



# **The Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind**

*“Supporting People with Sight Loss in Sheffield”*

## **NEWSLETTER – May 2011**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to our Spring newsletter, although with the weather we have had recently it feels more like summer – let’s hope the good weather continues for the various outdoor trips that we have planned over the next few months – see information for day trips and culture club further on in this newsletter.

We have just had 2 long weekend breaks for Easter and the Royal Wedding. Clients in the centre made a card to send best wishes to Prince William and Kate Middleton (now the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge) and many clients signed it before it was sent to Buckingham Palace.

### **NEWS AND NOTICES**

#### Summer Raffle

Unless you have requested otherwise, 2 books of tickets are enclosed for the Summer Raffle. Tickets are £2.50 per book – If you can sell them please put the money and the ticket counterfoils in the enclosed plastic bag and return to us by Thursday 30th June. If you or your family are able to sell extra

tickets please call us as we always need to sell more tickets. If you are not able to sell any tickets then don’t worry as we appreciate that not everybody is a salesman but please do **NOT** return unsold tickets to us as we do have to pay postage for the FREEPOST envelope if you use it.

Even just putting a stamp on the Freepost envelope will help us by saving us the postage costs.

#### Silver Surfers’ Week

Monday 16th to Friday 20th May

This is a national awareness week to promote the use of computers and the internet to older people. Have you ever wanted to find out how to use a computer to go on the internet or exchange e-mails with your grandchildren or other friends and family? If so, here’s an opportunity for you to find out more about how to do just that – age and sight loss is no barrier. Call in to see Darren or Kyle anytime between 10am and 2pm each day. They will show you what is involved and how somebody with limited sight can still use a computer. If you want to take it further after an initial visit then Darren is available for

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**Tel: 0114 272 2757**

you to book some “one to one” tuition with. If you aren’t able to call in that week, don’t worry, just give Darren a call on **0114 272 2757** to book an appointment at another time.

### Day Trips

This year we have a day trip arranged to Scarborough on Thursday 14th July.

Coaches leave at 8:30am prompt from the Pond Street Interchange and return at approximately 8pm. You will need to make your own transport arrangements to and from the Interchange. There is a non refundable booking fee of £2.50 per person, to be enclosed with your booking slip. These must be returned to us by Thursday 30th June.

Please note all the conditions detailed on the booking form enclosed with this newsletter. People going on the trip must be able to go around independently or bring a guide with them.

### Census 2011

You should by now have completed and returned your Census form. Just a reminder that there is a fine of £1,000 for non-completion of the form. If you haven’t completed it yet a collector from the Census Office will probably have called to see you and offered assistance to help you complete the form. If you have any concerns then please contact the Census Helpline on **0300 0201 101** or call us on **0114 272 2757**.

### Cairn Home Open Garden

On Sunday 3rd July there will be a Farmers Market on Selborne Road at Crosspool. Cairn Home’s garden will be open serving refreshments from 10am.

### Cairn Home

We currently have a vacancy at Cairn Home which is our residential care home for elderly people with a visual impairment.

Following our last inspection by Care Quality Commission the home was rated as “Excellent.” If you are considering residential care or this is something that you might require in the future and would like a look around then please contact the manager, Kevin McGrath, on **0114 266 1536**.

### 100th Birthdays Congratulations

Many congratulations to Frances Howe who celebrated her 100th birthday recently.

### Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)

For people with this hereditary eye condition there are two forthcoming events which might be of interest: -  
On Saturday 14th May 2011, 11am to 4pm at our Mappin Street Centre, the Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire branch of the RP Fighting Blindness (British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society) are holding their Annual General Meeting. This will include a talk by Mr Martin McKibbin, an Ophthalmic Consultant from St James Hospital in Leeds who specialises in medical retina, particularly vascular and inherited

disease of the retina. All are welcome – tea, coffee etc will be available but no lunch is provided so people attending may wish to bring a packed lunch with them.

