



SRSB

Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind

INSIGHT

February 2012

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD

INTRODUCTION

A belated Happy New Year and welcome to our Winter newsletter. As usual there is plenty to tell you about but probably one of the best bits of news is about the replacement for the minibus that was stolen and written off by joyriders last August – See the enclosed Fundraising News to find out how we funded it but suffice to say here that the new minibus will be with us in March.

Also enclosed with this newsletter is the Diary of Events and our list of Support Groups.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Social Evenings

At our two Christmas socials more than 120 people attended. Many thanks to entertainers Debbie on Tuesday, and Dennis on Wednesday for wonderful entertainment. Thanks also to our special guests on Tuesday, Andrew Coombe, the High Sherriff and his wife Sue.

For the Wednesday evening the Deputy Lord Mayor should have been our special guest but unfortunately he was not able to attend due to health problems, something we only found out about at very short notice.

SRSB Christmas Raffle

Altogether you sold raffle tickets totalling £3,057 which was a few hundred pounds more than last year so well done. Thank you to everybody who helped us by selling tickets.

Christmas Cards

A big thank you for the kind cards which many of you sent both to staff and to volunteers. Some of you even enclosed a donation to SRSB so thank you for that – it is really good to know that so many of you appreciate our services.

NEWS AND NOTICES

The SRSB Experience

On Wednesday 18th April, 3pm to 5pm, you will have the opportunity to join us at Sheffield Town Hall to find out more about the work of **SRSB**. The Trustees of **SRSB** invite you to this event, which is being hosted by The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Councillor Sylvia Dunkley, and will look back at the work of **SRSB** over the last year and the challenges facing us in the future. You will have the opportunity to meet trustees, staff and volunteers. Our Annual General Meeting will also be incorporated into the event. Afternoon tea will be served.

Places at the event are restricted so please contact **SRSB** as soon as possible to book your place.

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 Florence Colley, Anne McDermott, Ivy Osborne, Edna Wainwright and Winifred Twigg who all celebrated their 100th birthdays recently. As somebody on our Facebook page recently posted "Must be something in the water in Sheffield or are they made of steel?"

2012 Calendars and Diaries

We still have in stock a few of our large print calendars, price £3.00, A6 pocket diaries, price £3.95 and A4 desk diaries, price £6.80.

These are available from our Equipment Centre or by post.

Bus Pass Renewal

Many mobility and senior citizen bus passes are now coming up for renewal.

People who are registered partially sighted or blind can contact us to arrange renewals in the South Yorkshire area. We can also arrange for senior citizen passes to be changed to mobility special passes. We must have the person's details and have seen their CVI (certificate of visual impairment).

People who are not registered visually impaired who have a mobility bus pass will need to contact Social Services at Howden House to obtain confirmation that they are entitled to a mobility pass. For more information you can call them on **0114 273 4897**.

Senior citizen passes can be renewed at the Travel Information Centres.

You will need proof of identity and proof of your address.

Note: Once a new pass is issued the previous one is void.

Bus Ticket Machines

First are introducing a new ticket machine on their buses with effect from 6th February so by the time you read this you may have already encountered one. We understand that anyone who is registered partially sighted or blind and has a mobility special pass will not be required to swipe the bus pass on the ticket machine and will not receive a ticket.

Stagecoach are also introducing a similar ticket machine and we are assured the same applies

If you are asked to swipe your card or take a ticket please calmly ask the driver for assistance, explaining that you have a sight problem. In this case please keep the ticket and try to get it to us so that we can pursue the issue.

If anybody has any feedback on the new ticket machine then please contact us at **SRSB** and we will pass the information on to First, Stagecoach and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTTE).

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>

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|----------|-------------------------------------|
| February | The Winter's Tale Legally Blonde |
| March | All the Fun of the Fair |
| April | An Inspector Calls |
| June | Birds of a Feather |

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

Personal Shopper

Debenhams are now offering personal shopper assistance with staff who have received specific training in meeting the needs of blind and partially sighted people. The personal shopper must be booked in advance by telephoning Debenhams customer services on **08445 61 61 61**. This service is available in all Debenhams's stores across the UK.

RP Support and Information Group

Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) is the name given to a group of hereditary eye disorders that affect the retina.

