenty to do and a very much clearer vision of where we're heading.

Our trainers were Jenny Carter, Vicky Buckingham, John Carson, Lynne and Paul Eastwood, who are all directors at Together All Are Able.

We were very impressed and motivated by their visit and look forward to future collaborations and networking.

First up on our list was to create a Facebook Page and work has already started on this. We are also going to be looking at our branding to help create and present a professional image."

British Land Vols Build Confidence at RealMe

by **Steve Poole**

Employment Consultant & Job Coach



The volunteer day on 15th June was a day organised to help build the confidence of the customers at RealMe with the support of ten volunteers from British Land, four Travel trainers, two Crew training and RealMe staff.

We ran two sessions wrapped round a great lunchtime spread, cooked and served by our staff and customers.

The morning session revolved round a

'code breaker' challenge out in the community for customers to solve with the help of volunteers. It was facilitated on the day by our Travel trainers. Everyone cracked it and all our customers received a certificate to prove it.

In the afternoon Crew trainers literally took over the hall and involved everyone in exciting, interactive confidence building fun.

We ended the day by presenting all the volunteers with a certificate, our thanks and smiling faces all round. A video of the day will be out very soon.

Sue, one of the volunteers from British Land, said: "What a great day we had yesterday - we all REALLY enjoyed it; your customers made it so easy for us to join in!

"We've come away quite inspired - thank you so much."



Customers, staff and volunteers celebrate at Enterprise Lodge