



OUT OF SIGHT

Issue 41 – Oct 2014 Newsletter



Bury Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People

Chief Officer's Message

Whilst writing this I can hear in the distance our wonderful music group singing 'Away In A Manger'!! Christmas must be coming!! All this is in preparation for our Christmas Celebration evening here at the Centre on 17th December. I love Christmas, it's a really busy time for us here but it's always good fun. I do hope you will be able to join us at some point.

It's also a particularly challenging time for us. Now our Lottery funding has finished, the majority of my time certainly seems to be spent submitting bids to secure funding for our service. However, there are so many Charities also trying to ensure they keep going – it's not an easy task, particularly as we are a small, independent, local charity. I just wish the funders, and statutory organisations could hear some of the wonderful comments you make to us about the difference our service makes to your lives! That said, we certainly are not being down-hearted and, as you will read, there's plenty going on!

We've got our usual Christmas wrapping, and this year we are also selling our own Christmas Cards. The photograph on the card is by Scott, who is the grandson of Joy Clavell, one of our service users who comes along to our Thursday afternoon tea – so it's a real 'family affair'! In addition to this we have T Shirts, bags and even plant pots for sale – more details inside! And then of course, you will notice there is a book of raffle tickets with this Newsletter. Your support in selling these would be greatly appreciated.

So, I'll leave you to read on – and wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful New Year from myself, the Directors and all the Staff team.

Jill Logan

Upcoming Social Events

Regular Events

All regular events are at the Blind Society unless stated otherwise.

Evening Social – 7pm Tuesdays 28th Oct, 25th Nov and 27th Jan

Walshaw Social – 2pm Tuesdays 14th Oct, 11th Nov and 13th Jan at Walshaw Sports Club.

Tuesday Afternoon Knit & Natter – 1.30pm – 3.30pm

Wednesday Cookery Treat – 11am-1pm Cake or perhaps pasta

Thursday Afternoon Tea - 1.30pm -3.30pm

Friday Coffee Mornings and Luncheon Club – 10am-1pm

Music Group - Fridays 1-3pm OR Tuesdays 7-8.30pm

For fun – no experience necessary! Bring your own instrument, use one of ours, or just sing! £2 per session inc. refreshments

Monthly Poetry Group - Fourth Wednesday of the month at 10.30am

Pamper your feet: podiatrist – Wednesdays, every six weeks
Appointments available between 2pm-4pm. Book via the office.

Table Top Sale - second Thursday of the month 1.30-3pm

Macular Degeneration Support Group - third Wednesday of the month AND NEW GROUP first Wednesday/month both 1.30pm-3pm

Special Events!

For all events book by calling in, phoning or emailing the Blind Society (unless it says otherwise). Tel: 0161-763-7014

Email: admin@buryblindsociety.org

Extra Special Craft and Gift Show – Ramsbottom Civic Hall – Sunday 16th November 10am – 4pm Everyone is welcome as we return for another year hosting this crafty event. A great opportunity to pick up some unique locally made gifts for Christmas, and why not call into the café for tea and cake!

Christmas Shopping Trip, (provisional, dependent on numbers).

Departing from the Centre at 10am, Tuesday 18th November, return approx. 4pm. Transport approx. £5 for mini-bus, minimum number of 15 required for a mini-bus.

China Rose Tottington Meal, Wednesday 3rd December 7.30pm. Join us for a Buffet meal – so no menu choices, just select what you want on the night!! £6.00 for members, £12.00 for guests. Book with the Centre.

Christmas Lunches: once again we're inviting all members to join us for a Christmas lunch at Bury College in December. Daytime – Tuesday 2nd and Thursday 4th and Evening – Thursday 11th.

Christmas Celebration: Wednesday 17th December 7pm A celebration of friendships, family and the spirit of Christmas. Join us for Christmas songs, experiences and stories at Wolstenholme House, with mulled wine and mince pies. Tickets just £2.00 from the Centre.

