

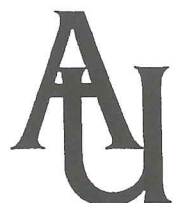
Produced by and for people with Asperger syndrome

# Asperger *united*

Edition 32 October 2002



*Dove Cottage by Julie Norman*





*Asperger United* is a self-help newsletter run by and for people with Asperger syndrome. The newsletter aims to put people with the condition in touch with each other and to share information so that they can lead more independent lives.

*Asperger United* is free to people in the UK with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome. We ask for a contribution of £6 per year from overseas readers and £10 from professionals and institutions to cover postage costs.

**Editor** John Joyce

**Additional support** The National Autistic Society's Publications Department

**Please send all correspondence and subscription requests to:**

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**Subscribing to *Asperger United***

Tel: 020 7903 3541  
Fax: 020 7903 3767  
Email: asp.utd@nas.org.uk

All we need is your name and address and we will add you to the mailing list – free of charge to people with a diagnosis!

Thank you to George Cox who kindly produced the illustrations included in the Pen Pal Network section.  
Thank you to Graeme Lawson for producing the AU logo.

*Please note that the views expressed in Asperger United are not necessarily those of the editor, The National Autistic Society or those involved in the publication of the newsletter.*

**Dear AU**

RE: *Asperger United Anthology*

I have received a copy of the anthology, and was pleased to see you have included my poem 'At Forty-two'. However I was most annoyed because there were several printing errors. The first line should read, 'Fly an eagle', not 'Fly like an eagle' and the word 'faery' has been spelt 'feary'.

Otherwise I liked many of the other contributions, but I am afraid that such errors detract from the overall quality.

With thanks and best wishes

**Jeremy Marchesi**

*Dear Mr Marchesi*

*The Publications Department sincerely apologise for the errors and for any distress this may have caused. Please see below the correct version of your poem.*

---

#### AT FORTY-TWO

(I was 42 when I found out about Asperger syndrome.)

Fly an eagle  
Over the deep blue sea;  
Waves of feeling  
Washed up, over me.

Oceans of emotion  
Play in faery song;  
Lost in other worlds ...  
For so, so long.

Far beyond the stars  
In the vast of deepest space;  
The music of the spheres  
Unheard ... by human race.

The pattern of my life  
In other words defined;  
I never really realised ...  
The confusions of my mind.

**Jeremy Marchesi**

## Dear Readers

I hope you all had a wonderful summer. Welcome to this latest edition of your magazine and thank you to all contributors.

In addition to your opinions on the content of your paper we would welcome any comment on the Anthology. Do you think we should publish any further editions? Does our talent have space on the general market?

We would still like to hear of your initial diagnoses and for newer readers – any memories of your life before diagnosis.

In November I will be addressing the Inaugural World Autism Congress in Melbourne on social skills groups

and on my experiences since knowing about my condition. The text of my address will be published in the next edition. A number of others including original editor, Richard Exley will also be attending and indeed addressing the conference.

Keep the material rolling in so that your magazine may continue for another few years.

May I take this opportunity to wish all of our readers all the blessings of Christmas and a very happy 2003.

Your editor

**John Joyce**



## in this edition

Editorial	3
Feature: Readers' experience	4
Finding employment - Readers experience/art	5
Letters to the editor	6
Pen pals	7
Poetry	8
More writing/letters	9
Feature: Readers' experience - It's good to talk	10
More letters/art	11
Book news/letters	12



Dear John

I read Chris Maguire's account of being "sacked" in the last issue. It sounds to me as if there may be a case for constructive dismissal. Perhaps you may like to suggest to him that he sees an employment lawyer.

I am 38 years old, married with two children (three by the time you publish this letter). I am employed as an engineer in the oil and gas exploration industry, and have been since I graduated with a degree in Chemical Engineering in 1985.

I met my wife about 7 years ago and we were married about one year later. My wife always knew that I had some problems, although she could see some good qualities in me that others couldn't. I would have temper tantrums, rituals/routines, dominating behaviour, wanting things my own way, lack of emotion, 'unnatural' attachment to my mother for a man in his early 30's to name a few.

