

Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

October 2017

ISSUE 80

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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
November 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 our 80th Spotlight, a good round number. Try out the quiz to see how many other octogenarians you can recognize.

Our contribution this month comes from Michele with a very interesting account of her touch tour of the Houses of Parliament. There are also lots of other interesting activities ranging from cooking to blind running for you to try.

As the summer has truly come to a close and winter is knocking at the door, I am off to chase the last of the sun on holiday in Sicily.

Arrivederci!

Jill

Community Support Team



Helpline Number 01206 548196

Colchester Sight Centre by Carol Massey



I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer and if you went away, that the weather was good for you. It now feels very autumnal here and I have turned the heating on in the Sight Centre for the first time.

2018 Diaries and Calendars

We now have a selection of large print 2018 diaries and calendars in the Sight Centre. I know lots of people like the RNIB foldaway calendar and these should be in stock by the time you receive this newsletter.

Technology

In August we had a visit from the RNIB On-Line Today Team. The team engages with those who have a sensory impairment and shows them how to get on-line, surf the web and use smart phones and apps. Our regulars and new visitors found the session very enjoyable and informative.

Humanware were at the Sight Centre in September demonstrating the latest technology for the visually impaired.

iPad Training

We are very excited to now have an iPad in the Colchester Sight Centre. This means that as well as 1:1 training with our friendly and knowledgeable team member, Michelle, we can also offer

demonstrations. If you are considering getting an iPad, then this is a great way to see what it can do before you buy. Please contact the Sight Centre for more information or to book a session.

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-12n	“Knitwits” (5 th Oct, 2 nd Nov)
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Hospitals



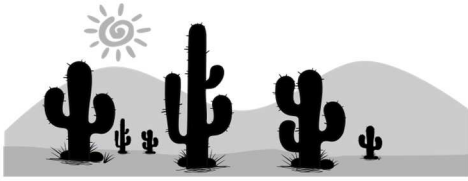
Christine - Sight Loss Advisor, Hospital Eye Clinics

July and August were very busy months for me with regard referrals from the eye clinics in Colchester and Clacton. A lot of patients have been contacting me directly for help and advice as well as getting referrals from the staff.

I can usually be found in the Outpatients waiting room on a Wednesday afternoon at Essex County and in room 14 in the Ivy Benson unit at Clacton District Hospital on a Monday morning. If you have an appointment on a different day but would like to speak to me please ask the staff for one of my leaflets.

If you would like information on an eye condition or some support from me I can be contacted on 01206 548196 or 07770 750108, please leave me a message if I am unavailable.

News from the Midwest by Jill Shakespear



Braintree Brentwood
Chelmsford Maldon

Chelmsford

A big thank you to Chelmsford Lions who have donated £750 to us which they raised at their Centenary Gala event in July. I was kindly invited along to the event which was a thoroughly enjoyable evening of local talent. The photo of the giant cheque is on our Facebook page.

The money has been put towards purchasing a demonstration set of the Orcam MyEye. This is a portable discreet camera fixed to pair of glasses with a small microphone attached. When you point at documents it takes a photo and reads it out to you. It can also be programmed to recognize faces and products. If you would like a demonstration I am happy to bring this out to any Sight Centre, just call the office to arrange it.

Maldon

At Maldon we have enjoyed two walks this summer. The first which was going to be a gentle stroll along the prom, ended up as a very enjoyable walk to Beeleigh Abbey. We also discovered some hidden gardens along the way. We did the prom walk in September admiring the statue of Byrhtnoth (a pronunciation challenge for our readers!) who was killed fighting the Vikings in the Battle of Maldon. The statue is very impressive being nine feet high and cast in bronze. It was created by local sculptor John Doubleday who is famous for his London statues of Charlie Chaplin and Sherlock Holmes and in Witham for his statue of the novelist Dorothy L. Sayers.

Braintree and Brentwood

Both our book groups have taken on a harvest theme which we will be discussing in October. You are welcome to come along and join us at either Braintree or Brentwood meetings. Here is an extract from **Keats** famous poem “**To Autumn**” to get you in the mood:

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

Tendring Talks by Denise Sanders



Brightlingsea Clacton
Harwich Manningtree

CLACTON SIGHT CENTRE

Provide

Thank you to Gabby for visiting us recently. Provide's Essex Lifestyle Service aims to empower the people of Essex to make healthy lifestyle choices, and lead healthier and happier lives. The Health Trainers can offer stop smoking support and guidance on diet and exercise. They also offer classes to support people suffering from long term conditions, and can signpost people to appropriate support provided in the community.

Clacton Macular Society

Just a reminder that everyone is most welcome at Clacton Macular Society; those living with macular disease or indeed living with a different eye condition. The group leader is Peter Bareham, tel: 01255 430386
The group meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month (excluding December) in Sam's Hall, Rosemary Road, Clacton CO15 1NX
Upcoming dates: Wednesday 25th October and Wednesday 22nd November

Sight and Sound Technology

This company is holding a product awareness and information day on Thursday 9th November at Cadows 1pm – 3.30 pm. The equipment being demonstrated will include:

a 7" HD video magnifier which magnifies materials up to 24 times; an intuitive wearable device with a smart camera designed to assist people who are visually impaired (ORCAM); a portable scanner and easy-to-use reader for individuals who have difficulties reading printed text; and a lightweight, portable video magnifier for reading, writing, and viewing magnified images at any distance.

