

VIEWPOINT

NEWSLETTER



Spring Edition

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

It seems like Spring has already started with the hottest recorded February. I hope the good weather continues.

At the Vision Support Centre we are continuing to provide a place where people can come and try out daily living aids, and receive advice on a range of equipment available for visually impaired people. Also, the Centre is a friendly place where people can meet each other.

Our Vision Support Team are continuing to support visually impaired people in our community and we have formed a working group of people to try to develop this work in the future.

We have 4 Champions who have just started to work on various projects for us. Tracy Culley-Brown is developing new Activities for people to take part in. Paul Laing is promoting the work of the Society and making people in the community more aware of the issues people living with sight loss face. Julia Brown is coming to the Vision Support Centre once a week to help us generate new fundraising ideas. Then finally, Norman Harvey is working on Employment issues and is hoping to take some of the hesitation away from local employers regarding employing someone who is visually impaired.

Finally, in March we will start construction on our long awaited sight loss and dementia village at Ostley House. The building will become known as the Bradbury Village and take 6 months to complete. In the end we hope it will provide more stimulus for our residents who live there.

It's all happening!

Carl Hodge

JUST FOR FUN QUIZ

1. How many minutes are there in a day?
2. Which circuit has hosted the Italian F1 Grand Prix every year except 1980?
3. What type of creature is a purple emperor?
4. Who is the founder of the internet encyclopedia Wikipedia?
5. Where were the Gods of Norse mythology said to live?
6. Michelle Robinson is the maiden name of whose wife?
7. By what name do we now know the Chinese Gooseberry?
8. Who wrote "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang"?
9. Which British politician said "A week is a long time in politics"?
10. Which insect is responsible for the spread of malaria?

Answers on Page 7



VISION SUPPORT TEAM

As most of you will know the Vision Support Team visit visually impaired people in the Furness area. We travel as far as Waberthwaite, Coniston, Hawkshead and Grange-Over-Sand and I thought it might be interesting to find out exactly what we do on our travels!

The team consists of four Vision Support Officers, an Activities Coordinator and a Children's Activities Coordinator. We receive referrals from our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, Paul, who is present in the Eye Clinic at Furness General Hospital every Monday and from the ECLO who works at Westmorland General Hospital in Kendal. We also meet people at the Low Vision Clinic which is held every month at the Vision Support Centre and at the Health Centre in Grange. Whichever way we hear about a visually impaired person we endeavour to contact them as soon as possible and offer to give them support at what can be a very worrying time.

The team will give advice regarding lighting, refer to the Low Vision Clinic and refer to other agencies if appropriate. We inform people about all the daily living aids and new technological equipment available. We put tactile markers on microwaves and ovens etc. and arrange for Talking Books.

When somebody is certified as sight impaired or severely sight impaired they often do not know where to turn for information or support. We are there to give this support in whatever format it takes. One of the main worries for people is how they will manage financially and therefore part of our role is to complete any benefit forms. The whole benefit system especially the assessment stage can be

extremely stressful and we always offer to accompany people for support. If a claim is not successful we will appeal and if needed, we will go to tribunal.

The team are able to give information on different eye conditions and we very often put people's minds at rest if they are suffering from visual hallucinations known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

Emillie, our Activities Coordinator, organises several groups including craft group and bingo. She also arranges for speakers to provide advice and information at our Dual Sensory Loss group and Macular/Charles Bonnet Support group.

We are wanting to develop more groups and one idea is a History group. This would involve inviting speakers to talk about local history and perhaps exploring family history. It would also involve trips to the Library and Dock Museum and maybe further afield. If anyone is interested, please get in touch. The first meeting will be held 20th May 2pm – 4pm at Vision Support Centre.

Another idea is a Book club, which involves people discussing and recommending books they have read. Again, please get in touch if you think this would be something that would interest you.

Cath, our Children's Activities Coordinator, organises trips for our visually impaired children. These activities have been extremely popular and have included trips to the Science and Industry Museum in Manchester , trampolining, bowling, the Treetops experience at Brockhole and The Chill Factore in Manchester.

For anybody who has not benefitted from our service and you feel we could help, please get in touch either by phone

or come in to our Vision Support Centre. You will be able to see what is available with regards to aids and equipment and also be given some useful advice by Lynda, our Resource Advisor.

Maggie Nelson

SIGHT LOSS AWARENESS TRAINING

We offer awareness training to companies or organisations that wish to provide an excellent service to all customers. If anyone is interested in this service, please contact us on 01229 440556 for more details.

VISION SUPPORT CENTRE

Why not come along to the Vision Support Centre to look at the Echo products.

We will demonstrate all products. Also new is the Hive Active light and plug which will turn on and off your lighting and heating and other appliances while you are not at home.

MOBILE PHONE

There is a new phone available called "In Your Pocket" which reads Talking Books and Newspapers any many more things. If you are interested we have a volunteer who will demonstrate this product to you.

