

VIEWPOINT

NEWSLETTER



Christmas Edition

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A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This is the 17th edition of our Viewpoint and it's nearly Christmas! Where does the time go?

As the end of the year approaches, we can reflect on what the Society has been up to in the last 12 months. We have continued to provide support for visually impaired people throughout our area. Whether recently diagnosed or with continued sight loss, we have strived to provide the support that every individual requires. In the year, we joined with RNIB, to employ our first Eye Clinic Liaison Officer at Furness General Hospital. The Vision Support Team were very busy assisting 763 people in our local community. We also started an activity project supported by Sport England which has proven very popular. At Ostley House we started to offer Day Care and completed the construction of our new Sight Loss & Dementia Village.

All this has occurred with a lot of activity from our clients, staff and volunteers, and I am very grateful for their support. They make the Society what it is today!

We are part of 'Visionary' which is the national organisation that links sight loss charities. At the recent annual conference, we gained ideas from other organisations and shared our experience with them as well. This very useful event is the catalyst for many ideas that we have introduced in the Vision Support Centre.

With 2020 slowly approaching, we are putting plans for the future together to continue to provide lots of opportunities for visually impaired people, so may I wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Carl Hodge



CHRISTMAS DID YOU KNOW

The Christmas cracker was invented by a London sweet shop owner called Tom Smith. In 1847, after spotting French bonbons wrapped in paper with a twist at each end, he sold similar sweets with a “love motto” inside. He then included a little trinket and a “bang”. His “Bangs of Expectation” included gifts such as jewellery and miniature dolls. By 1900, he was selling 13 million a year.

The word “Carol” actually means dance or song of praise and joy, and they used to be sung during all four seasons, but the tradition of only singing them at Christmas is the only one to survive.

Nearly 60 million Christmas Trees are grown each year in Europe.

In White Christmas, the part of Betty is played by Rosemary Clooney, who is George Clooney’s aunt.

In Victorian times, turkey was seen as an expensive meat to eat on Christmas day, and goose was often eaten by poorer families. In A Christmas Carol, Bob Cratchitt was planning to have goose before Ebenezer Scrooge surprised him with the prize turkey.

The first song ever broadcast was a Christmas Carol, On Christmas Eve, 1906.

The Yule Log was originally an entire tree that was carefully chosen and brought into the house with great ceremony and burned over the 12 days of Christmas.

Boxing Day gets its name from all the money collected in church alms-boxes for the poor.

ACTIVITIES PROJECT

In October we had some very special guests visit the centre, this was the Owl Sanctuary. After contacting them they agreed to come into the centre for a day in half term, this event was open to both clients and the general public. A variety of owls were brought along for people to learn more about and we also had the chance to hold them, it was a brilliant experience and something which may occur again in the future.

Since the last newsletter the activities project has continued to listen to clients' requests for varying activities. In November a small group of clients went to Barton Grange in Preston to try a game of Curling on the ice. On arrival we were introduced to our coach for the session who explained the rules to us and then we proceeded to change into our ice shoes and don our headgear. Once we were ready we then went through into the ice rink, we began by having a go at brushing then the actual pushing of the stones. The stones themselves weigh around 3 ½ stone so although this looked easy it proved harder for some than others. Once everyone had had a practice it was then time to split into two teams ready for the games to commence. The games became rather spirited with everyone having a good time, the first game was won by the red team and by the decision of the coach the second game was won by the yellow team.

The horse riding has been a continued success with weekly sessions still being provided at Seaview riding school under the care of their riding instructors. The horse riding will continue until the end of December at which time this will come to an end. The clients that have

undertaken this activity have thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure many of them have plans to now continue this activity. If there are any clients still interested in horse riding then please feel free to contact Claire Huddleston who can arrange a meeting with Seaview Riding school for the individuals to gain an insight into how they can enable you to partake in this. We would like to say a very big thank you to Claire and all her staff at Seaview who have been amazing developing their understanding of each client's requirements.

I am currently in discussions with Claire at Seaview regarding a day outing to Seaview, this would include learning to look after the horses, feeding, mucking out and tacking them up. We would then have time for some lunch before going for a trek in the afternoon. Anyone who is interested in this event is required to contact Claire Huddleston as soon as possible as this will be very strict numbers due to Seaview's staff and insurance policy.

As the weather has continued with this cold spell many of us haven't made it out onto the water with Duddon Canoe club, the sessions are now on a Saturday afternoon 2-4pm at the club house for anyone wishing to go down and have a go. Duddon Canoe club are currently applying for funding to enable them to purchase some more two-man kayaks which will enable more people to undertake the sport if they don't feel confident on the water on their own. We wish Duddon Canoe club every success in this endeavour to secure funding.