Upcoming dates for the sight centres are:

Brightlingsea – Wednesday 15th November 10am – 12.30 pm

Clacton – every Thursday 1pm – 3.30 pm

Harwich – Tuesday 10th October and Tuesday 12th December 10am – 1 pm

Manningtree – Tuesday 28th November 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

Puzzles

Can you identify these famous people who celebrate their 80th birthday in 2017?

Actors and actresses

1. His breakthrough role was Benjamin in The Graduate
2. Larger than life actor famous for his booming voice
3. Hannibal Lecter
4. Mrs Hudson in Sherlock
5. Classical British actress from a famous thespian family
6. Famous for Carry On films and Eastenders

Musicians

7. Welsh singer who sang many James Bond themes
8. Singer/songwriter of "Killing me softly"
9. Rolling Stones bassist

Other

10. Current Pope since 2013
11. 50th Prime Minister of Italy
12. English Pop Artist "A bigger splash"

Answers on page 16

Technology

Our RNIB technology day in August was a great success with Andrew demonstrating a wide range of useful phone Apps for visually impaired people. As he was blind himself and used these Apps daily to aid his independence this was really informative. There are too many to list in one article so we will include a new App section in future Spotlights to tell you about one at a time. Here is the first:

Be My Eyes app for smartphones

The Be My Eyes app makes life easier by connecting sighted and blind users via video messaging. The project was invented by partially sighted Hans Jørgen Wiberg who wanted to create a simple way for blind people to seek help.

Blind users can use the app to request help from a sighted person. As soon as the first sighted user accepts the request for help a live audio-video connection will be set up between the two and the sighted user can tell the blind person what they see, when the blind user points their phone at something using the rear-facing camera.

Andrew demonstrated this App for us. The person who he was connected with was in Australia. Andrew told them that he was with some friends and asked how many were here – he then slowly scanned the room with his phone so they could count. He also asked the colour of the shirt of the person next to him and whether it was light or dark outside.

The big advantage of this App is that you are talking with a human being so can be quite flexible in what you ask. However, you would not want to use it for anything of a confidential nature

This app is only available for Apple phones at the moment. An Android version is in development and should be available soon. You can find out more by visiting the website at www.bemyeyes.com

Equipment

Eye Shields

We now have some new fitover eye shields in stock at our Sight Centres. They are called Cocoons and are very comfortable to wear with good quality lenses. We have lemon ones suitable for protection from indoor lighting and for use with electronic screens and Boysenberry which have a pinky brown tint for outdoor use. As with all our eye shields they give 100% UV protection. They are proving very popular with users finding them restful to wear. We are selling them at £25 a pair.

Activities

Tour of the Houses of Parliament – a personal account from Michelle

In March, the UC Club attended a touch tour of the Houses of Parliament. This tour is specifically designed for those with little or no sight, the difference being that they allow you to touch almost everything.

Be prepared to go through Airport style security before entering the building. This can take some time, but refreshments are provided before the tour starts to give everyone enough time to get through the process.

The tour starts in the Great Hall where various objects including a tactile model of the Houses of Parliament have been laid out for people to explore. We proceeded to the House of Lords where we could sit on the benches and the Woolsack where the Lord Speaker sits. As its name suggests it is literally a sack of wool gathered from all over the Commonwealth and is the most comfortable place to sit. The only thing you can't touch is the throne where Her Majesty sits when she opens parliament.

Outside the door to the House of Commons there is an area where statues of various past Prime Ministers are displayed including Churchill. Tradition has it that when an MP is about to give their maiden speech they rub Churchill's foot as they pass through the door. You can also do this and feel how it has been rubbed smooth. You can also feel the place where Black Rod knocks on the door of the House of Commons.

This room also contains the MP's pigeon holes so we had fun locating the one for our MP and seeing if it was empty or not. Inside the House of Commons again we were allowed to sit on all the benches, where the Prime Minister sits and the Leader of the Opposition. I think people most enjoyed sitting in the Speaker's chair and saying "Order, Order!"

I am not politically minded and wasn't sure if I wanted to go but I'm very glad I did. I found it extremely informative and a lot of fun. You are at no disadvantage to sighted visitors and our sighted guides appreciated and enjoyed being able to touch things which they would not be able to do on any other tour. The tour allows you plenty of time to freely explore each area and does not feel rushed. There is a lot of walking but wheelchair hire can be arranged.

If you are interested in this tour the details are below. You do not have to go as a group, you can book individually too.

UK residents who are blind or partially sighted can arrange a fully guided tactile tour of the Houses of Parliament.

In order to develop a real sense of the building and its history, visitors have the opportunity to talk to our friendly team before the tours start and touch various specially made models and other objects.