TECHNOLOGY SESSIONS

Here at the Vision Support Centre we have just commenced our Technology Sessions which take place on the second Wednesday of every month 1.00pm – 4.00pm.

Everyone is welcome.

IRENE CRABTREE

Irene Crabtree is a valued long term volunteer of the Society who also worked for 4Local Charities who have donated to our Society on a number of occasions. Irene retired at Christmas. The Society would like to wish her a long and happy retirement.

QUIZ ANSWERS

1. 1440
2. Monza
3. A Butterfly
4. Jimmy Wales
5. Asgard
6. Barrack Obama
7. Kiwi Fruit
8. Ian Fleming
9. Harold Wilson
10. Mosquito

BLIND CRICKET

Blind Cricket England and Wales will be holding a cricket taster session for visually impaired people at Barrow Leisure Centre on Wednesday 10th April, between the hours of 2pm and 5pm.

The session is open to players of all ages & abilities, is free of charge and you are welcome to call in at anytime during the afternoon to have some fun as you give our great game a go.

If you require more information please contact John Garbett on:-

Email : garbett.j@sky.com

Mobile : 07769 909906

John Garbett Development Director

Blind Cricket England and Wales - ECB level 2 coach.

FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY

The Society relies on a variety of income to keep providing services in our local area for visually impaired people and one way is through the Friends of the Society. By paying direct or setting up a standing order with your bank to pay the Society £2, £5, £10, £20 or any other amount, you can make a real difference to our work. And if we can, we'll increase your donation through Gift Aid at no extra cost to yourself.

So if you would like to become a Friend please pick up a leaflet or give us a call and we will sort it out.

Thank you.

CHILDRENS PROJECT

Energi and Clip n Climb Report – February 2019

Cath Rogerson – Children & Young Persons Co-ordinator

On Thursday 21st February 2019, our young people and their families went on a day out to Energi Trampoline Park and Clip n Climb in Preston.

When we arrived at Energi, we met with our party host, Sarah, who explained what we would be doing. Our group watched a safety briefing and video before we went into the trampoline park. The children enjoyed bouncing on the trampolines, making their way round the inflatables, jumping onto giant air pillows, taking on the climbing wall and having fun in the foam pit.



Whilst at Energi, we also had the opportunity to have a go on the Skyride. On the Skyride, the children and some brave parents were fitted with a safety harness, which was clipped on to a track, fixed to the ceiling of the trampoline park. Once clipped on, the children stepped off a platform and swung round the track until they reached the landing platform at the end of the skyride.

After our session in the trampoline park, we met up at our party room, where we had pizzas, hot dogs and juice. We were even lucky enough to have a visit from Salt, the Energi Mascot.



We then headed over to Clip n Climb in Preston. Clip n Climb has 20 different climbing walls and challenges to have a go on. Once there, the children attended a safety briefing and were fitted with climbing harnesses. They were shown how to use the walls and walk around the climbing area safely. Everyone had a great time trying out the different walls and trying to get to the top as quickly as possible.

The children also had the opportunity to have a go on the vertical drop slide. Anyone going on the slide had to put on a safety suit and helmet. They then got on to the slide and had to hold on to handles attached to a rope, which pulled them up the slide. Once they had reached the height they wanted they let go of the rope and slid down the giant vertical slide.

We all had a great day out in Preston and we're looking forward to meeting up again soon.

REMEMBERING US IN YOUR WILL

“The Society was there for me when I needed it the most. I want it to be there for others”. Client

Sight loss can be frightening and isolating, the simplest tasks, such as finding your way around the kitchen can be daunting. Lifelong hobbies, reading, baking, looking at old photographs, seem impossible and stepping outside suddenly becomes overwhelming.

With the right support, people can adapt, maintain independence and live life to the full. A gift in your will ensures that this support will be there for generations to come. Please consider leaving a gift for Barrow & Districts Society for the Blind in your Will. Future generations will appreciate it.

STEPPING FORWARD

If you have recently experienced sight loss, this short course could be of assistance to you. For four sessions we will describe the variety of services and products available for visually impaired people. Please get in touch if you are interested in taking part.

EXHIBITION

Optelec are holding an exhibition in the Vision Support Centre on Friday 29th March 2019 - 10.00am – 2.00pm.

Come along and have a look at the wide range of equipment available.

EASTER

No one is 100% sure where we get the English word 'Easter' from! In pretty much every other European language, the word for the festival of Easter comes from a variation on the word 'Passover' (Pesach - פֶּסַח in Hebrew or Πάσχα in Greek).

The word Easter mostly likely comes from the Anglo Saxon month 'Eostremonath' which was about the time of year we now call April, when the Christian festival was held. The month seems to be named after a German goddess 'Eostre' or 'Ostara'. But the only reference to this name is from the early historian Bede in 725 AD. And we're not 100% sure he was accurate! But having the festival named after the month it took place in seems to make sense.

