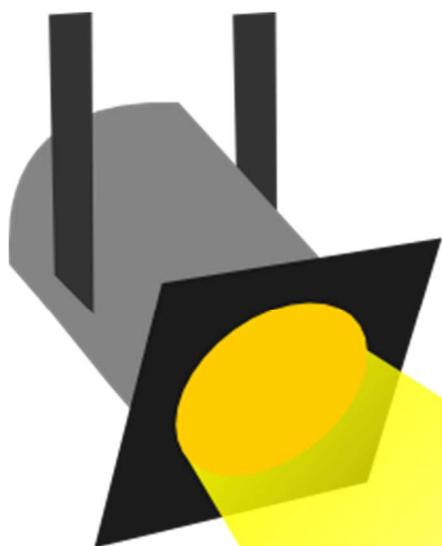


Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

February 2017

ISSUE 76



Contents:

Editorial	page 3
Colchester Sight Centre	page 4
News from the Midwest	page 6
Tending talks	page 7
Hospital Sight Loss Advisor	page 9
Read House	page 10
Puzzles	page 11
Local News	page 12
National News	page 14
Equipment	page 15
Answers to puzzles	page 16

Please send your articles for inclusion in Spotlight to:

The Editor

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**Items for the next issue should reach the Editor by Monday 27th
March 2017**



The Editor writes:

Hello!

Welcome to the latest edition of Spotlight brought to you by Essex Blind Charity. We hope you will find articles that are informative and of interest to you and that you will share these with other visually impaired people and their carers. Everyone who is newly registered in Essex will receive a copy of Spotlight and they can request their own copy in large print format, on tape or memory stick or by email. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide Braille copies.

This is my first Spotlight as editor and I hope I can keep up the sterling work done by Susan Mann who was responsible for all the previous 75 editions. I want to continue to include articles about local and national events that may be of interest to you, but I would also like you readers to contribute. It is always interesting to hear individual stories from our readers, whether it is about coping with everyday life or about activities or events you have attended.

I am also introducing some new features. This month there is a quiz for Valentine's day and a book recommendation from one of my audio book groups. Let me know what you think of these and if you have any other ideas on what you would like included.

I hate to end on a sad note but I want to add my personal tribute to John Johnson, our friend and counsellor at Colchester who died at the beginning of the year. John touched many people here, not just those he counselled but all the staff and volunteers who worked with him. He was always cheerful and gently supportive and we miss him very much.

Jill

Community Support Team



Helpline Number 01206 548196

Colchester Sight Centre by Carol Massey



I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and new year and I hope 2017 is a good one for you all.

John Johnson

No doubt you will have read elsewhere in this issue about the sad loss of our counsellor, John Johnson. John was a lovely person and made a real difference to so many people, both clients and staff and the Sight Centre will be a little bit sadder without the warmth and humour he brought with him. Farewell John, we miss you.

Forthcoming Demo Days

We have several demo days planned for 2017, the first being on Tuesday 21st February when Professional Vision will be coming to the Sight Centre with their latest equipment. On Tuesday 21st March Sight & Sound will be here. Further information can be found below and our website is regularly updated with forthcoming events and activities.

“Alexa”

“Alexa” has recently joined our Colchester team. You can read more about her in the Equipment section of Spotlight and you are welcome to come in and meet her and find out what she does in the Sight Centre.

Colchester Volunteer Information

Just before Christmas, we had a party for our volunteers in the Sight Centre. Our volunteers provide a fantastic service for us and have a wealth of knowledge and experience and this is one small way to show how much we appreciate and value them.

We are always looking for new volunteers, so if you, or anyone you know has a few hours to spare and might be interested, please contact me. I especially would like to find someone with a background in social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter who could help us maximise the impact of these applications.

Knitting Group

We are looking for new members for our knitting group. We meet on the first Thursday of the month between 10am and 12noon. Both visually impaired people and their carers/family are welcome and any ability. We can provide patterns in large print format and have magnifiers available should you require them. Currently, we are knitting simple squares to be made into blankets and "Twiddlemuffs" for people with dementia. Of course, you can do your own project if you wish.