Luxury Gift Wrapping & Christmas Card Writing Service – Wolstenholme House – 1st to 24th December - Come along and take the stress out of Christmas. We will wrap your gifts and write your Christmas cards for a donation to the Society.

Fundraising Directory

Welcome to our new Fundraising Directory! An exciting corner of the newsletter where you can keep in touch with fundraising events and activities, and a place to see how you can help your Society prosper! As you may recall from the last newsletter the Society is no longer in receipt of The Big Lottery funding. Did you know that it provided the Society with 70% towards our running costs? With this money now gone we are, as we have always been, looking for new and exciting ways to raise funds to enable us to continue providing services and activities for visually impaired people within the Borough. We are a local independent charity and receive no government funding and are not affiliated to any larger organisation e.g. R.N.I.B. You will also be able to keep up to date with how the money you help us raise is being

spent. We hope you enjoy this new feature and look forward to hearing your fundraising ideas and stories!

Christmas Shop

Why not treat your loved ones with some Bury Blind Society merchandise this year!

Christmas Cards: pack of 10 for £3.00 in stock now!



Queens Award Celebration T-shirts - £5.00

Canvas Bag: £3

Christmas Plant Pots: £4.00

Gift Wrapping Galore!

This year our Luxury Gift Wrapping Service in the Mill Gate Centre returns for its 9th year! For a minimum donation of £1.50 per gift our fabulously festive volunteers will turn their hands to making the Christmas Gifts of Bury truly magical. We will be in our usual pitch, outside the old M&S and opposite Coffee Creations, from the 10th December right through to Christmas Eve!

Can't get to the Mill Gate Centre? **Don't Panic!!** We are also offering this service to our members at Wolstenholme House from the 1st to the 24th December, as well as a Christmas card writing service!!

If you would like to volunteer at this event, or see what it's all about, we are holding a **Demonstration Day** on Monday 17th November, 2pm, at Wolstenholme House. Get first pick of the volunteering slots with our Priority Sign-Up Service! All served up with mince pies and mulled wine!! To reserve your place at the Demo Day please contact Jane Deakin on 0161 763 7014 or jane.deakin@buryblindsociety.org

Make a Wish and a Christmas Dedication

This Christmas we are inviting members of the public, volunteers and service users to Make a Wish and a Christmas Dedication.

Throughout December we will have our very own Wishing Well and Christmas Tree on Union Street in the Mill Gate Shopping Centre. We will be hosting two Christmas Dedication workshops on the 17th and 24th November in the Mill Gate where you can come along and write your dedication to go on the tree for a small donation. For more information contact Jane at the Society.

Updates

Hellos and Goodbyes!

It is hard to believe that we are already approaching November and 2015 is just around the corner! It seems like only yesterday that Jane Deakin, our Volunteer Coordinator, headed off onto Maternity Leave back in February. Six months have passed and Jane rejoined the team at the start of September. As Jane returned we bid farewell to John Taylor. John joined us in 2012 to provide administration support for the Lottery Befriending project. Sadly his contract finished with the funding and he will be missed by us all. We have also said goodbye to Deborah Gregory this month, who had been helping out on the funding side whilst Jane was on Maternity leave. We would like to take this opportunity to thank John and Deborah for all their hard work and commitment to the Society and to wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

Your Staff Team

Jill Logan – Chief Officer

Judith Fowler – Centre Manager

Jane Deakin – Volunteer Coordinator

Victoria McNulty – Early Intervention Officer

Gill Currie – Eye Talk Project Facilitator/Fairfield Hospital Desk

Jack Hodgkinson – Admin Support

Penny Newns – Fairfield Hospital Desk

Kath Pritchard – Fairfield Hospital Desk

Brenda Peacock – Cleaner

Coffee Break Corner

Tracey's Brain Teasers

Test your brain and try to work out these riddles the answers will be in the next news letter.

