

## In the Dark Backyard

# IN THE DARK BACKYARD



**By Mark Harnden**

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**Description** In The Dark Backyard is informative, harrowing and yet comic. It is the story of a young man who becomes afflicted with manic depression, a young man who survives to tell the tale. With the benefit of hindsight, the author is able to question the behaviour that saw him propelled into psychiatric care. He also offers a social commentary regarding the mental health system that will resonate with those who have been through it too. In The Dark Backyard begins the week before the authors first admission into a psychiatric hospital. Late on a Saturday night, he and his friends are leaving the house for a forest party in deepest, darkest Northumbria. He has no idea that within a few days he is to become an in-patient on an acute ward but there are signs that this is where fate is taking him. A rollercoaster journey ensues, full of highs and lows of the most clinical sort. The author eventually completes an arduous, revolving door phase and emerges into care in the community as an out-patient. This is where the fun really starts.. About the Author Mark was born in Aldershot in 1973. At the age of sixteen he won a sixth-form leadership scholarship to Malvern College, in Worcestershire, before going up to the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne to read politics and history. Three years later, however, when Mark should have been sitting the final exams of his degree, he found himself admitted into psychiatric hospital and diagnosed with manic-depressive psychosis. Learning to cope with manic depression has proven achievable but remains, nonetheless, an endeavour fraught with difficulties and seemingly insurmountable challenges. Mark is proud to have graduated from the Open University with BA (Hons) in politics and philosophy and MA in philosophy. From 2004 to 2006 Mark was employed as Public Relations Officer for MDF the Bipolar Organisation Wales.

Since 2006, Mark has worked free-lance in mental health education. His clients have included the United Kingdom Psychiatric Pharmacy Group, AstraZeneca Neuroscience, Bath University and Manchester Mental Health Service Trust. Mark has published his Masters dissertation with chipmunka, a political philosophy of mental illness, along with In The Dark Backyard, a quirky and entertaining look back at some acutely chaotic times.

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