On 6th July 2011, there will be an RP information session at our Mappin Centre from 2pm to 4pm. This has been organised jointly by SRSB, Royal Hallamshire Hospital Eye Department and Sheffield Social Services Sensory Impairment Team. This is an opportunity to find out more about the eye condition and meet other people with the same condition. Everybody welcome but to assist with planning it would be appreciated if you could let us know if you plan to attend by giving us a call on **0114 272 2757**.

Finally, there is an updated web site with a wealth of information for anybody with RP -

<http://www.brps.org.uk>

### Sight Village

This annual exhibition of specialist products and services for blind people, held in Birmingham each year, is always a popular event. This year we are organising a trip there on Wednesday 13th July 2011. To book your transport please telephone us on **0114 272 2757**.

### National Eye Health Week

Monday 13th June to Friday 17th June. Every day this week we will have an awareness stall in Orchard Square promoting good Eye Health, SRSB's services and also a street collection to help fund our services.

On Wednesday 15th June we will also be at the top of Fargate where we will be joined by various other organisations including Royal Hallamshire Hospital Eye Department and Social Services Sensory Impairment Team, again promoting the Eye Health message. If you are in town that week please call in and say hello. If you would like to help us man the stands then please give us a call on **0114 272 2757**.

### Bus pass renewal.

Just to remind you that if you are registered partially sighted or blind and want to renew a mobility (orange) bus pass please contact us. If you have a senior citizen (blue) bus pass and you are registered partially sighted or blind please contact us to arrange to have the pass changed to a mobility pass which allows travel at any time.

If you have a senior citizen pass which needs renewal then you should contact **01709 51 51 51** or the nearest Travel Information Centre.

### Audio Described Performances at Sheffield Theatres.

If you would like further information on audio described performances listed below or to make a booking, please contact the Ticket Office or call **0114 249 6000**.

More information can be found at <http://digbig.com/4mkda>

May

Tell Me on a Sunday  
Yes, Prime Minister

June

Hobson's Choice

July

Calendar Girls

Do bear in mind that our Culture Club is organising trips to some of these – see later in the newsletter for more details.

### Digital switchover

Just to remind you, TV is going digital all over the UK and the traditional analogue signal serving Yorkshire will change to digital this year in August.

Everyone needs to be ready for the switchover to ensure they can keep watching TV after this time. If you only watch TV via Sky or Virgin Cable then you should not be affected but if you get your TV signal through a TV aerial you may need to make some changes. Nearer the time you will see messages on your TV screen, leaflets will be distributed to all households, and elderly and disabled people should receive letters with more information.

For anybody that is concerned about the Digital Switchover there is a help scheme. The Switchover Help Scheme will help thousands of older and disabled people living in the Yorkshire TV region to convert one of their TVs to digital.

For technical advice and information about how to convert individual televisions to digital, please contact the Digital UK advice line on **08456 50 50 50** or visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)

For advice about the Switchover Help Scheme call **0800 40 85 900** or visit [www.helpscheme.co.uk](http://www.helpscheme.co.uk).

### **HOLIDAYS**

We have a number of holidays organised with Creative Travel.

#### Sandown – Isle of Wight

This will be Sunday 19th to Saturday 25th June, cost £398 per person inclusive of coach travel from/to Sheffield, accommodation on a half board basis and a number of excursions.

Please contact Olwen as soon as possible on **0114 272 2757** as places are quickly filling up.

#### Weston-super-Mare

We are running a similar holiday to Weston-super-Mare from 11th to 16th September. This will cost £359 per person to include coach travel, half board accommodation and excursions.

#### Early Xmas Holiday

From 14th to 18th November a Tinsel and Turkey holiday to Eastbourne. This will cost £257 per person to include coach travel, accommodation, festive food (half board), excursions and seasonal entertainment.

Please let us know soon if you would like to put your name down for either of these holidays.

### **COST CUTTING**

The government's cost cutting cannot have escaped your notice, given all the publicity it has generated recently.

Here at SRSB we are not directly affected to any great extent by these cuts and as stated previously we would like to reassure you that we have no plans to reduce the level of services we offer.