I was able to modify some of my behaviour such as temper tantrums and dominating behaviour when matters eventually came to a head and my wife threatened to leave me. One of the ways that I did this, which others may find useful, was to write a short phrase on several pieces of paper that I would leave in conspicuous places around the house. These were to remind me whenever I saw them of that aspect of behaviour that I wished to change. For example 'be more considerate to [wife's name]'. This gradually became embedded in my memory and generally had the desired result. I didn't realise at the time what was behind my behaviour.

When my eldest child was two years old, it was apparent that his social and language development was not what it should be. Our Health Visitor had also noted this and was dropping subtle hints to us that something was not right. I'm not sure what prompted me,

but I then trawled the internet for 'autism'.

I realised that what our little boy was suffering from was either Asperger syndrome or high functioning ASD. Furthermore I realised that this explained my whole life's behaviour. I examined my childhood and adult memories and concluded that I too was suffering from either Asperger or high functioning ASD. Later on I realised that my mother, some of my brothers and our late grandmother probably all suffered from either Asperger or high functioning ASD.

Our son was assessed at a Special Needs Assessment Centre. No firm diagnosis of either Asperger or high functioning ASD was concluded, as there was no unanimous agreement between the members of the assessment team. However, privately, two senior members of the team who had knowledge of ASD agreed with our conclusions and are overseeing our son's development.

We were fortunate therefore to secure local authority funding for an additional helper at his playgroup to assist him in this social situation. He is now 4 years old and will hopefully start in mainstream school, with appropriate assistance next year when he is 5 years old.

I wanted to be sure that I had either Asperger or high functioning ASD so I approached my GP who referred me to the Adult Psychology Department at a local hospital. I have had many sessions there and still have a few to go. The person that I'm seeing seems to be sure that I have at least high functioning ASD. He is not sure whether I have Aspergers or not for two main reasons:

(1) There is no developmental history for me growing up as a child, only my own recollections and what my mother has told me. (My mother wouldn't be

able to provide this history because memories fade over time, and in any case, doesn't believe that I have a problem.)

(2) There is no firm agreement between the different diagnosis tests available as to what Asperger syndrome actually is. (Am I still eligible for a free subscription?) I am hoping that eventually these sessions will help me to improve my emotional relationship with my wife, which I see as the last stumbling block to be overcome.

If anyone were to ask what the most important aspect is that needs to be worked on with Asperger syndrome/ASD I would say emotions, before all else. If you can get this right it may make it easier to improve other problems caused by ASD.

I appreciate that from reading this magazine and others that I am one of the better-off sufferers of ASD/Asperger syndrome. The message that I have to others less fortunate than myself is don't give up hope.

Those people who have admitted they have a problem are a long way down the road to improving their lot. There are many other people with this condition who either don't realise it or don't want to recognise it. These people struggle in their lives, but at great cost to themselves. They ultimately have a greater distance to go.

Yours sincerely,

**S Richards  
Scotland**

*Dear S Richards*

*Thank you for contributing your thoughts to AU.*

*Best wishes  
John Joyce - Editor*

## Follow up article from Michael Feldman

*An article by Michael on his quest to find employment was featured in the last issue (31) of AU*

### SECURING EMPLOYMENT

After registering with Prospects I secured a position as a filing clerk with a Building Services Consultancy.

Of course, being out of work for so long meant that I had to get back into the swing of things. The company had been without a filing clerk for some time. This meant that I had a large task to do.

That first day my Employment Consultant supported me. Before starting we were introduced to my colleagues. Following on, we were then given a set of instructions on how to do the filing. Then as I got to know the job better, the support was slowly reduced to one session per week.

The job itself consisted of each file having an allocated job number and subsections. Most consisting of large volumes of paperwork. Before filing, I had to ensure that each subsection remained in chronological order. In addition to this, there was also archiving of old files and re-labelling of the pigeon holes. And when necessary, re-labelling the filing cabinets.