We had a successful second RP meeting in November. Mr Acharya came along and did a talk and stayed around to answer questions. Our next meeting is at 2pm on the 22nd of February and we are going to look at technology, Mr Acharya is coming along again as is Sue Drew from 'Fighting Blindness' the RP Society.

Charles Bonnet Support Group.

We are still meeting on the third Wednesday of each month. The meeting lasts for 2 hours from 11am to 1pm, then we enjoy a very enjoyable lunch.

CBS (Charles Bonnet Syndrome) is a problem from which some VIPs (Visually Impaired People) suffer. We see things which are not there. These visions are very clear to us and can be very funny or very frightening. We find the only way to deal with them is to talk about them and listen to other people's visions.

Over the years we have had a number of people who have learned to cope with them, so no longer need to join us. However other people still join us.

When we first met hardly any members of the medical profession had even heard of CBS. Now the word is getting around. I went to Halifax eye department and all the staff to whom I spoke had not only heard of it, but had also heard of us. If you know of anyone who has this problem, please ask them to contact **SRSB**. If you wish to speak to me, please, ring my phone number, **0114 269 2650**. If you want to come to a meeting, please come and join us. You will be made very welcome. We are a 'Happy Group' and have quite a few laughs. Cheerio. June Lloyd

Sheffield Star – Entertainment Info

The Star is now regularly featuring information about accessible films and theatre.

The information is published in the What's On section every Friday, and includes details of audio described performances as well as those which are captioned or signed. Many thanks to Phillip Timms who has done so much work getting the Star to run this for a trial period. We would encourage

you to contact the Star to tell them how much you appreciate the service. You can contact them by email to **whats.on@sheffieldnewspapers.co.uk** or by writing to The Star, Editor Jeremy Clifford, York Street, Sheffield, S1 1PU

If you have email **SRSB** can also send you weekly info about what films are on at local cinemas for the following week with details of which performances are audio described. Please email **info@srsb.org.uk** to be added to our email list.

Telephone Scams

We have some reports from clients of telephone scams so please be careful if you are telephoned by somebody you are not expecting a call from. If you are asked to give your name, address, post code, date of birth or bank details be extremely suspicious and just put the phone down as any genuine caller should already know who they are calling. The latest scams reported to us are as follows: -

You are called by somebody (usually with a foreign accent) saying that you are due a refund from the government or your bank but they then want to know your name, address, date of birth and bank details. Just put the phone down.

The other scam says they are calling about internet security and they have noticed that you have viruses etc on your computer. They can sort the problem out for you but need to access your computer remotely. Again put the phone down.

In both cases when you put the phone down they may call you back and sound very convincing, being offended that you have put the phone down on them. Please do not be taken in and put the phone down again. If you do give them your bank details or access to your computer it is very likely that you will find money being removed from your bank account so please be very careful.

It is possible to trace malicious calls by dialling 1477 after you have put the phone down. Any information you get from this you should pass on to the police and/or trading standards.

Note: The 1477 service is available if your telephone service is with BT or with TalkTalk (it may be possible with some other providers but you would need to check with them).

ACTIVITIES CENTRE

Our Activities Centre operates every day, Monday to Friday with people arriving from 10am onwards, going home again at 2:30pm. There are a range of activities and occasional short outings as well as a cooked lunch available. We may be able to offer minibus transport for a door to door service. This is an opportunity to get out of the house one day per week and make some new friends.

We currently have vacancies on some days. If anyone is interested in attending to find out if it would be suitable for you then please contact Olwen at **SRSB**.

CAMPAIGNS

The Hardest Hit – defending disabled people's futures

Welfare reforms are still being decided in Parliament. Campaigns organised by 'The Hardest Hit' group have helped to secure amendments in the House of Lords and some of these may be accepted when reforms continue to be debated in the Commons.

For on-going information about the campaign see www.hardesthit.org.uk.

Some of the changes which are going through are described below in the section on Benefits. If you have individual concerns about any benefits then please contact one of our Community Advice Officers

COMMUNITY ADVICE OFFICER NEWS

Council Tax – Possible Reduction

Just a mention about something that can easily be overlooked in relation to Council Tax if there is a carer in a household.

If the carer: -

- provides care for at least 35 hours a week on average,
- is resident in the same dwelling as the person cared for,
- is not the parent of the person cared for (if the child is under 18) and is not the partner of the person cared for,

and cares for a person who is entitled to one of the following:

- the highest rate Disability Living Allowance care component,

- the higher rate of Attendance Allowance
- or constant attendance allowance, then the carer will be disregarded when calculating Council Tax Liability. As Council Tax is calculated based upon two adults sharing a property, there is potential to have a 25% or even a 50% reduction in a bill.