However, the cuts are likely to have an impact upon all government funded services such as health and social care so they could affect you. Sheffield City Council is having to make significant financial savings so if you are struggling to access services or your existing services are being reduced then please let us know. We cannot guarantee to rectify the problem but we may be able to assist.

### Talking Book Service

One very significant cost for the council is the provision of the Talking Book Service which we operate. This is currently funded by Sheffield City Council, currently at an annual cost of over £50,000.

We are doing all that we can to ensure that this service continues to be funded by the council so for this reason we are monitoring very closely the people who use this service which we are able to do from the books people borrow. If you are not using the service, we will have to cancel your Talking Book Library membership and arrange for return of the player which is issued on loan. This is in order to protect the service for the people who do use it.

## **CAMPAIGNS**

### The Hardest Hit – defending disabled people's futures

Are you worried about the potential impact of the Welfare Reform Bill and other elements of the Government's cuts package on your life and future?

Join thousands of disabled people, family and friends in London on 11 May for 'The hardest hit'- a march, lobby of Parliament and rally organised by a coalition of the UK's leading disabled people's organisations. Together we will be challenging MPs to vote against policies that will push many people further into poverty and isolation.

If you can't get to London, do make an appointment to visit your MP locally to make sure they understand the potential impacts of the cuts on blind and partially sighted people.

### Campaign success for disabled bus passengers

Over the last six months, hundreds of people made sure MPs understood the importance of good bus services for getting around safely and independently. They called on MPs to influence crucial legislation at the European level. On 15th February a fantastic win was achieved, when Members of the European Parliament approved new regulations at a vote in Strasbourg.

The new rights, which include the provision of accessible travel information and mandatory disability awareness training, will come into force in 2013, and importantly, will

apply to all bus services including local services.

At a local level we have recently heard that progress is being made in enabling real time information displays on bus stops to also be 'talking bus stops.' We will let you know as soon as more information becomes available.

### Lost for words

Across England, as local authorities draw up plans and consult with residents about how to achieve 28 per cent budget savings by 2014/15, campaigners have been demanding their clear right to accessible information about local service cutting plans.

Remind your council of their duties under the Equality Act by contacting them now – we can provide you with a template letter if you wish.

## **COMMUNITY ADVICE OFFICER NEWS**

### Disability Living Allowance

If you are registered blind and believe you may be entitled to the higher rate mobility component and have not been contacted by DWP yet please contact us for assistance.

### Employment Support Allowance (ESA)

There are also many changes being made to the way ESA and other benefits are assessed.

If you are contacted about benefits and need advice or help completing forms then please contact us as quickly as possible so that we can give you the most up to date advice.

### Self Directed Support

Sheffield City Council is in the process of implementing Self Direct Support which will provide anybody who requires care services with a sum of money which they can use to purchase the care. This will replace the current system where Social Services organise the care package for people.

If you are contacted by the council about this and require any assistance please do not hesitate to contact us on **0114 272 2757**.

## **CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES**

On 23rd February we had an Activity Afternoon. We did crafts including Mothers Day cards and gifts and we decorated buns and wow did we have some interesting creations!!

We had another Saturday morning Activity Day on 26th March where the theme was the Royal Wedding. We had some lovely art work which will be entered into the Children's Art Show. This month's Activity Day saw us potting plants and decorating pots. We also baked ginger bread men and did some more art work for the art show. Next month we are going to be making bird houses and feeders.

Details of all children's activities are sent out to parents regularly. For more information or to book places please contact Joanne Arden on **0114 272 2757**.

We have already planned an activity day for half term and trips to see Jungle Book and Horrible Histories at the Theatre.

### Little Sparklers

Our weekly Little Sparklers Group for toddlers continues to grow – we have recently had 4 new attendees including 3 babies under one year old.

We meet weekly every Wednesday at Mappin Street and once a month we visit the hydrotherapy pool at Norfolk Park School.