Eventually and with perseverance, I managed to get the filing under control. My Line Manager was very pleased with my progress. In fact, I was doing so well, that she even limited me in how many folders I could have each week. Not forgetting too, the accompanying dividers.

Little did I know however that, because the job was such a big responsibility, that various documents were going astray. To be honest, I felt the job was such a huge responsibility, I was never 100% happy unless both sides were clear. The reason for this was my autism coming out. By Monday morning there was always, without fail,

a fair amount of additional paperwork to file. And it always took me until the end of the week to clear this. I found this aspect of the job frustrating.

Coming back to the point, my Line Manager got to hear about the missing documents. Following on, I had to go through the whole filing system locating them. By now, the filing was in such a mess and beyond my control that despite my efforts, I was unable to locate all of those going astray. In fact, after going through each file, I discovered misplaced documents. Probably because as I was going through the filing system, a particular file was absent from the filing cabinet.

In writing this piece, I am back with Prospects looking for work. Because I worked for the company for ten months, it has now put me in a better position to find work than before. And that's what really counts.

Although this time, I'm going to try to find a job with less pressure. However, on reflection, I have learnt a lot and enjoyed the social interaction the job gave me.

**Michael  
Essex**

*This reminds me a bit of my job where I am expected to deliver so much a day causing me to accumulate flexi credit I have not 'justified' by my stats and which is currently in excess of the maximum permitted. However I am too close to retirement for them to consider dismissing me and my reports do not warrant it - John*



Peter Myers 2002



**Dear Asperger United**

I wanted to let you know that I found Maxine Aston's *The Other Half of Asperger Syndrome* book absolutely fascinating.

On the Saturday morning that the book arrived I met a friend for a coffee. This is a special friend who doesn't mind listening to my monologues on Asperger syndrome! She told me about a friend of hers who went to a party with her husband. Halfway through the evening her husband suddenly got up without a word and disappeared from the party. He sat in their car and waited for her impatiently and was on the point of driving home and leaving her stranded high and dry – although he had not said a word to her to let her know that he had left the party.

In reply I read my friend the section from *The Other Half* on 'Socialising solutions – the introvert.' The last sentence particularly attracted her attention: 'Some women have found themselves getting a taxi home as their partners have left them alone at a social gathering, disappearing altogether without any prior warning.'

Spooky or what? My friend's interest in Asperger syndrome immediately rose 100%.

I am sure that I will be lending out Maxine's book to many of my friends!

**Gerhard Beck**  
**Germany**

*Danke, Gerhard*

*Interesting news - hope your friend's interest is continued.*

*John - Editor*

**Dear Editor**

I'm starting back at my local technical college in September. I am very worried about going back to college because last time I went for 4 days and I was always sitting on my own at breaktimes with nobody else to talk to because nobody else wants anything to do with me.

I don't like living where I live (Burton-on-Trent) at all because it is a very modern town, it gets too hectic and the back-streets are dirty and covered with litter.

I love the outskirts of Burton-on-Trent like Tutbury,

Barton under Needwood and Swandlincote. I do not like Burton-on-Trent because it is too modern and I didn't fit in at college.

I've thought of moving out into another town but the trouble is that, even in towns that I like, life for me would still be very difficult because of the isolation, feeling left out and sticking out from the rest of the crowd.

**M Syke**  
**Burton-on-Trent**

*Thank you for your letter. I am sure the college authorities will help you adjust and you will find friends either in the college or the neighbourhood - maybe at one of the town's sportsclubs?*

*Keep in touch.*

*John Joyce - Editor*

**Dear AU**

I thought the poem, *The Problem Is Understanding*, on the inside front cover of July's issue was superb. One of my main obsessions is computers and through that poem I could understand that it tied in with Asperger syndrome.

'Your connecting cables look impressively complicated, but go nowhere': a lot of people often wondered with me why I can talk so intelligently but can't seem to do much with the intelligence (or use the intelligence in the wrong way).