Please contact **SRSB** if you would like to discuss the above further, even if there are more than two people in the household, as it can be a little complex and people may be missing out on a reduction!

HOLIDAYS, TRIPS AND OUTINGS

Creative Travel

We regularly have holidays organised with Creative Travel. We are in the process of planning what holidays to organise this year through Creative Travel. They have made suggestions of trips to Llandudno or St Anne's in the Lake District. Possibilities range from 4 to 6 nights, with prices ranging between £310 and £429.

We would like feedback on what people would prefer. If you are interested in the holidays then please contact Olwen at **SRSB** to discuss the options.

Traveleyes

Traveleyes specialise in holidays for visually impaired people all over the world (Europe, India, South America amongst other places). They can organise guides as well as all travel arrangements.

For full details you can contact them on: **08448 040 221**

at: PO Box 511, Leeds. LS5 3JT or www.traveleyes-international.com

Day Trip

Details of this year's day trip will be included in our next newsletter, due out in May.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

In October we held a Halloween Party, we had an excellent turn out, everyone got dressed up even some of the parents!!

We had a drama/craft activity day in December. The children really enjoyed the drama workshop and are looking forward to another session later this month.

We had our Little Sparklers Christmas Party on the 14th December at our Mappin Street Centre. Father Christmas came along and everyone had a lovely time including a couple of new faces. Our big party was held again at Monkey Bizness. We had over 80 children come along!! Again we had Father Christmas who was brilliant. We've already had such good feedback about the night.

We also had our annual trip to the Sheffield Lyceum Panto. Again we had a few new faces and it was nice to see some of the Little Sparklers coming along.

Finally, in January we took a very full coach up to West Yorkshire Playhouse for Action for Blind's annual event, a fantastic performance of the musical Annie. It was a brilliant day with lunch, a touch tour and a brilliant audio description.

We have a theatre trip booked to see Swallows and Amazons and an Activity Day planned for later this year.

Little Sparklers

Our weekly Little Sparklers Group for toddlers continues to grow.

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

Coming up over the next few weeks is a music day, baby massage session and a trip to the Sensory Rooms at Concord Sports Centre.

Actionnaires

Sheffield Actionnaires continues to be popular. 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.

Each session includes 2hrs 'dry' sport/activity followed by swimming. Activities over the next few weeks include bowling, yoga, martial arts and street dance.

SRSB staff are actively involved with Sheffield Actionnaires linking in some of our Activity Days with their parents' meetings.

Further information from Joanne Ardern at **SRSB**.

CULTURE CLUB

We had a few trips to the theatre during the last few months of 2012. In October we went to see the brilliant Othello, The Everly Pregnant Brothers

and Alan Ayckbourn's Season's Greetings.

At the end of October we visited The Lowry Gallery at Salford Quays.

We had two further trips to the theatre in November to see End of the Rainbow and Buddy, and in December we saw the musical Company.

In January we were back at the Lyceum to see King and I and this month it's Legally Blonde.

We have a number of theatre trips planned for the first few months of 2012. We also have already booked in a number of trips for the year including the Hepworth Gallery Wakefield, The National War Memorial at Lichfield, Quarry Bank Mill, Tatton Park, Harewood House and a return trip to Haworth.

If you are interested in any of these events or wish to put your name on the Culture Club mailing list to ensure you don't miss out on future events please contact us at **SRSB**.

STAFF

Jill Somerville, our Accounts Assistant who was on maternity leave for much of 2011 has decided not to return to work. We wish her well for the future. David Ashmore who was recruited as temporary cover has taken the role on a permanent basis.

In the Equipment Centre we are unfortunately having a full change of staff. Sylvia Crossland who has been off work due to ill health for a few months is not able to return to work and Nicky Gardner is giving up work to look after her father and to do other

things. Nicky has been with us since 1993 so, a big 'Thank you' Nicky for all that you have done for so many clients over the years.

We wish to thank Jill, Nicky and Sylvia and especially to wish them all the very best for the future.

We are currently recruiting for the Equipment Centre with details available in the Jobs section of our web site **www.srsb.org.uk** or by calling SRSB for an application pack.