### Actionnaires

Sheffield Actionnaires group has now expanded. It is a free multi-sports club for visually impaired children. The main group for 8 to 16 year olds meets every Sunday at Westfield School Sports Centre between 10am and 1pm. There is now a group for 4 to 8 year olds which meets on the last Sunday of each month.

We continue to be actively involved with Sheffield Actionnaires linking in some of our Activity Days with their parents meetings.

### Boccia

We would like to congratulate 3 of our younger clients, Sophie Brown-Skinner age 13, Lucy Millar age 13 and Bailey Ashman age 12. All 3 took part in the National Boccia Championships at the English Institute for Sport last month. Sophie did exceptionally well coming second overall and proudly came home with a trophy. Boccia is a target ball sport belonging to the same family as pentanque and bowls. The children have learnt the sport whilst attending their weekly Actionnaires club.

### **CULTURE CLUB**

In February we visited the Lyceum Theatre for an excellent audio described performance of Blood Brothers. March saw us back there twice to see Corrie and Sweeney Todd. March also saw us visiting the beautiful Hodsock Priory and its snowdrop displays.

Unfortunately we had to reschedule our trip to the Royal Armouries as they had funding issues and had no tactile displays available at that time. We hastily arranged a trip to Wentworth Village and Garden Centre which everyone thoroughly enjoyed and some have even had a look at getting there again independently on public transport.

We have a number of trips coming up including more theatre trips, Doddington Hall, Tatton Park, Big Band in the Park and we are also looking at re-visiting Yorkshire Sculpture Park to see the new Jaume Plensa exhibition which encourages tactile and sensory exploration so would be great for our clients.

If you are interested in anything or wish to put your name on the Culture Club list (to ensure you don't miss out on future events) please contact us on **0114 272 2757**.

### **SRSB STAFF**

Jill Somerville, our Accounts Assistant who started her maternity leave at the end of January, had a baby boy, Jacob Boe, weighing 6lb 13oz on 23rd February 2011. Both mother and baby are doing well and

they are regular visitors to us. On one of their recent visits Jill purchased a pair of trendy baby sunglasses to protect Jacob's eyes from bright sunlight. Many people do not realise how just as exposure to UV light can cause sunburn and risk of skin cancer it can also cause damage to eyesight which may only manifest itself later in life.

### Student Links

We are pleased to continue our liaison with students who plan to work in fields which support our work. Their work with us is an important part of their overall training and provides us with valuable help. The students also leave SRSB with more awareness of the impact of sight loss which they will hopefully use in their working life wherever that may be.

Two Occupational Health students Alex Murphy and David Cox have just finished their placement with us. Not only have they found it enormously beneficial but also people at the centre have had the benefits of regular cooking groups and regular singing groups. Alex and David intend to keep supporting us by coming back each week to keep running their groups.

Rosie Wynne and Hayley Burns are both social work students and have settled in really well so you might be lucky enough to meet them if they are visiting in your area. They will continue their placements right into the summer.

### Recent Research at SRSB - Occupational Therapy InSight

Rachel Colley, a student from Sheffield Hallam, has completed a master's thesis which explored perspectives of acute sight loss. Based on occupational therapy theory, the research focused upon how day to day activities and the wellbeing of the 5 adult participants were impacted post sight loss. The research also examined whether the participants felt current services were satisfactory for their needs.

Findings suggest:

- that it is a journey to accept and harmonise the change in sight with demands of daily activities and the environment
- that positive thinking and wider support were key to their re-engagement in day to day activities and wellbeing
- that engaging in daily activities had pros and cons which should be examined
- that services can and should improve alongside the education of wider society.

The participants unique contributions highlight the need for services to develop a uniformed, empowering, client centred framework. This must have the flexibility to acknowledge and respond to their individual need, both short and long term.

Participants identified that there is: -

- the need for accessible information that can enable informed choice



- the need for independent living with specialist equipment at a lower cost
- the need for employment support
- the need for peer contact, and emotional support

alongside dignity and respect in what they identified as a major traumatic life event. Future research should examine the barriers to providing this.

A big thank you to all involved in the study and the occupational therapy students that completed subsequent projects at SRSB.