'Your communication is not being processed then, but being stored': that reminds me of the times when I've learnt something but not quite taken it in and then a few days or weeks later remembered most of what I learned even 'the tired machine explodes in frustration' reminds me of the times I've tried to communicate with people and they've not understood.

What I mean is, they didn't seem to see the logical path that I saw and eventually after repeatedly explaining it to them I'd get really frustrated and then just explode.

**Darren Forster**  
**Cheshire**

*Great letter - John*



## How to reply to **Pen Pals**

- Please remember to let us know the full name (including surname) of the person who your letter is for.
- To contact a pen pal, please send your letter to *Asperger United*, c/o The National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG.
- We will pass your letter onto the person you wish to contact. However, we cannot guarantee the person will reply as that is entirely their decision.
- Please note that all penpal letters sent via *Asperger United* are opened before being passed on.
- Young people under the age of sixteen must have parental permission before placing a pen pal advertisement in *Asperger United*.

My name is April. I'm fifteen and interested in computers, music (especially Gareth Gates and Steps) and 'Charlie's Angels - the movie'. I am interested in hearing from anyone close to my age who would like to contact/write to me. I look forward to hearing from you.

April Slocombe - South Wales

Hello, I'm Joanna. I'm 28 years old and high-functioning autistic. My interests are outdoor activities – walking in the countryside, camping and cycling. I love cathedrals and religious buildings although I have no conventional religion. I also love and respect all animal and plant life. I would like to have penfriends of any age, from anywhere. Please note I am not looking for a relationship. Also, L Clayton, if you're reading this, please could you get in touch. It's so long since I've heard from you and I'm told you've moved.

My name is Martin. I'm 24 years old and have Asperger syndrome. I am looking for a female friend in the Burton-on-Trent/Staffordshire area to go out to pubs with, and to have a good time.

My name is Susan, I'm 42 years old. I'm autistic but I believe that I may have Asperger syndrome. I'm currently waiting to be diagnosed. I live on my own and I'm unemployed. I get very lonely during the day. I like listening to music, both rock and pop. I also like eating out. I would like to meet up with other people like myself who live in London.

My name is Frank. I'm 31 and I live in Israel. I have recently been diagnosed with Aspergers. I've subscribed to *AU* because in Israel there are no organisations for people with A/S. I'm a musician and composer. I would like to get in contact with someone with A/S who also has some artistic interests - thank you.

My name is Sean. I am 27 and would like to hear from other adults of a similar age, in the Walsall area who have autism or A/S. I like reading, going to the cinema, going to pubs, eating out, meeting new people and making new friends. I also enjoy 10-pin bowling and snow sports, especially tobogganing.

My name is Paul. I am a 28 year old man who has been diagnosed with Asperger syndrome. I would like to correspond with people in the Lincolnshire area (particularly single ladies between the ages of 25 – 30). My hobbies include reading, cycling, computers, cinema, and going out to pubs and clubs. I am also a member of the St John's Ambulance Brigade where I live. I often feel lonely and isolated and would be glad of any correspondence with others in my position.





## Waiting For The Phone To Ring

Sometimes I stop in, waiting for the phone to ring.  
Other times I just can't be bothered to hang around the house.  
When my mum was alive, I wasn't bothered about using the phone too much.  
This was because, my mum paid the bill.  
The last few years of her life, my mum let me do this, even though she was ill.  
If I'd got this time, all over again, I think I'd have been, better to my mum,  
Although my gran couldn't stand mums illness too.  
I hadn't a clue what to do.

These days I sometimes hang around, waiting for the phone to ring.  
I keep wondering what the next call will bring.

Now I live by myself, I know why words mean so much.  
Words said on a phone mean a lot too.  
Although I've now got email that is true.  
Even the email needs a phone line to get there.  
Some days I don't even get email and then I think that's not fair.  
There's a lot in this life, that isn't very fair.  
My pal Steve has worked hard all his life, and I think he's now, got less than me.  
Working hard doesn't always bring you great gains, that's easy to see.

These days I sometimes hang around, waiting for the phone to ring.  
I keep on wondering, what the next call will bring.