STUDENT LINKS

SRSB always welcomes students as they are of great benefit to us as well as taking with them a much deeper understanding of the issues affecting visually impaired people.

We are very fortunate in having five students with us at present.

Recently three medical students started their placement with us for six weeks. They are Chu-Hai Wong, Ben Lee and Toby Ma. Already they are making themselves popular with people in the centre and staff as well as those people they telephone and visit at home.

Chu said 'Thank you, as I've felt very welcomed by clients, staff and volunteers alike. You've helped me to find my feet in the busy setting of **SRSB**.'

Two Occupational Therapy students, Kirsty Grant and Charlee Wise have also started their placements and hope to broaden the range of activities available in the Activities centre. We will let you know how they get on in future newsletters.

Listening to the City

A university design student Linda Grasso has been studying the way in which visually impaired people perceive the world. She writes

Jean Paul Sartre, the French writer says, "The body is what I immediately am... I am body."

We use our bodies to navigate through the city. Sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch are our senses, which we use to perceive the city. Usually there is a ranking of sight above sound, the eye above the ear and also above all of the other senses, which the sociologist Anthony Synnott has called 'ocularcentrism'.

We live in a very visually orientated society. The sense of sight is very powerful, strict and heavy. Sometimes it overpowers all of our other senses. It is the sense in which we trust, as Aristotle wrote in the first sentence of his Metaphysics: "Of all the senses, trust only the sense of sight."

But is this really true? As an urban designer I keep on asking myself, is the predominance of visuality the right way of analysing and talking about cities and their networks? For a sound project at the University of Sheffield I met Julie and Jane, two volunteers from the Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind, who helped me to listen to the city in a very detailed way. I came to the conclusion that every city and every environment has got specific sounds, and therefore its own identity distinct from its outward appearance.

The following is a description of my visit to the Devonshire Cat pub based

on the sounds I heard: As soon as I open the door and start walking through the pub, there are different levels of sounds from the people inside. Various groups of voices surround me like individual sound bubbles. By the echo-effect from the noise of the crowd you can sense that this is a large pub. I am approaching the bar. The clink of cash and sound of a drink being poured is getting louder. A lot of people are talking to each other around me. While I am ordering my drink the lady at the bar is creating a tapping sound with her shoes on the pavement. I can hear the noise of fridge doors being opened and closed, while bottles are clanging. Again the clink of cash. I am taking a seat next to the window. It is echoing the sounds from the pub towards me. Laughing, talking and shouting surrounds me. It is getting busier.

When I asked Julie what makes the sound of Sheffield different to any other city, she said: "I can only think of one sound that distinguishes Sheffield from other cities and that is the rumbling of the Supertram, as trams in other cities don't sound like that – not the Manchester Metro, or the trams in Berlin or Amsterdam or other European cities that I can remember. Sheffield ones are definitely a bit different. You can hear them from inside the cathedral or in our Church on Infirmary road, and although they aren't particularly noisy or rattley – they make quite a smooth sound – they are very distinctive.

Linda Cristina Grasso (Hamburg, Germany)

LEISURE EVENTS AND SPORT

Monthly Social Evenings

Every month, usually on the third Thursday from 7:30pm to 9:30pm with entertainment and supper provided. Transport is usually available. To book your place please contact Olwen at **SRSB**. There is a charge of £3.50 per person plus £1.50 if we provide transport.

What's New?

We are setting up a sports activity club for the over 16's. We've had a number of requests from people looking to try various sports which are a bit more challenging than the mainstream sports available at the moment.

This will initially operate on a bi-monthly basis. Activities we have in mind so far include wall climbing, kayaking, paint balling, snowboarding and scuba diving. We hope that this type of 'taster' event will give people the confidence to access these activities independently if they wish to pursue them further.

Our first session is in February when we'll be wall climbing at The Edge, John Street, Sheffield, £13.00 per person. Please call Joanne Ardern at **SRSB** for more details.

Goalball

South Yorkshire goalball team are still looking to recruit some more players. The sessions are open to any players, new or experienced, visually impaired or sighted, aged 14 and over.

For further information please contact Kyle Crossland at **SRSB**.

Gardening Group

The Gardening Group urgently need visually impaired people 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.

EXHIBITONS

Please call in and visit the forthcoming exhibition at **SRSB**. 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.