Editor's note: - If you need advice on the areas identified above then please get in touch with us so that we can arrange for a Community Advice Officer to contact you.

## **LEISURE EVENTS AND SPORT**

### Monthly Social Evenings

Every month, usually on the third Thursday, we hold a social evening which starts at 7.30pm and finishes at 9.30pm. Supper with entertainment is provided and transport is usually available. We now charge £3 for these evenings which makes a small contribution to the total cost.

### Music Group

Our music group is a bi-weekly experience that makes your eardrums tingle. We have several musicians who come along to play or sing mainly popular music. On the other hand we have music aficionados who appreciate the emotion within music and just come

to listen and/or discuss. If you would like any more information on the music group, please contact Kyle on **0114 272 2757**.

### Tai Chi

This has become a favourite with the people attending each week. It is a great way to exercise and still end up feeling very relaxed. The sessions are held every Friday from 2:30pm to 3:30pm at our Mappin Street Centre.

### Cricket

Yorkshire Visually Impaired Cricket are looking for new members, male or female. This is a good group and whether you are into cricket or not it's very good exercise, so why not come along and join in. Contact Peter Stancill for more information on **0114 267 7749**.

### SRSB Archers

The SRSB Archers had another very successful weekend at Lillishall in April when they attended the British Blind Sport national championships. The VI open class was won by Peter Hazelhurst with a score of 988, Les Culf came a close second with 944. The Barebow was won by Dennis Cook who scored 764. John Bower came first in the B1 class with 631 and Michelle Whalley came first in the ladies VI open with 1009.

It was a great weekend attended by six of our archers and their spotters. Our thanks must go to Peter Stancill for his continued support and for getting us there safe and sound with many thanks to SRSB for letting us have the Minibus and Peter's time.

Please extend our thanks to Steve and tell him we really appreciate the support SRSB gives us to attend this meeting each year.

Janet

### Shepshed Have-a-Go Day of Sport

Sunday 12th June 2011, 10am to 4pm, Shepshed Campus, Leicestershire

It's a superb opportunity for anyone of any age, with a disability, to come along with their family, friends or carers and have a go at a number of sporting activities and games.

There will be over 35 activities, including archery, martial arts, kayaking and pedal go-carts. There are also a number of fun games for people to enjoy and plenty of expertise on hand to help everyone get the most out of the day.

There is NO CHARGE, and we would stress that it is NON-COMPETITIVE DAY for people with disabilities to try out new activities or rediscover old skills.

Do come along. Meet people, enjoy yourself and have a go! If you are interested or want more information then please contact Peter Stancill **0114 267 7749**. SRSB will be arranging transport subject to sufficient people registering their interest to attend.

### Gardening Group

The Gardening Group urgently need visually impaired people and volunteers to join them. They have allotment space at Meersbrook and all help is welcome. Please contact

Dennis Cook on **0114 249 2134** for further information.

### Goalball

We are awaiting news of more goalball sessions being arranged. If this is of interest to you and you would like to find out more then please contact Joanne Ardern on **0114 267 7747**.

### **EXHIBITONS**

Please call in and visit our forthcoming exhibitions at our Mappin Street Centre. Whilst here you are also welcome to have a look around our centre, check out the Equipment Centre and get refreshments or lunch in our café. We look forward to seeing you.

### Enhanced Vision

Friday 27th May from 10am to 3pm Enhanced Vision will be exhibiting their range of electronic magnifiers (CCTVs) at our Mappin Street Centre.

### Optelec and Guide

Monday 6th June from 10am to 3pm Optelec will be exhibiting their range of electronic magnifiers (CCTVs) at our Mappin Street Centre, accompanied by Guide demonstrating their accessible computer software.

### Apple

Monday 20th June from 10am to 3pm is the provisional date when we hope Apple will be demonstrating their range of products which have accessibility built in as standard. Please note that we are still awaiting confirmation of this date so please

check with us nearer the time for confirmation.