We have been busy working closely with Barrow Cricket Club in regards to being able to offer more activities within a safe environment, they have suggested that we could use the premises to play cricket, begin the football group

again, and we are also looking into buying some Archery equipment which we would look into undertaking every few weeks. We have a date confirmed for the Cricket tournament next year which will be the 7th June 2020. This is for people of all abilities, anyone wishing to play in either a team or to enter a full team then please contact Claire Huddleston in the office 01229 440556 who will give you more details. This will be a fun day and there are plans to include a magician for the children, a warm-up by the current Mr Cumbria along with other activities.

I am currently looking into a variety of activities for next year, one of which will be a residential trip to partake in a variety of outdoor activities this will be sometime in March. Furthermore, I am looking into a skiing session which will be either at Chill Factore or Kendal. Plans for the Cumbria Way walk are still in place and if anyone wants to undertake this then I will need to know by the end of the year to confirm dates and book the venues. Furthermore, after attending the Visionary Conference I was speaking to some other organisations that are interested in undertaking activities in the Lake District so we may be able to offer some full sports matches against these organisations.

The current funding for the activities undertaken is being provided for by Sport England. This grant will end at the beginning of May 2020 but we hope to continue to offer these activities. If anyone would like to send in a testimonial regarding how they have found being able to undertake the various activities then please send it into the office. These testimonials will help to show Sport England the difference this grant has made to visually impaired

individuals and will also to help enable us to build on it in the future.

THE CO-OP

If you shop at the Co-op and get a Co-op card and use it each time you shop after registering your card on line 1% of the total amount you spend will come to the Society which helps us to continue to provide our services to LOCAL sight impaired people. If you need any help with your card please come into the Centre

NEW STOCK

We now have a new handheld electronic magnifier named Explore 5 from Humanware price £460.00, if you are interested please call into the centre for a demonstration.

In the centre we have a wide selection of talking watches, clocks and also magnifiers which will make ideal Christmas presents

2020 calendars and diaries are now for sale in the centre

Pocket diaries - £5.95

A3 wall calendars - £6.95

New for this year A3 landscape calendars price £7.95

VISION SUPPORT TEAM

Well I can't believe this is the Christmas edition of the Newsletter; where has the year gone? It has certainly been another busy year and I would like to thank the team for all their hard work. The children have been on some wonderful trips and some of our visually impaired adults have also enjoyed some activities such as sky diving, cycling, horse riding, curling, kayaking and walking with Alpacas. If anyone would like to take part in any of these activities, please contact Claire Huddleston.

In September it was National Eye Health Week. We held a coffee afternoon and also invited two Barrow Councillors and two members of staff from John Woodcock's office to walk up Dalton Road wearing sim specs. These sim specs simulate different eye conditions and the aim was to show how difficult it is for visually impaired people to navigate A-Boards and street furniture. It certainly 'opened their eyes' to these difficulties and the need to educate shop owners and come to some kind of compromise.

Our Kitchen Skills sessions started on 18th September. So far, the group have made a hot pot and Victoria sponge cake. The sessions have been very much enjoyed by all who have attended. If you would like to join in, please get in touch.

Paul Ogden continues to be our Volunteer ECLO Support worker at Furness General Hospital and as such, has referred many visually impaired people to the team who we otherwise would not have known about and consequently could not have helped. Anji, who is our paid ECLO, has made great progress since she joined us in June. The role of the ECLO is very important as it means we can get to

know people at point of diagnosis or when they are certified and give the necessary help and support.

In November, a group of us went to the Guide Dog Centre near Bolton to see for ourselves how the process of training the dogs and matching them with visually impaired people works. The staff at the Centre are exceptionally dedicated and we were all really impressed with the work they do.

I hope you have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

Maggie Nelson

A 1960'S CHRISTMAS

Food preparations began with the making of the Christmas cake and Christmas puddings. This was usually three or four weeks before the day itself: a sixpence might be stirred into the pudding batter for luck. Christmas began for many families on Christmas Eve. Most shops and businesses worked until at least lunchtime on Christmas Eve: this was also the day when the festive food and drink was bought. There were few home freezers so all the produce for Christmas lunch had to be bought as close as possible to the day itself. Orders were taken by the butcher, greengrocer and baker as supermarkets were only just beginning to open in the high street. The whole family, except those working, would be needed to collect the food, as there was a great deal to be carried home.

Stockings or pillow cases were left by the beds upstairs, ready to be filled with gifts – if the child had been good, of course!