Donated and Ex-Demo Stock

We regularly get donated equipment coming into the Sight Centre. At present, we have large button telephones and small handheld video magnifiers, together with some ex-demo Boomboxes (USB players). These items can be obtained in return for a donation to the charity. If you are interested, please contact me for more details.

That's all my news for now. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in the Sight Centre in 2017. Please remember to mention Essex Sight to your friends and family should they need our help and advice.

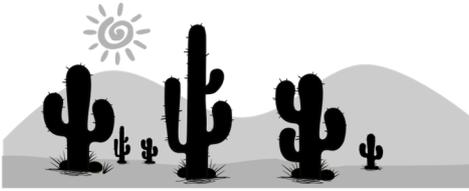
Colchester Sight Centre Activities

Weekly: Tuesdays	10am-12	Coffee Morning (IPad/iPhone sessions by appointment only)
Wednesdays	10am-12	Correspondence Reading
Monthly: 1 st Thursday	10am-12	"Knitwits"

Demo Days

21 st February	10am-1pm	Professional Vision
21 st March	10am-1pm	Sight & Sound

News from the Midwest by Jill Shakespear



Braintree Brentwood
Chelmsford Maldon

We are already well into 2017 and making plans for activities and events across the region. As I write this I am preparing for the new Finding Your Feet course in Chelmsford at the end of January in partnership with Essex Cares. I was very pleased to be asked to contribute to this course as I find it very rewarding helping newly diagnosed people to adjust to their sight loss.

The local Sight Centres are a very important part of our work and I am always pleased to see old as well as new faces visiting us. You are always welcome to pop along when we are in your area, maybe to stock up on equipment, see if there is anything new or just for a chat. Remember that we can bring along small equipment we may not stock locally like mobile phones, electronic magnifiers and our exciting new “friend” Alexa – more information in the equipment section.

Our audio book groups in Brentwood and Braintree are still very popular and I thought you might like to share in some of our reading. The January theme for the Braintree group was winter weather and here is one of the books in the selection:

Book of the month: The Frost Fair by Edward Marston

This book is from a series of crime novels set in the restoration period and featuring the architect and amateur sleuth Christopher Redmayne along with his friend, constable Jonathan Bale.

The year is 1669, the coldest winter for many years, cold enough to make the great river Thames freeze over. The merchants and entertainers make good use of the frozen river by holding a fair on the ice. However the revelries are soon cut short when Redmayne and the constable discover a corpse trapped in the ice. The dead man is an Italian, a fencing master and he has been stabbed with a weapon belonging to the rakish elder brother of Christopher, Henry Redmayne. Everyone, including the constable is convinced that Henry is guilty, but the accused

was too drunk to remember what happened. Christopher is convinced of his brothers' innocence and sets out to prove it.

If you like historical crime fiction this is an easy reading novel with lots of interesting period detail.

Upcoming dates for the Sight Centres are:

Braintree: 15th February and 15th March

Brentwood: 13th February and 13th March

Maldon: 7th February and 7th March

Chelmsford: every Friday

Tendring Talks by Denise Sanders



**Brightlingsea Clacton
Harwich Manningtree**

Already February – goodness, that came around quickly.

Hope you are all keeping well. As I write this it is quite mild but as you read you this Spotlight it may be the harsh winter predicted – hopefully not. Talking of heath, have you noticed how many 'itis' s there are – the most common one being arthritis of course. Can you think of others? Itis means inflammation

Laryngitis – inflammation of larynx – sore throat

Appendicitis – inflammation of appendix

Iritis – inflammation of Iris (eye)

Rhinitis – inflammation of nose (runny nose)

Gastritis – inflammation of gastric lining (tummy ache)

Conjunctivitis – inflammation of conjunctiva (sore, red eye)

Dermatitis – inflammation of skin (itchy, sore skin)

But Spring is just around the corner with hopefully less coughs and colds around.

Clacton Sight Centre

It was a while ago now, but it was lovely seeing so many at the Christmas celebrations. Thank you to Richard for providing the music and thank you to Chris for a great Christmas quiz – well done Agnes and John for winning the quiz and I hope to better my score of 10/20 next year!