## **SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES AT MAPPIN STREET**

### SRSB Library and Information Centre

Come visit our Library and Information Centre and find out what books we have to offer. Whether you prefer to listen to a romance novel or a mystery book we have a large selection on audio cassette and some on CD. Or, if there is a question, on any topic, that has been driving you crazy come and see if we can answer it for you. Kyle will be happy to help

### Computers and other Technology

If you are considering using computers or other technology related items such as accessible mobile phones, GPS navigation devices, video magnifiers etc then it might be worth you visiting our Technology Officer, Darren Furness. He will be able to show you the various options available and help you make an informed choice of the equipment or software most suited to your needs. Darren will also be able to train you with the equipment of your choice. To arrange a visit with Darren please telephone us on **0114 272 2757**.

### Health and Beauty Centre

We now have a chiropodist who is coming regularly to our centre, as well as regular visits from the hairdresser, and an aroma-therapist. Please contact Carol at Reception on **0114 272 2757** for more information.

### Equipment Centre

We continue to add new products to the Equipment Centre. The range of products is too large to list here so for further information please telephone us on **0114 267 7757** or call in any weekday between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

We also usually have a range of used equipment available at discounted prices so please ask when you contact us.

### Used Equipment for Sale

#### **Telesensory Aladdin Video Rainbow Magnifier.**

Excellent condition, hardly used, 7 years old. £250 ono.

Telephone **01709 589 773**.

**Optelec CleaReader** – We have an ex-demo model for sale. This scans and reads out documents, letters, bills, etc and has the option to save the text to a file on a USB pen drive to transfer documents to a computer. The list price of this is £1695 which we have reduced to £1200 including 12 months warranty. For a demonstration please contact Kyle Crossland in our Library at Mappin Street.

**Video Magnifiers** – We have some second hand units for sale with prices ranging from £100 upwards. Please call in to our Mappin Street Centre if you would like to try one of these.

**Portset Digital Media Centre, £400** (hardly used and was £859 new under 2 years ago). Stand alone system which includes: DAISY player

for listening to books, CD, audio and mp3 playback; you can record programs from Freeview and listen to digital television using audio description and audio programme guides. 40gb hard drive; spoken teletext; digital radio. No screen needed as it is a listening device. Just needs connecting to a digital aerial. In original box with print and CD instruction manuals. Buyer must collect from Wadsley Bridge. Phone Deborah on **0114 234 8149**. Or email [deborahmarks1968@gmail.com](mailto:deborahmarks1968@gmail.com)

### **Braille Notetaker: -**

Andrew Downs has a Braille notetaker for sale in good condition. This is an electronic Braille machine. He is asking £250 or nearest offer, as it has only been used a few times. One of the features of the Braille notetaker allows you to put appointments in the planner, add addresses in the address book, send emails and go on the internet and create documents.

If you are interested please contact Andrew direct on **0114 261 1082**, or mobile **0782 446 9154** or by email to [andrew.david2009@guidemail.co.uk](mailto:andrew.david2009@guidemail.co.uk)

**Other Equipment** – We also have various other smaller items of used equipment such as big button phones available at bargain prices. Please enquire in our Equipment Centre.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

A big thank you to all our volunteers who make such an enormous contribution to all of our services and our fundraising – Well Done! We couldn't do it without you. If you or anyone you know could help us then please contact Dyane Midgley on **0114 267 7742**.

### Volunteer Appreciation Evening

This is a wonderful time for us when we can say a well-deserved and huge thank you to our brilliant team of volunteers, for their continuous loyalty and support. We will be holding our special event this year during Volunteer Week which is the first week in June. All our volunteers will be invited for an Appreciation Evening on Tuesday 7th June from 5pm until 7pm.

## **CONCLUSION**

Just a reminder that this newsletter is available in large print, audio cassette tape or CD, braille or e-mail. If you would prefer to receive it in a different format to the way you have received this newsletter please let us know.

We hope that you have found this newsletter informative and enjoyable. Don't forget, we are **here to help** you. If we can't do something ourselves we almost certainly know somebody who can – Just give us a call.

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