(You might also see some sources saying that it's named after an Akkadian goddess called 'Ishtar'. But this has been widely proven to make no sense! Ishtar was a goddess in the very ancient religions of the middle east - about 5000 years ago. She stopped being worshipped at least 1500 years before Jesus was born. So apart from having a name which sounds a bit like Easter, she has nothing to do with the Jewish Passover festival or the Christian festival of Easter which came after it! Her name was first connected with Easter in 1853 when a church minister, who had some very strange views about lots of things, wrote a pamphlet which had no serious historical merit at all.)

The Passover festival dates from about 4,000 years ago when Jewish people remember that God saved them from slavery in Egypt. Jesus was a Jew and so celebrated the Passover. Passover takes place in the first month of the Jewish New Year (14-15 of the month of Nisan). The Jewish calendar follows the cycle of the moon, so the date changes a bit every year.

The first Jewish Christians added Easter celebrations to the Passover festival and because Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday, so Easter Day became the first Sunday after Passover.

Unlike Christmas, when Jesus's birth is celebrated (although we don't know what time of year Jesus was born!), Easter is celebrated around the same time of year that he was killed. This is because Jesus died at the time of the Jewish Passover festival.

Over the years, the Christian festival moved in date slightly from the Jewish Passover, so they don't now have the same date, but sometimes they are very close! The Christian date for Easter also follows the moon, so it also changes every year. To make things even more complicated, Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter, like Christmas, on a different day to Catholic and Western Christians!

For Christians, the full Easter period lasted for a long time. Easter officially starts with Lent on Ash Wednesday, 46 days before Easter Day. (Lent lasts for 40 days but you don't count the Sundays!) Then 39 days after Easter Day, Christians celebrate Ascension Day, when they remember Jesus going back into Heaven and promising to come back to earth one day. Easter officially ends 49 days after Easter Day with the Christian Festival of Pentecost or Whitsun, when Christians remember that God sent his Holy Spirit to help Christians. So Easter is a very busy time for Christians!



MARJORIE – HER JOURNEY AS A VISUALLY IMPAIRED PERSON.

Marjorie is 87 years old and has been visually impaired for five years. She struggled with her sight loss for quite some time and didn't know who to ask for help. She felt totally isolated and at the end of her tether. She was finally referred to Barrow Blind Society and says from then on things moved very quickly. Marjorie was given information on the various aids available to her in order to maintain her independence in her home. She was referred to the Low Vision Clinic where she was assessed and given appropriate magnification aids.

Social isolation can be a big factor for anybody who becomes visually impaired and as Vision Support officers; we try to encourage people to join our various groups. Marjorie is a member of our Grange group and has found talking to others with similar problems extremely important. Marjorie has also attended our Macular and Charles Bonnet Syndrome Support group and our Dual Sensory Loss group. Through these groups she has been able to gain valuable information about both her visual and hearing impairments and ways of dealing with them.

A very troubling aspect of Marjorie's sight loss has been her visual hallucinations otherwise known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome. These hallucinations are a very common side effect of sight loss and for those who are affected they can be extremely frightening. Once the condition is explained it can bring great relief and peace of mind to the sufferer. Marjorie said that 'I now know that I wasn't going mad or dreaming when I saw donkeys walking down my street'.

GROUPS AND CLUBS

Monday Group – Social – Every Monday night 7.00 p.m. – 9.00 p.m. at Spring Mount, Walney. Tuesday Group –

Craft work – Every Tuesday 1.30 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Thursday Group – Bingo – Every Thursday 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m. at Station View, Barrow.

Ulverston Group – Social – meets every third Wednesday at 1.30p.m. – 3.30 p.m - Neville Street Methodist Church,

Barrow Luncheon Group – Last Wednesday of every month, assorted venues.

Dual Sensory Loss Support Group (sight and hearing impairment) – Meets last Monday of the month -1.30.p.m – 3.00p.m at the Vision Support Centre. We have speakers from the NHS, HITES, the Police the Fire service and from local opticians

Millom Group – Social – every Friday 1.00.p.m – 3.00.p.m at the Salvation Army Citadel. Grange Group – Social – First Wednesday of every month 2.00.p.m – 4.00.p.m at Thornleigh.

Men’s Group – Social – first Wednesday of every month 1.30.p.m – 3.30.p.m at the Vision Support Centre.

Knit & Natter – Social – Every Tuesday at 10.00.a.m – 11.00.a.m. A chance to enjoy some knitting while having a chat. At the Vision Support Centre.

Blind Football – Fitness – Every 3rd Friday of every Month 7.00.p.m. – 8.00.p.m at Central Drive community Hall.

Our next Macular Support Meeting will take place in June.



BARROW & DISTRICTS SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

Vision Support Centre

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