Visual Eyes

Visual Eyes will be holding a demo day on 28th February, from 10am to 3pm, displaying a wide range of video magnifiers and other hi-tec solutions. Please see the flyer enclosed with this newsletter for full details of their wide range of products.

COMPUTER TRAINING

The Limbrick Centre

The Limbrick computer course for visually impaired people is looking for new participants. At this time of cutbacks we are happy to say that funds keep being found to offer this course to the visually impaired people of Sheffield.

To take part in these sessions you must be able to see a 17 inch computer screen as there are no specialist packages available, however the display has been optimised for best contrast and accessibility. Jane the tutor has a few years' experience now in running this

course and is keen to find some new students.

If you are interested for a course that starts after Easter please contact Alan Thorpe on **0114 220 7007** for an initial assessment of your needs.

Limbrick Centre – User feedback

Graham who has attended the course has written the following:

A group of partially sighted people have been attending a computer class at the Limbrick Centre, Hillsborough.

Jane is our excellent teacher, ably assisted by Paul a volunteer. They create a relaxed and very friendly atmosphere in which to learn and Paul has also brought us samples of his excellent baking!

People are working at different skill levels and studying different aspects of computing and Jayne manages this very skilfully. Some people are first time beginners with no computer knowledge and others are attending for their 3rd year. When I had my first lesson in September last year. I already had a few computer skills, so I finished the ten week introductory course early and Jayne provided me with other interesting things to do. I am looking forward to January when we all meet again.

So I would urge any one who is wanting to learn new skills or even begin to use a computer with a mild visual impairment to book a place on the next course that is due to start after Easter.

Computer Training at SRSB

For people who find it easier to attend our Mappin Street Centre for computer training or for those who need additional magnification or speech packages to enable them to use a computer then please contact **SRSB**.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES AT SRSB MAPPIN STREET CENTRE

SRSB Library and Information Centre

Just a reminder that we have a library well stocked with audio books as well as a few braille or large print books for loan. Some of the audio books are available on CD but the majority are still on cassette tape although we are trying to change over to CD as quickly as we can. If you have any audio books on CD that you don't need any more we would be very grateful for any donations.

Please contact Kyle at **SRSB**

Health and Beauty Centre

Just a reminder that we have a chiropodist, hairdresser and others who offer services in our Health and Beauty Centre. Please contact Carol on Reception at **SRSB** for more information or to make a booking.

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 or call in any weekday between 8:30am and 4:30pm.

As you will have read earlier in the newsletter we are currently recruiting for new staff in our Equipment Centre

but until this is concluded we will not be fully staffed so would ask for your patience when visiting us. If you want to be certain that somebody will be available to attend to you then please telephone us first to book an appointment.

Used Equipment for Sale

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.

Video Magnifiers (CCTV's)

We have various video magnifiers for sale ranging in price from £150 to £750. If you are not sure whether you would make full use of one of these magnifiers then we can arrange for free loan equipment on a trial basis.

Floor Standing Daylight Lamp

D21078-01 Mains operated Floor Standing Daylight Lamp in antique brass. It is fully height adjustable with 20w low heat energy saving bulb. It has a 130mm magnifier lens with 1.75 magnification with a cover and an adjustable clamp to hold your own magnifier / reading material etc. It has an organiser tray for holding e.g. craft / sewing materials. The bulb reduces glare and improves contrast, allowing you to read and write for longer. It is in excellent condition and would cost nearly £100 new. Price for sale is £45, Chapeltown area. If you are interested please contact Mr or Mrs Parsons on **0114 246 6899** or

07742 275466.

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 £950 including 12 months warranty. For a demonstration please contact Kyle Crossland in our Library.

If anybody thinks that this may be suitable we may be able to arrange a short loan period if you want to try one at home before deciding whether to purchase one.

For Sale on behalf of client.

TV Max colour – hand held video magnifier that connects to a TV. 18 months old, hardly used. Cost new £129 for sale £75. Demo available at our Mappin Street Centre.

NEWSLETTER

We would be delighted to hear from you with articles for inclusion in our newsletter or ideas for things that we could cover in future editions. Please contact us at **SRSB** by either telephone or e-mail.

CONCLUSION

Don't forget, we are here to help you. If we can't do something ourselves we almost certainly know somebody who can – Just contact us at **SRSB, Making a Difference in Sheffield**