1. I never was, I am always to be, and no one has ever seen me and no one ever will what am I?
2. What runs but never walks, has a mouth but never speaks, has a head but never weeps and has a bed but never sleeps?
3. You can gain me, you can have me, you can break me or you can lose me what am I?



Here are the answers from the last newsletter

1. A man lives on the 10th floor in a block of flats, he takes the lift down in a morning but at the end of the day he takes the lift only up to the 8th floor and walks up the last 2 floors why?
He is a person of small stature and can't reach the buttons.
2. What can hold water even with holes in its top, bottom and sides?
A sponge.
3. What is it? The more food you give it, it will grow but give it water and it will die?
A fire.

POETRY GROUP

We meet on every 4th Wednesday of the month at the Society please come along with a poem that you have found or written or just listen to others.

Here is a poem written by Pat which I am sure that many of you will be able to relate to.

REMEMBER

REMEMBER when the sun always shone and the days when snow lay thick and all we did was play?

REMEMBER when food and sweets were scarce and a little money had to go a long way?

REMEMBER when there was no TV and round the fire the radio held sway?

REMEMBER when Monday was wash day and clothes hung around until put away?

REMEMBER when we had no car and had to go by bus or use our legs every day?

REMEMBER world events - wars, disasters, royal tours and sports results when everyone had their say?

If you can REMEMBER all this, you'll be getting a bus pass, free eye tests, winter fuel payments and advice on how to keep dementia at bay.

Pat Long, September 2014

Vicky's Article

Retinitis Pigmentosa

Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) is a condition prevalent among many of our members and I have visited many clients with differing presentations of RP.

RP is the name given to a group of inherited conditions of the retina that all lead to gradually reduced vision, both eyes generally being affected to the same extent.

Some of the key factors people with RP may notice early on are:

- Night Blindness
- Poor peripheral vision (tunnel vision)

Later in life people with RP may notice difficulty with:

- Reading
- Colour vision
- Central vision (detail)

The age at which symptoms start and the rate of deterioration varies due to genetics, but is generally slow with changes occurring over years rather than months. In approximately half of all cases there are other family members with RP. Parents may notice the following signs

in their children which can indicate reduced vision:

- Eyes moving to and fro – (known as Nystagmus)
- Touching/Rubbing their eyes
- Roving eye movement

People with RP often develop cataracts. These can be operated on once they reach a certain stage. The lens can be replaced or glasses prescribed. Depending on the condition of the retina a certain amount of vision might be restored after the operation.

People with RP can inherit Usher Syndrome which results in hearing loss. For more information on Usher Syndrome please contact [SENSE](#).

There is currently no approved therapy able to stop the evolution of RP or restore vision, so the current management aims to slow down the degenerative process, to provide low vision aids and to provide psychological support.

Finally, we have been looking into setting up an RP support group here at the Blind Society for members with RP, and so are keen to learn of your thoughts about whether this is something you would like to get involved with and come along to? Also if you have any ideas about what you would like from a support group please let us know at the Society... We look forward to hearing from you!

RP Fighting Blindness

(The British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society)

PO Box 350, Buckingham MK18 1GZ

Tel: 01280 821 334

RP Helpline 0845 123 2354

Email: info@rpfightingblindness.org.uk

SENSE for Deafblind People

Tel: 0300 330 9256 or

020 7520 0972

Textphone: 0300 330 9256

or 020 7520 0972

Email: info@sense.org.uk

Eye Talk Makes a Difference

By Gill Currie, Eye Talk Project Facilitator

Attendees from recent Eye Talk sessions tell us that it makes such a difference to their lives.



Eye Talk is a 4 week programme currently running on a Monday afternoon from 12:45 – 2:45pm. Eye Talk is generally attended by newly diagnosed or recently registered clients but it is open to all visually impaired

adults and their families / carers. Over the four weeks you will cover topics such as benefits, equipment, Adult Care Services, transport and mobility, coping strategies, the services of Bury Blind Society as well as benefitting from peer support – sharing challenges and successes with fellow attendees. If you would like more information or would like to book a place on the next course please contact Gill at the Society on 01617637014.