I keep on thinking, someone will phone me up, wanting to do me songs  
There should be songs written about people like me.  
Although I won't be able to sing them, as I sing out of key.

Lisa sometimes phones me up, from across the seas.  
Kathy sometimes phones me up, from across the seas too.  
When I fly across the Atlantic Ocean, it looks like one giant puddle from a plane.  
Here in Rotherham, it's been so hot today, that no-one's called.  
Everyone's out in the Sun having fun.

These days I sometimes hang around, waiting for the phone to ring.  
I keep on wondering, what the next call will bring.

A guy phoned me up the other day, saying he'd write me a song.  
He said he'd also write to Kerrang! music magazine about me too.  
Today I'm finding it hard to concentrate. Because of the heat, and the sky being blue.  
When it's hot, and the sky is blue, it's hard to think, of much to do.  
Even the cat just rolls around, in the grass, and in the Sun.  
I don't even see many birds about, I think it's even too hot, for them to fly.  
I must admit, it's so hot today, that even I've not used the phone.  
Although a bit of Sun is good for my spots, and good for my old bones.

These days I sometimes hang around, waiting for the phone to ring.  
I keep on wondering what the next call will bring.

David C. Miedzianik  
More of David's poetry is available to read on his website  
[freespace.virgin.net/david.mied/](http://freespace.virgin.net/david.mied/)

### Society Today

Coarse voices,  
Fun-poking laughter, coarse clothes,  
Coarse denim and black bikers leather,  
Very powerful motorbikes.  
Toilet jokes, jokes about sex,  
Bad language, rude people.  
High police levels, riot police  
Criminal society.  
Thug rule through clothes,  
Thug sexuality and bad language,  
Youth-ruling nation.

### Rainbow

A spectrum of colours  
Shining in its magnificence  
Colours of enchanted light  
Almost sent from Heaven  
A half circle of enchantment

### Time & History

A huge explosion in the universe.  
Life brought to life,  
Microscopic life.  
The birth of Mankind,  
The Human race  
And Mankind coming alive.  
The earth being a drop of  
Water in the Ocean  
Of the universe.

*Poetry by Kerr*



*Julie, whose work is featured on the front cover, is a craftworker and artist and is currently planning to set up her own craft business. She also has plans to exhibit her work.*

**Dear Editor and AU readers**

I was very pleased with the result of my article in *AU* (issue 31). I have now been diagnosed with High Functioning Autism (HFA). It came as a relief in one way, because my life has changed. My creative ability has developed into profound depths. People seem to take a great interest in my work which gives me great satisfaction.

My main aim is to fulfil a dream, which is to go to university. At the moment my skills are based on what I have learnt through what I see and what I have heard about.

The story by Simon Harrington in the *AU Anthology* was a true reflection of what can happen and in a similar situation has happened to myself. My strength also lies in my creative ability: it gives me strength when times are difficult. My problem is my inability to communicate with people and this reflects in my work, as the majority of my family don't take an interest in what I am doing. The lucky thing is - people who work for the NAS have given me fresh hope towards building a brighter future.

I am also lucky that some people do take an active part in my life. What I am hoping to do is to sell my work through private means. Of any income received, a certain amount will be given to the NAS for fundraising.

As I see now, for me the difficulty is communicating with the family. My mum does her best but in respect to my brother and sister, communicating is on a disturbing level, particularly my sister. Unfortunately, her interest in my work is non-existent and she doesn't talk about my HFA. Since

my dad died, illness troubles her. In her eyes, people have to be perfect. This is a particular problem, as it has caused conflict with my brother as well, who has had to work hard, like myself, all his life. For many years my brother and sister didn't communicate and when I achieved something - in the early years - I didn't receive any reward at all, except from my mum.

My understanding of speech and language has been mixed and there have been gaps, and problems still exist with certain members of the family, which have taken their toll. What I am going to do is textbook work and avoid certain members of my family. I am also hoping that what I want to do will take me out of my family circle, step by step. To carry my plans forward, my friend has given me some ideas about displaying my work.