The tours then follow a route covering Westminster Hall, Central Lobby, the Lords Chamber in the House of Lords and the Commons Chamber in the House of Commons. There are plenty of objects and items of furniture to explore along the tour route.

These tactile tours are offered free of charge.

Times and availability

Tours run between 10-12 times per year, usually late on Friday afternoon, and last approximately 120 minutes.

Confirmed tactile tour dates are:

- 8 September 2017 at 5pm
- 20 October 2017 at 5pm
- 24 November 2017 at 5pm

Further dates will be announced shortly.

Visitors are recommended to arrive 60 minutes prior to the start of the tour to allow time to explore the tactile objects in Westminster Hall and to visit our facilities before the start of the tour.

Booking and further information

Please contact us by email at visitparliament@parliament.uk or by calling 020 7219 2144.

Blind running

Guide running taster morning

Saturday 28th October 2017

9.30am TO 12.30pm

Venue: Essex University, Colchester Campus, CO4 3SQ

This is an opportunity for visually impaired and blind people to try out running with an experienced guide runner. The course will allow participants to try out guided running in a traffic free and safe environment, at a level to suit their fitness; be it a gentle short jog, a fun based short training session or for the more active and sporty, a longer run.

The idea behind this event is for the visually impaired and blind, who may not be confident to try out new sports, to have a pathway into guided running. The event will be well attended by licenced and experienced guide runners, offering a gateway to new blind and VI runners to enjoy and experience running.

If you are interested in registering to attend this free event, or have any questions,

please contact: garyperryman1@hotmail.co.uk

Mobile 07549 191221

Bank of England tour

Date: Thursday 12 October 2017 at 6pm

Blind and partially-sighted visitors are invited to an exclusive after-hours audio-described tour of key exhibits in the Bank of England Museum. Visitors will learn about the Bank's history and architecture, find out fascinating facts about banknotes and will be able to hold a real gold bar.

The tour begins at 6pm and will last approximately 1 hour. Please feel free to join us for light refreshments from 5.30pm.

Places are free but advance booking is essential.

Sighted companions and guide dogs are welcome

Baking Blind - An online and global adventure.

Cooking is yet another daily task that many people take for granted. Having sight loss can make cooking incredibly difficult, but Penny Melville-Brown OBE – disability rights advocate and Director of Disability Dynamics – wanted to show the world otherwise.

Baking Blind is her YouTube channel and online project, featuring videos of Penny – who is blind – preparing all manner of dishes, from curries to quails' eggs to Turkish delight.

Earlier this year, Penny entered the Holman Prize, a competition run by San Francisco's Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired organisation to fund big ideas and innovative projects pitched by people who are blind.

Penny's ambition was to take her online cookery project around the world, cooking across the globe and filming it as she went.

After progressing through the competition, Penny was recently announced as one of the three winners to receive funding. Her global dream is about to become a reality and audiences will be able to follow her travels and exotic recipes through the Baking Blind YouTube channel.

Find more information and Penny's cooking videos at the Baking Blind website: <http://bit.ly/2xE9fiM>

Entertainment

London Science Museum

The science museum is holding a VIscovery day on **Saturday 14th October 2017**.

VIscovery days include a series of events which are specifically designed for families with members who are visually impaired, partially sighted or blind. The day will be themed around Illuminating India, an exhibition celebrating India's contribution to science, technology and maths. Events will include an immersive storytelling, workshops, and much more.

All events are free and suitable for children aged 5 and over. Events will be individually bookable so that families get the most personal interactive experience possible.

For more information email: Federica.Marzari@ScienceMuseum.ac.uk or call on 02079424086.

Shaftesbury Theatre, London

Motown the Musical – there will be an audio described performance on Tuesday 10th October at 7.30pm with a touch tour at 6pm. Ticket price £34.75.

Contact the Box Office on 020 7379 5399

Answers to puzzles

1. Dustin Hoffman
2. Brian Blessed
3. Anthony Hopkins
4. Una Stubbs
5. Vanessa Redgrave
6. Barbara Windsor
7. Shirley Bassey
8. Roberta Flack
9. Bill Wyman
10. Pope Francis
11. Silvio Berlusconi
12. David Hockney

Contact details

Helpline and office 01206 548196
(Jill Shakespear, Carol Massey, Denise Sanders)

Christine Pratt (Colchester + Tendring hospitals) 07770 750108

Read House 01255 673654
(Janet Plant, General Manager, Sandra Edwards, Admin Assistant)

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.....
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.....
.....

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.....
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.....
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.....

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
Wednesday late opening to 4pm

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)

Brightlingsea

Brightlingsea Library, New Street
Brightlingsea CO7 0BZ
3rd Wednesday alternate months
10 am to 12.30 pm

Harwich

Harwich Library, Upper Kingsway
Dovercourt CO12 3JT
2nd Tuesday alternate months
10 am to 1 pm

Chelmsford

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

Maldon

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

Clacton-on-Sea

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

Manningtree

Manningtree Library, High Street
Manningtree, CO11 1AD
4th Tuesday alternate months
9.30 am to 12.30 pm

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