Access Technology

Bump Mark, a Bio-Reactive Food Expiry Label

By Diane Webb, Director for Volunteers

Each year the “James Dyson Award” is awarded to a student who has invented something “of benefit”.

This year a young woman, Solveiga Pakstaite of Brunel University, has won the award for developing a patch of gelatine to stick on the outside of packaging which changes in texture as the food inside deteriorates. When asked what gave her this idea she expressed concern that visually impaired people could not read the “use by dates” on food in their kitchen. However, the more she researched the problem the more she realised that it is sighted people who can read the “use by” date who are wasting so much food as they throw it away according to the date without checking whether the food has actually gone off first. She explained that, as different foods go off at differing rates, she has developed a formula to calculate the consistency of gelatine required so as to go off at the same rate.

As these new ideas can take a while before they reach the high street it might be a while before we find it in use on our weekly shopping but companies are already showing an interest in her work; so watch this space.

Body Shop Grand Re-Opening



By Beth Rogan, a service user and volunteer

On Saturday 31st August 2014 Jane Deakin and I along with Amber my guide dog were asked to unveil the newly refurbished Body Shop store. The store is in the Mill Gate Shopping Centre and has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment. The ceremony was not due to start until 10am so Jane and I were allowed to walk around the store and sample any items that we wanted. It was like being a kid in a sweet shop. It was great fun trying the makeup, perfume and body butters. Once 10am came it was down to work and Jane gave a small speech about the store as well as thanking them for making Bury Blind Society their chosen charity for the year. It was then my turn to step forward to cut the ribbon and the new store was officially open. There was a great queue of shoppers waiting, the first in line were given goodie bags and within minutes the store was full of customers! As the Society is the Bury stores chosen charity they also organised a collection and raised in excess of £221.44 on the day – Thank you Body Shop Bury!

The new store is so much brighter than before with a simple and uncluttered floor plan. This makes getting round with my guide dog Amber so much easier. Their staff are always happy to help and take their time making sure you have exactly what you want. I know I will be back in there very soon.

In Memory

Some of our clients have been kind enough to remember the Society in their Funeral arrangements. This quarter we received:

£75.00

A gift in your will, a Funeral Donation or donation 'In Memory' of a loved one however large or small, will ensure Bury Blind Society can be here for other blind and partially sighted people within the Metropolitan Borough of Bury in the future.

If you would like to discuss leaving Bury Blind Society a gift in your Will please contact Jill Logan at the Society on 0161 763 7014.

Services We Offer

- Eye Talk Support Sessions
- Referral Service for Home Assessment
- Benefit Information
- Comprehensive Resource Centre
- Regular Social Activities
- Hospital Information Service
- Befriending Services
- Visual Impaired Awareness Training
- Symbol Cane Training
- Skills for Seeing ("Eccentric Viewing")
- Specialist Equipment Demonstrations
- Support Clinic
- Drop In Centre

Over the past 6 months, to keep our Centre open it has cost:

Stationery	£1778.65
Volunteer Expenses	£2455.93
Telephone	£1073.32
Photocopier	£328.11
Repairs & Maintenance	£1810.56
Gas	£724.05
Electricity	£993.32
Water Rates	£449.55
Mortgage	£5468.70
Insurance	£1422.03
Support Costs (cleaning materials, toilet rolls, refreshments etc)	£1885.29
Total	£18,389.51
Annual Cost	£36,779.02

Brrrrr It's Cold In There! Winter Comes to Wolstenholme



After a glorious Indian Summer the weather has now taken a turn and the wind and rain is setting in and temperatures are dropping. Perfect timing for our boiler to stop working! After lots of TLC and various heating engineers tweaking it here and there our poor boiler has gone to heating heaven.

We currently have no heating or hot water at Wolstenholme House but what we do have is a rather large bill for a new boiler! Sadly new boilers do not come cheap and we are now faced with finding £3000 for a replacement!