Clacton Art Group – a change of time

As you may know, Annie Fennymore is now running the Clacton Art Group in an afternoon rather than a morning. They will continue to be on the first Thursday of each month.

Forthcoming Events

Thursday 23rd February - Professional Vision Demon Day

Brightlingsea, Harwich and Manningtree sight centres continue to be every two months and it is lovely to meet people from these towns.

Next Dates for sight centres

Brightlingsea – Wednesday 15th March

Harwich – Tuesday 14th February

Manningtree – 28th March

Sight Loss Advisor for Mid Essex residents - Loredana (Lori) Ivanus



It is obviously a very difficult and challenging time when a patient is told for the first time that they are losing their sight. It is vital that patients are supported and are given the practical information they need to help them cope with their loss, this is best given at the time of diagnosis. But the eye clinic is very busy and is very difficult for the medical staff to offer this support, this is where our sight loss advisor will step in.

As a sight loss advisor, my primary role is to act as a bridge between clinical and social care by providing patients with advice and making necessary referrals into the community in addition to providing practical and emotional support.

If you or a member of your family has been diagnosed with visual impairment, feel free to contact me. I will be able to explain your eye condition and give you the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. I can offer you and your family support, advice and information at a time most helpful to you.

Sight loss advisors are trained to carry out the following role

- Advice about registration and certification
- Information on eye conditions
- Emotional support
- Referral to other agencies (e.g. sensory team)
- A bridge between clinical and community services

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am in the eye clinic at the following times:

Monday - all day

Wednesday and Thursday – PM

Alternatively, you can call or email me.

Read House, Frinton on Sea by Janet Plant

Read House is the residential care home run by Essex Blind Charity in Frinton on Sea. The home specialises in the care of elderly people with sight problems. We offer permanent and respite care (short breaks) by staff who have all been trained in visual awareness. The Home is situated on the seafront at Frinton on Sea, a short distance from the town centre with its friendly local shops.

If you would like to find out more about Read House or to receive our Information Pack please contact me or Sandra on 01255 673654. We are more than happy to show you round at any time to suit you.

The Christmas festivities now seem a long time ago, but all our residents, including those who joined us for a short break over the Christmas period, had a lovely time with presents, good food (and drink!) and lots of activities. We were pleased to welcome a lot of new clients for a short break, some of whom seemed reluctant to go home and extended their stay!

We are now starting to plan our activities for the forthcoming year. We have a regular programme of daily activities, mostly decided by the residents themselves at their monthly meetings. But we like to include some extra special events, like another visit from Gemma's Farm as well as visiting entertainers. Our residents enjoyed a visit to the panto over Christmas so we are planning a few more theatre trips.

We have already taken a number of bookings from clubs who are planning their summer outings to Frinton. If your group is planning day trips this year and you would like information about what we can offer, please contact us for details – 01255 673654 or email sandra@essexblind.co.uk.

Puzzles

Valentine's Day Word Scramble

Can you solve these anagrams to find words connected with Valentine's day? Answers on page 16

1. LEVO

2. DRE

3. ESNRTPE

4. ESOR

5. APYHP

6. DCAR

7. RRAOW

8. FINERD

9. KEIL

10. PDUIC

11. TGIF

12. OCOLACHET

13. REHTA

14. EMPO

15. IGNR

16. DCANY

17. AETD

18. LOEFWRS

19. ITARMCON

20. SKSI

Local News

Mercury Theatre, Colchester

The next audio described performance will be for Bang Bang the George Feydeau farce adapted by John Cleese. The performance is on Saturday 11th March at 2.30pm with a touch tour at 1pm. Box office: tel: 01206 573948 or email: tickets@mercurytheatre.co.uk

Essex Book Festival at Rayleigh Library

Mark Hardie will be speaking at the Essex Book Festival event at Rayleigh Library, 132-4 High Street, Rayleigh, SS6 7BX, on Thursday 30th March 2017 at 7.30pm.

