



Bury Society For Blind and  
Partially Sighted People

## Monthly V.I. Link – Issue 14

### December 2020

Well, it's here! Christmas is once again upon us and what a strange one it will be this year. We know that many of you will be spending Christmas alone and so have put together a few ideas to make the day still special. But first, we must thank you for the wonderful support we have had for our very first Christmas catalogue. It's been lovely to hear from so many of you when placing your orders, and it has made us feel much more festive! We hope you have too.

A number of you, staff included, decided to donate to the Society, instead of purchasing Christmas cards, and send your festive messages via our Christmas Wishes sheet. Thank you and we hope you enjoy reading the messages.

**Wrapping and Cards.** It not too late to have your presents wrapped! We're still providing a gift-wrapping service, in the Centre, with appropriate safety measures, until Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Simply drop your gifts off and return later to pick them up – beautifully wrapped and decorated for a minimum donation of £1.50 per gift. Also, don't forget, we are offering a personal **Christmas card writing service.** We will write or braille your message on one of our beautiful home crafted cards, address it and send it on your behalf, all for just £5.00!

Our **Advent Calendar** has now gone live! Last month we said it was just 12 Days of Christmas, but we decided to go for the whole 24! Take a peek on our web site. Each door displays some of the activities we remember so well!

**Don't have the internet?** Why not book a '**Christmas Connection**' session to use our Zoom facility to contact family and friends? We are happy to support you in setting up the session and inviting your guests. Relatives abroad, or even closer to home, if they have internet, we can contact them for you. What a lovely way to stay in touch for Christmas! Contact the Society on 0161 763 7014 for more details and to book.

**What's On Over Christmas?** At the time of going to press, the Christmas Programme for the radio and television has not been released but there's

bound to be plenty to tune into. Or what about something a little different? There are a number of theatres streaming ballet, concerts and plays to view in the comfort of your own home. Check out their websites for further details. The Royal Albert Hall is streaming, as pay to view, the 2020 performances of the Messiah and Carols at the Hall. ([www.royalalberthall.com](http://www.royalalberthall.com)). Or maybe you would like to join in with a panto? The Belgrade Theatre, Coventry are performing Jack and the Beanstalk online. Watch from home from 1-31 December for just £16. You only need to book once to be able to view the online panto whenever you like! [www.belgrade.co.uk/events/jack-and-the-beanstalk-online](http://www.belgrade.co.uk/events/jack-and-the-beanstalk-online). If you need assistance to access these events, we'd be happy to help.

We also have our own little 'virtual Christmas mini show' available from Monday 21 December. Check out our website for further details and the link to access some fun poems, stories and songs performed by staff, volunteers, and HSBC friends.

**Christmas Silent Auction:** Carole Allen has very kindly donated a wonderful Christmas Chocolate Hamper, consisting of a wide variety of Christmas chocolates, nibbles and biscuits all displayed in a lovely wicker basket. As it's not feasible to have our usual Christmas raffle, we have decided to put this up for auction, to go to the highest bidder. The starting price is £25 and the bidding is open until 10am Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Simply ring in with your bid and contact details.

**Healthy Living – Christmas style!** Christmas traditionally is a time to indulge, and, as the famous supermarket says 'this year no one is on the naughty list'! Why not join us via Zoom, on Thursday 17 December, 10.30am when we are delighted that former volunteer, Julie Croke, will be joining us in her capacity as a Slimming World group leader, to guide us on how to treat yourself but still be healthy! For details on how to book on, please contact the Society. Don't forget, you can access Zoom via a landline -you don't have to have the internet.

### **Let's Get Physical!**

At Christmas when decorations are on display, wires trailing, items are not where we left them, it can be a dangerous time for trips and falls. We've

listed a few hints and tips here, courtesy of the Stroke Association, ensuring a happy and safe Christmas.

- Keep all floors clear of trailing wires, frayed carpet or anything else you might trip on. Mop up spills straightaway.
- Arrange your home so that you are less likely to bump into things.
- Keep your home warm – cold muscles work less well, and this can lead to accidents.
- Often falls happen when people are not paying attention, are thinking of other things, or doing several things at once. Try to avoid doing two things at once such as walking and talking on the phone.
- Focus on your movements when you are doing anything tricky like turning, going up and down stairs, or getting in and out of the bath or bed. These are all common times when falls happen. Step around carefully when you are turning (rather than twisting), hold on to whatever solid objects are around and take your time. Use aids if you have them and get someone to help if you need to.
- Move at a speed that you find comfortable. Don't feel rushed by pressures of everyday life to do things more quickly.
- Remember to use any walking aids, such as sticks or frames that have been recommended.
- Use high wattage light bulbs so you can see clearly, particularly around stairs. If you get up in the night, make sure you turn the light on.
- Have regular eye tests. Wear any glasses that have been prescribed for you.

**Christmas Scams:** Just a little word of warning. We have had a number of people letting us know that they have received phone calls or an e mail supposedly regarding unusual activity with their bank. Please ignore or, if you are concerned, ring your bank to confirm before you give ANY details.