Every year the stocking would contain a satsuma or mandarin orange, a walnut and a coin. Often there were also chocolate coins, a chocolate selection box, puzzle books, small toys, crayons and an annual, often Beano or Dandy the main present would have been wrapped and placed under the tree downstairs.

The main event at Christmas lunch was not always turkey: the meat of choice might be chicken, capon or goose. Chicken in the early 1960s was an expensive meat, as this was before factory farming. The Christmas table was not decorated with special Christmas-themed items as it might be today: this was the occasion for the ‘best’ tablecloth, china, glass

After the washing up, the family would gather around the one TV in the house or if there was no TV, around the wireless. All would stop at 3pm for the Queen’s Christmas broadcast.

The evening meal on Christmas Day was always the same every year: cold cuts of meat, usually ham and leftover turkey from lunch, pork pie, bread rolls, tomatoes, pickles and crisps, trifle, mince pies and chocolate log. Pride of place on the table would be the Christmas cake, covered in white icing

Billy Smart’s Circus on the BBC. And then the Christmas festivities were over for another year!

THE BRADBURY VILLAGE

On 11 December our newly constructed Sight Loss & Dementia Bradbury Village will open after 8 years of fundraising and 6 months construction.



The Bradbury Village does not add any more bedrooms to Ostley House. Some find this surprising but that was never the aim of the Village. The aim was to provide areas that would create more stimulus for the existing residents.



So now we have a larger restaurant, streets, a pub, a café, a sensory room, a shop, a bus stop, a cinema, improved lighting and a secure external court yard. The final part of the design is for every wall to be decorated to match the areas mentioned above.

Carl Hodge

GROUPS AND CLUBS

Tuesday Craft Club are having a lot of fun and laughter making Christmas crafts. We will be going out for Christmas Lunch on the 17th December and Club will start again on 7th January, 1.30 p.m. at the Vision Support Centre.

Men's Group have enjoyed talks from many interesting speakers this year. They also had a wonderful day at Windermere Adventure Centre in June and they have ben for Christmas Lunch at the Bay Horse at the beginning of December. Club will start again at 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday 8th January at the Vision Support Centre.

Thursday Bingo Club meets at Station View, Holker Street at 2.00 p.m. each week. The Club have been to Barrow Golf Club for Christmas Lunch on 12th December and will finish off Bingo for the year on 19th at Station View. Bingo will start again 9th January.

Ulverston Group has again enjoyed many talks from speakers throughout the year. We meet at 1.30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at Ulverston Methodist Church.

Dual Sensory Loss Group meets 1.30 p.m. at the Vision Support Centre on the last Monday of each month. This group is for clients with sight and hearing problems. We have had talks from Health, Citizens Advice, Optelec, Optician, Paramedics, Police, Fire Service and HITES.

Macular and Charles Bonnet Support Group have met on three occasions during the year at Ulverston Methodist Church. Michelle Dutton from the Macular Society gave a

very informative talk at our last meeting in October. Next Meeting will be arranged to take place in March 2020.

If anyone is interested in any of above groups please contact Emillie.

POETRY CORNER

Charles Bonnet Swiss Philosopher

I went into the bedroom and what did I see?
A strange feeling was coming over me,
Curtains were moving to and fro,
The door was opening but very slow,
Dragons were running up the wall,
Somersaulting as if they fall,
I know as I'm blind,
These things must be coming from my mind,
My mother who has perfect sight,
She assured me the wall is clean and bright,
So if you experience visions in any way,
Remember in 1760 so they say,
The grandfather of Charles Bonnet
Could see things that way,
Share your imaginings with friends,
Enjoy what nature sends,
We must be the chosen ones from this nation,
Because we have imagination,
It is entertainment for free,
So be glad it has come to you and me.

By Val Bryer

My Snowman

I sit with my little snowman in the cold outside
I made him myself, so I am full of joy and pride
He is my friend and I talk to him every single day
I had one last year, it got hot and he melted away

I love to sit with him on the steps of our front door
It will break my heart when he's there no more
The time I have with him however is well spent
I love his button eyes and his little nose all bent

This Christmas is such a special time you see
Mommy says I am to have something just for me
A little brother is coming to live with all of us
And I will love him and give him lots of fuss

I will make him a snowman when we go out to play
The difference is my little brother will always stay
He will not melt and leave me out here all alone
I really will look forward to the day when he has grown.

By John Sullivan





BARROW & DISTRICTS SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

Vision Support Centre

**67/69 Cavendish Street Barrow in
Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1QD**

01229 440556

info@barrowblindsociety.org.uk

Company Number: 3133015

Charity Number: 1051674