Set in Southend, Mark Hardie's gripping debut novel "Burned and Broken" introduces a brilliant new detective duo to the world of crime fiction, weaving together two suspenseful stories that end in a breath-taking finale.

Visually-impaired himself, Mark's book is one of 1000s available free of charge from the RNIB Talking Books Library. It is available in a range of accessible formats - braille, giant print and as a Talking Book, as well as being available to download from RNIB Overdrive. Representatives from the RNIB will be at the event so you'll have the opportunity to find out more about the Talking Books Service and other RNIB support services.

Tickets can be bought through the **Mercury Theatre Box Office** at a cost of £7 /£5 (27yrs and under). If you are disabled, a companion or carer may attend free of charge.

Book by telephone: 01206 573948

Book online: mercurytheatre.co.uk

Metro Blind Sport

If you live in the West of the county or East London you may want to follow up those New Year resolutions and start a new sporting activity. Metro Blind Sport is a London-based charity who aim to open doors to sport for all vision impaired people, regardless of age or sporting ability. They offer a range of sports including: archery, athletics, bowls, cricket, cycling, football, sailing and tennis. For more information visit their website www.metroblindsport.org

England Talent Day- Football

The Essex FA are to hold an England Talent Day for 11-13 and 14-16 year olds with disabilities including visual impairment. This day is used a signposting exercise to make sure players are in the right club for their level or for players who are not with clubs find one. Any players which show potential to make it to the next level are assessed at a further 6 session within the Talent ID Centre before decisions are made about the players potential to trial for England Emerging Talent Programme

Where: Moulsham High School, Brian Close, Chelmsford, CM2 9ES

When: Saturday 25th March 2017 2-4pm (both age groups)

Last Year Harry McDonald who is 16 years old and partially sighted (British Blind Sport Classified him as being a B2) attended the England Talent day and got through to the 6 assessment sessions where he was signposted into the England Partially Sighted Pathway Emerging Talent Programme. Harry got through the trial successful and is now regularly attending training camps.

For more information contact

Sean Harris
Senior Football Development Officer
Covering Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend, Thurrock
Essex County F.A.

T: 01245 393095

Email: sean.harris@essexfa.com



National News

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC)

The next taster weekend will be on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 March 2017. This is free for young people aged 13 to 17 with a visual impairment and includes free overnight accommodation for one accompanying adult.

For more information and to request a booking form;

Call 01432 376 621

Email info@rnc.ac.uk

Big Life Fix TV show

Did you watch the Big Life Fix series on BBC Two in December last year? This exciting and innovative science series sees a skilled team of scientists, engineers and designers create bespoke technology for individuals and groups to transform their lives for the better.

In the first series, the team came up with solutions for a range of issues affecting individuals and communities, including creating a device to counter the effects of Parkinson's disease for a young graphic designer, building a bicycle for a boy born with no hands or feet and designing a system to help a visually impaired mother take her children out to the park.

They're now planning a second series and looking for more people who feel they could benefit from a tailor-made invention. Perhaps it's a daily task, a hobby or a lifelong dream that's proving to be a challenge. If selected, the team will work with you to tackle the problem or challenge using ingenious design and technology.

If anyone is interested in applying, they can call the casting team on 0203 040 6908 or email: biglifefix@studiolambert.com. All calls are treated in the strictest of confidence.

Equipment

Amazon Echo Dot: our new friend Alexa

You may have seen the television adverts where the man talks to Alexa while he's cooking dinner. We are very excited by this new gadget and have had some very positive feedback from some of our regular users who have bought one for their home. We have now got two Echo dots for demonstration. One can be tried out at our Colchester Sight Centre and the other is available on a weekly loan for a refundable deposit for you to try in your own home. You need a wireless internet connection and a tablet, smartphone or computer that you can download the Amazon Alexa App onto.

Here are some of the things you can ask Alexa:

Alexa, what's the weather?

Alexa, what time is it?

Alexa, play BBC radio 4

Alexa, set alarm for 7am

Alexa, tell me a joke

Alexa, who is William Shakespeare?