### **Coronavirus information and advice:**

The following is the current situation as at 10 December. On the 17<sup>th</sup> December there is to be a review to decide whether we will remain in Tier 3. From 23 to 27 December, across the UK, you will be allowed to form a 'Christmas Bubble' of up to 3 households and meet indoors. However, the

guidelines still encourage celebrating Christmas remotely this year and protective measures should still be followed such as washing hands.

**Tier 3** - Bury is currently in Tier 3, very high risk. Meeting people socially remains restricted. You should not meet anybody you do not live with, or who is not in your support bubble, indoors or in most outdoor places including private gardens.

**Community Hubs** – Bury’s Community Hubs support clinically extremely vulnerable people with things like food shopping and collecting prescriptions. Call 0161 253 5353, Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm.

**Mental health support** - Bury’s Getting Help Line is a confidential telephone service for people of all ages that are experiencing difficulties with their mental wellbeing. Call 0161 464 3679, Mon to Sat, 8am to 8pm or visit [www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing](http://www.bury.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing)

**Getting tested** - Find all the information you need on booking a test at [www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing](http://www.bury.gov.uk/coronavirus-testing) or call 0161 253 5515, Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm.

### **Vaccine rollout**

The Government has accepted the recommendation from regulators to approve Pfizer/BioNTech’s COVID-19 vaccine for use.

This will be the largest vaccination programme in our history, and as such its delivery will be in phases. People will be contacted when it’s the right time for them to come forward for vaccination.

### **Forthcoming Information Sessions:**

**Macular Degeneration Support Group** – virtual meeting on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 1.30pm. The meeting last 55 minutes and is via a telephone conference. All you need is a phone line. If you are interested in joining the group, please ring the Centre on 0161 763 7014 and details of how to join will be issued.

### **Let’s Look Forward:**

In the New Year, we will be arranging further ‘Zoom Workshops’ for you to familiarize yourself with the new virtual meetings. In addition, we are planning a monthly support group for families and carers, plus a Charles Bonnet Esme Umbrella support group. Gill Currie is looking to start the Eye Talk Support programme again, possibly virtually or one to one. Also, we are

working with Commnic8te, developing a project that will provide practical support for people with both hearing and sight loss – we'll keep you posted!

**A Message from Jean Spencer, Bury Pipeline:** I am sending this message with regard to our current position regarding Pipeline, the Talking Newspaper.

To those of you who received a copy of our weekly recording of the Bury Times, as you are aware, it has been absent since the end of March. We sincerely regret having to shut down, but we had no option. Never did I, nor the rest of the Committee and volunteers, anticipate that this shutdown would still be in place at Christmas!

Regrettably I have no good news. The Tottington Centre, is on limited opening, but no access to the public or use of the rooms, which of course, ours is one. Neither they nor we, can say when we will be able to start up again.

In the meantime, stay safe and keep "soldiering on". I'm not going anywhere, so if there is anything that you would like to say or anything I can help with, please give me a ring. 01706-824401.

Have a lovely Christmas. Jean

### **Events:**

**Monthly Prize Draw – '100 Club'.** Our November lucky winners were No.22, £99.90, No.278, £49.95 and No.49 £16.65. It's a great way to support the Society. 50% of the money raised is distributed in prizes and the other half contributes directly to provide services for local people living with sight loss. The draw takes place on the second Friday of every month, and to buy a number it costs just £1.00! Let us know if you would like an application pack.

**Just for Fun – Brainteaser.** Last month's solution: What letter comes next in the following sequence? D R M F S L T, it was the musical scale and the answer was D for Do.

**For this month, a Christmas Cracker.** What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in the chimney? Claus-trophobia!!

**'Take 5' Quiz.** Answers from last month:

1. Which artist painted The Poppy Field in 1873? **Claude Monet**

2. Which country is the world's largest producer of cheese? **USA**
3. What herb is used to make pesto? **Basil**
4. How many UK No.1's did Elvis Presley have in the 60's? **11**
5. Who scored the fastest goal in Premier League history after just 7.69 seconds? **Shane Long**

And of course, we have to have a Christmas themed quiz this month!

1. How many ghosts appear in *A Christmas Carol*?
2. In what year was the first Christmas card sent?
3. In which modern-day country was St Nicholas born?
4. What gifts did the three wise men bring for the baby Jesus?
5. Who invented the Christmas Cracker?

**Christmas closure:** Staff will be available in the Centre until 4pm, Wednesday 23 December 2020 and we will re-open for appointments from 10am Monday 4 January 2021.

Finally, this year has been such a challenge and I do hope you all have a very special Christmas, no matter how you are spending it. Our thanks for your continued support of the Society. A particular thanks goes to a mystery 'Friend of BBS' who has donated a significant amount of money to the Society a couple of weeks ago. We are so grateful as this donation will make such a difference at this challenging time. We have been experiencing problems with the Centre's roof and exterior walls and this money will be used to carry out much needed repairs ensuring that we are ready to welcome you all back when Covid allows. We have missed you during this year and we wanted to send you something to remind you that you are all in our thoughts. We have enclosed with this Bulletin a Christmas Tag wishing you a safe and peaceful Christmas from us all. It can be displayed on your tree and then used after Christmas as a bookmark if you desire or pass it on for use by someone else.

A very Happy Christmas and best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year. Let's hope we can all meet again soon in 2021. Stay Safe, Jill and all the Bury Blind Society Team.