The biggest problem with HFA is being accepted by people, because not many people understand me and my condition, which makes life very difficult. I am hoping to have a new counsellor, which will give me an opportunity to share my concerns.

**Julie Norman  
Warwickshire**

*Thanks for your contribution Julie. May we have more of them.*

*John Joyce*

*Editor*

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**Thomas**

My name is Thomas. I have Asperger syndrome. I have never known life without Asperger syndrome, and I never will.

Each day the ritual of work and leisure, local sights and distant sunsets merge and condense the years, abducting hope and distorting future.

I have a few friends, like me - individuals with disabilities. We talk, go for a walk, lament and have a barbecue.

I am then left alone, alone, with a sad piece of music. The days are counting down to another social encounter. I am resolute but feel scared.

Another day older but weaker - challenged and disturbed by society. A hostage to its rules. For love, compassion, set me free.

Rob has gone, another Asperger syndrome friendship left. Another will replace him. He challenged and pleased me. An optimism induced. We walked along tranquil forest trails at dusk. He won't be back. I feel dislocated, who will repair me, pick up the pieces and put me back together again.

Allow me to be part of my city, unchain my ambition, unlock my hopes. Release me from the burden of worry, I am transcendental, jealous, belligerent,

able. I am emotionally charged and ready to explode.

Where is my life going? Will I ever grow up? Will the years I have lost be replaced?

Childhood images of sunny days and beautiful white clouds return every time I look out upon a potent vista. I had hope then, rejoicing in vitality, youth. Now I function, I live life to a sequence of events disrupted only by these thoughts and the time it takes to write them down.

### It's good to talk

I was first diagnosed with Asperger syndrome when I was ten years old.

My earliest memory of feeling very different to most of my peers must have been when I was about four years old. I had just started at my first and middle school in Harrow and I just remember not knowing what to say or do when my teacher called the register.

I remember that everyone else knew what to say and how to behave but me. I sat there feeling very nervous and scared. When the teacher finally called my name I froze and didn't know what to say.

In the end I was marked absent but I think later the teacher realised that I was there. My life at school was not a pleasant one; I was constantly bullied and called names. I found it so difficult to make friends when I felt like everyone was against me.

It was the little things at first. I was always picked last for teams. This put me off PE and games for life. Although I was very bad at most of them, I didn't see why I had to be treated in this way.

As my years at primary school went on, I managed to find one friend. She was my first and only friend at the time. But I finally had someone to talk to and at least I wasn't on my own. But then my friend moved away and I never saw her again, although I will always wonder what happened to her.

Most of the teachers at my school were not much help but there were a few good ones who took the time to help and understand me. I had struggled at that school for so long and when I left I thought that the struggle was over – but I was wrong.

I started at my high school in Harrow in 1996. My first year there was the most painful and by far the worst time I have ever experienced. The bullying carried on and it got a lot worse. I felt so lost and alone.

It was as if the whole school plus my class were all wearing black and I was wearing bright green. I had no confidence, I hated myself, I really hated myself. As a result my grades suffered and I was failing in every subject apart from English.

I started slipping into a black hole and didn't know how to come out of it.

I started to receive counselling at St George's Hospital in Tooting. I had no idea what a huge impact this would have on my life. The counselling went on for the rest of that year and it helped me to rebuild my confidence and self esteem.

In fact it helped to turn me into a whole new person. Although the bullying was still going on, by my second year at high school it began to stop.

As a result of this I totally transformed myself. My life at school began to get better. I started getting the help and support I needed which helped me a great deal.

During my time at school, as I grew more and more confident each day, I started to make friends. I felt so much happier in myself and it showed. My grades got a lot better and I started to achieve a lot more than I ever thought I could.

I got through school and achieved eight GCSE's all with good grades.

Although I had always found school such a struggle at last I had showed everyone what I was made of.

I am now attending college in Windsor doing a work preparation course. The help and support that I have received at college has been tremendous.