Alexa, add potatoes to my shopping list

Alexa is good company as well as really useful and once she has been set up is simple to use, just say "Alexa" and then what you want to know. Do come into our sight centre to meet her!

Answers to puzzles

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. LOVE | 11. GIFT |
| 2. RED | 12. CHOCOLATE |
| 3. PRESENT | 13. HEART |
| 4. ROSE | 14. POEM |
| 5. HAPPY | 15. RING |
| 6. CARD | 16. CANDY |
| 7. ARROW | 17. DATE |
| 8. FRIEND | 18. FLOWERS |
| 9. LIKE | 19. ROMANTIC |
| 10. CUPID | 20. KISS |

Contact details

Helpline and office (Jill Shakespeare, Carol Massey, Denise Sanders)	01206 548196
Loredana Ivanus (mid-Essex hospitals)	07759 720551
Christine Pratt (Colchester + Tendring hospitals)	07770 750108
Read House (Janet Plant, General Manager, Vanda Watling, Fundraiser)	01255 673654

Essex Blind Charity produces and distributes Spotlight free of charge. However donations in time or money are always welcome. If you are a UK taxpayer please consider filling in our gift aid form so we can claim back the tax paid on your donation, thereby allowing us to make even better use of your donation.

If you are writing or redrafting your will please consider leaving us a gift. Your support will enable us to continue to provide and develop the services we provide for people with sight loss throughout Essex. Thank you.

Gift Aid Declaration

**On behalf of Essex Blind Charity
Registered Charity No. 1103732**

The Gift Aid Scheme enables charities to make more of your donation by reclaiming the tax you have already paid. In order for us to make this claim on your donation(s) please complete this form and return it as soon as possible

Thank you!

Please treat the enclosed gift of £.....as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Title.....Forename(s).....Surname.....

.

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Post Code.....

I would like Essex Blind Charity to treat all donations I have made since 1 July 2012 as Gift Aid donations until I notify them otherwise.

Signature..... Date.....

Please return your completed form to:
Essex Blind Charity
Read House, 23 The Esplanade
Frinton on Sea, Essex CO13 9AU.

If you are not already on our mailing list for 'Spotlight' and would like to receive a regular copy, please complete the form below and return it to Carol Massey at Essex Sight, 40 Osborne Street, Colchester CO2 7DB

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Tel.....

How would you prefer to receive your copy?

Large Print..... Cassette Tape..... Memory Stick.....

Email.....

We would like to add your contact details to our database so that we may from time to time send you details of developments to our services, events taking place in your area and other information we feel may be of interest to you.

If you would prefer us not to do so, please tick here.....

We will not pass your details to anyone else without your permission.

You may request us to remove your details from our database at any time.

Essex Sight Centres

Braintree

Braintree Library, Fairfield Road
Braintree CM7 3YL
3rd Wednesday of each month
10 am to 1pm

Colchester

40 Osborne Street
Colchester CO2 7ND
Open Monday to Friday
10 am to 2 pm

Brentwood

Brentwood Library, New Road
Brentwood CM14 4BP
2nd Monday of each month
10 am to 1 pm

Frinton on Sea

Read House, 23 The Esplanade
Frinton on Sea, CO13 9AU
Mon-Fri. 1pm to 4.30 pm
(by appointment – tel. 01255 673654)

Chelmsford

Chelmsford Library, Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1LH
Every Friday
10 am to 2 pm

Clacton-on-Sea

CADOWs, Old Road
Clacton on Sea CO15 1HX
Every Thursday
1 pm to 3.30 pm

Maldon

Maldon Library
Carmelite House, White Horse Lane
Maldon, CM9 5FW
1st Tuesday of each month
10am to 1pm

We also hold regular sessions in Brightlingsea, Manningtree and Harwich libraries on alternate months, as well as other ad hoc sessions in other locations.

**For more information contact Essex Sight Office on 01206 548196.
Email: services@essexblind.co.uk**

**For information about permanent or respite residential care, contact:
General Manager at Read House, Janet Plant: on 01255 673654
Email: janet@essexblind.co.uk**