We would like to thank everyone for bearing with us whilst we work to get the heating and hot water back on!



A Right Royal Round Up



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Following the Society being awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and Jill and Jane attending a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace it has been a whirlwind of celebratory events for volunteers and service users of the Society. Here is a round-up of their recent activities.....

Queens Award Presentation

By Yvonne Wright, volunteer

It was a great pleasure to be included in the group of 20 Volunteers who were invited to Gorton Monastery on the 6th August to celebrate the Society having been awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service.

Dressed in our finery we headed to Gorton Monastery which is situated just on the outskirts of the city centre. The Monastery is a very large majestic looking church with a modern extension. It has pretty gardens set in inner courtyards. The entrance hallways were long and impressive and we all felt that we were in a very special place for this extra special occasion.

We were led into the main body of the church and ahead of us circular tables were laid out and we were all looking forward to the treat of an afternoon tea. Before the tea, the presentations took place with 12 other charities from Great Manchester also receiving the Award. A₁₃

short piece was read on the work of each charity with slides displayed on a very large screen and then the presentation was made. Jill and Jane accepted the signed certificate from Her Majesty presented by the Lord Lieutenant Mr. Warren J. Smith KStJ JP DLitt LLD and a piece of domed English Crystal with the Queens Award insignia. I am sure both will soon be displayed in the centre in a pride of place.

All enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea in good company and thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience. It was a very special day in the history of the Society, being awarded the highest accolade in the land in recognition of the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. We just wish we could have taken everyone with us.



Party Time – Celebrating our Queens Award in Style!

Friday 29th August saw volunteers, service users and staff come together at the Masonic Halls in Bury to celebrate our Queens Award for Voluntary Service! With our very own Music Group opening the evening we all took to the dance floor and a night of celebration began. The music played, the buffet was delicious and there was a well-worn track to the bar! Everyone agreed that a great night was had and in true Bury Blind Society style we even raised £217 on the night!!!

I'm Back!

By Jane Deakin, Volunteer Coordinator

Where has the time gone? One minute it's February and I'm heading off onto Maternity Leave and the next it's October and I'm sat writing an article for the Newsletter about my return to work! It is wonderful to be back at the Society and I am slowly getting back into the swing of things again, as well as getting used to working full time with a 7 month old at home! **My sincere thanks to Jill, the staff, and the many fabulous volunteers who kept things running smoother than ever in my absence.**



As you may remember from a previous newsletter my little boy, Benjamin, was born with a cataract in his left eye which he has had removed and a replacement lens fitted. Benjamin has since developed Glaucoma in the left eye and 6 weeks ago had an artificial drainage tube implanted into the eye. We are waiting on the results of this, but initial indicators are good! So now we are in the process of eye patching for up to 7 hours a day to get his left eye working as hard as it can. Benjamin takes all this in his stride and just gets on with being a bouncing 7 month old baby, busy teething and learning to crawl!

Annual General Meeting and Open Day

This year our AGM was held on Thursday 25 September and the Deputy Mayor, Sharon Briggs along with her consort, Shirley Rabitt, attended as our President.

At the meeting the 2013/14 accounts were agreed and accepted and two new Directors were confirmed for the Board. Tracy Marno, Service User liaison and Dr Shuaib Chaudhrey, Specialist Eye

Consultant. We are sure they will both prove to be valuable assets to the Society.

Copies of the Annual Review are available in large print, braille, audio and e mail for anyone wishing to receive a copy. Please contact the office with your request. In our next newsletter we will be profiling our Directors and giving details of the planned strategy for the next financial year.

Christmas Centre Closing Times

The Centre will close at 2.00pm Wednesday 24 December:Christmas Eve and re-open in the New Year on Monday 5 January 2015.



Christmas Greetings

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Jill, Judith, Jane, Jack, Gill and Vicki! And all.....!!! or Staff Team??