Finally, my advice to anyone out there who is the victim of bullying or who is struggling to come to terms with their Asperger syndrome – first don't be a victim and stand up for what you believe in – and be heard after all.

Love us - don't judge us.

It's good to talk!

**Lucie - aged 18  
Harrow**

*Well done Lucie.*

*Thanks for your contribution. You have certainly lived up to the meaning of the name 'Lucie' - giving 'light' to those who are ignorant of your condition.*

*God bless  
John Joyce  
Editor*



## Dear John

It was the 6th of June 2001 that I was assessed for Asperger syndrome. To find out after 34 years the issues I had faced all my life was both shattering and a mill stone from around my neck.

To think my A/S came to light due to my son being diagnosed with the condition is amazing and at times heartbreaking. We now face the prospect of our five year old daughter also having A/S and she is being assessed in October this year. Friends often ask how we cope with a family of 'Aspies'. The truth is, it is everyday life to us.

Other aspects of A/S do have a great impact on our lives. I have two learning issues that result from my A/S, dyslexia and dyscalculia. The use of words and numbers can be a nightmare and my wife (bless her) is in constant demand to check my spellings and any number work or to make sure that I don't get short changed in any local shops. Besides the learning issues I also suffer from both high levels of stress and anxiety.

This has resulted in the use of medication and a change in lifestyle. I now have to find ways to relax and use part of my day to find time in which to switch off. The anxiety got so bad recently that I found it nearly impossible to go out of the house alone and for someone who loves walking like me it was a terrible time.

There are days when I ask God why I was born like this and why my children are also suffering. But there are more days than not when I thank him for making me different, for giving me the gifts that I have, my love of writing poems and my passion for music.

The benefits of having A/S far outweigh the problems and in my dark hours of depression this is what I tell myself. I know how my children feel, why a bus trip is so stressful, why school is the most awful experience for them. This has to be the greatest advantage of having A/S that I possess. I know what it was like for me as a child and I'll do all I can

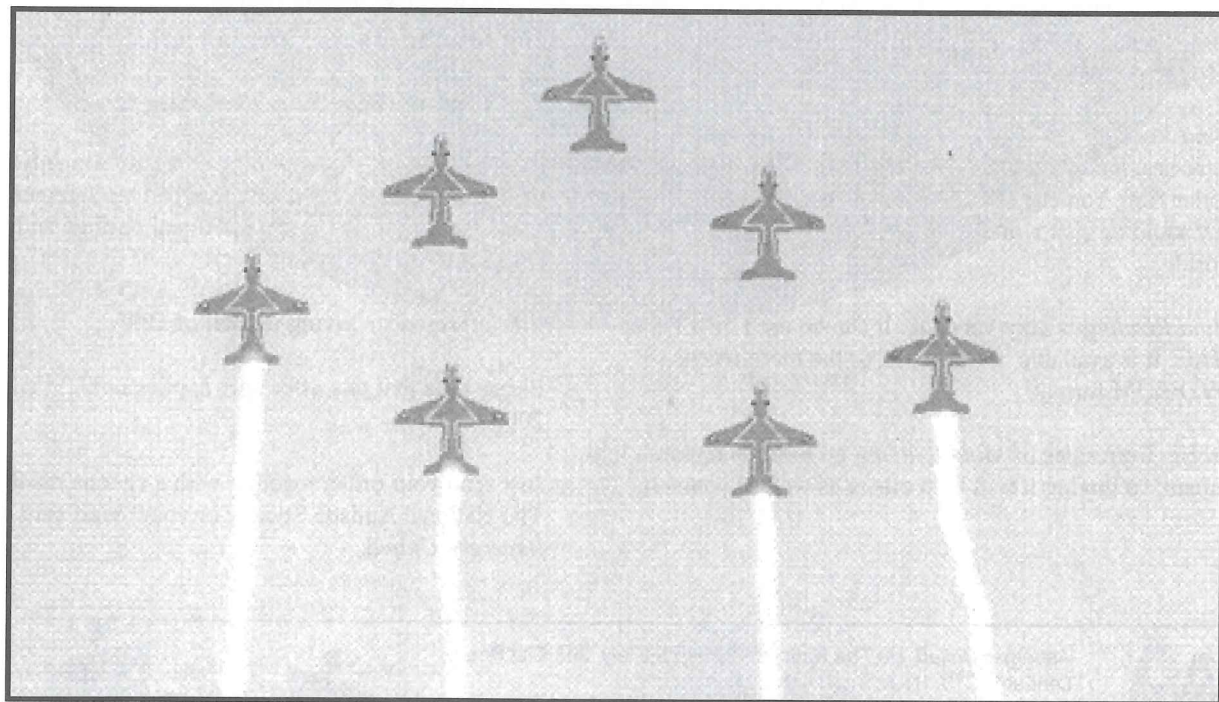
to make sure that my children don't have to suffer at school, as I did.

My reasons for writing this is to let people who have just found out that they or a family member have A/S know that there is life after diagnosis.

You can live with Asperger syndrome. Yes, it can be hard and even cruel and there will be times that you feel no one understands you and that you cannot face another day. But if you look at what you have and how you have coped over the years you will soon see that you can live with A/S. When I look back over the years since I found out so much has changed and I understand so many things about myself and those around me. All the little things that I did but could never understand have at last been answered. I am sure that this will be you in a year or so.

Good luck to you all.

**Richard Longstaff  
Mansfield**



*William Scrope - aged 11 yrs.*

### Dear fellow sleuths

I, like many other readers, was bullied at school. This carried on after I had left and is one reason why I rarely use the bus today (once scallies smell my blood they cannot resist the charge). I was ridiculed because of my passive nature, for being simultaneously 'clever' and 'stupid' and for my idiosyncrasies.

Some of the boys thought that I was 'putting it on' for attention (what a strange accusation!) and, ironically, went on to give me just that. My bizarre behaviour included shaving off my eyebrows, saying 'kinda like sorta thing' at the end of every sentence, licking other people's pencils and other actions that invited torture.

With any luck the new SEN Act will mean that there will be so many people with special needs in our schools that assaults on the vulnerable will be less easy. Humour itself has to change so there exists less need for a 'butt' (perhaps we could lead the way with our unusual sense of mirth?).

Class solidarity has to be hardened through trade unions so that men respect their fellows (maybe there could be a Working Class Students Association?).

That's all !  
**Patrick Kenny**

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## New publication news

### *Mind Reading: the interactive guide to emotions*

We are delighted to offer this brand new interactive DVD or CD ROM, designed to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome develop a better understanding of how other people feel and react.

It is a brilliant way to learn about human emotions, with games, quizzes, video and audio clips. It has been developed by Simon Baron-Cohen, Fiona Scott and the rest of the Cambridge University Autism Research Unit to help people with autism and Asperger syndrome improve emotion recognition skills.

*Mind Reading* makes use of well known actors and actresses, including Daniel Ratcliffe, star of the recent Harry Potter film. You can see how Daniel reacts to being offered raw squid or visit a market to play with emotions in the real world.

*Mind Reading* is very versatile. It can be used on a PC or MAC. It is available in CD ROM or the more recent DVD/ROM format.

Profits from sales of *Mind Reading* go towards research into autism, so buying it will help others as well as yourself.

#### Special NAS offer

*Mind Reading* is published by Cambridge University Autism Research Unit and normally £69.95, including VAT.

**However, NAS Publications have negotiated a special offer of £49.95 plus £4.50 postage and packing from our suppliers, Barnardos.**

This means a saving of over £15.00.

#### Extra special Asperger United offer

Because *Mind Reading* will be so useful to many Asperger United readers, we have made special arrangements to sell *Mind Reading* without the additional postage and packing charge.

This represents a saving in total of £20!

Please note that this offer only applies until 29 November 2002.

Just send your order, together with a cheque made payable to The National Autistic Society or your credit card details, to *Asperger United*.



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Telephone: 020 7833 2299. Fax: 020 7833 9666.  
Email: asp.utd@nas.org.uk  
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