



# **SRSB**

**Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind**

# **INSIGHT**

## **SPRING 2016**

**MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD**

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2016. We look forward to another busy year with all our new staff and new services being developed.

### Christmas Lunches and Social Evening

Our dining room was full to bursting for our Christmas Social with over 80 people attending. We had a great evening with music provided by our dear friend Dennis. He soon got everyone up dancing and we thank him for an evening of fabulous entertainment. We were delighted to welcome our special guest Cllr Talib Hussain the 119th Lord Mayor of Sheffield. He took time out to talk to all the clients and showed them his Chain of Office, he really enjoyed himself.

Over 340 people joined us for our Christmas lunches; that's some turkey! We would like to say a big thank you to all staff and volunteers who helped them to run so smoothly. Pupils from Nether Green Primary school entertained us one day, they were excellent, a pleasure to listen to, they were so excited because they were going back on the bus in school time. Thanks also to our very own Mappin Street Singers, Bill Skipworth and the volunteers choir who provided entertainment on the other days. Not forgetting special guests The Master and Mistress Cutler, Craig and Karen McKay, and The High Sheriff, John Holt who all joined in with the carol singing.

### SRSB Christmas Raffle

We raised a fantastic £2311.50 from the sale of our Christmas raffle tickets

this year. We didn't quite match last year's sales so the challenge is on for next year! Thank you to everybody who helped us by selling tickets and also to those people who included a donation for **SRSB** it is very much appreciated.

### 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

### Cairn Home

**SRSB** owns and operates Cairn Home at Crosspool. It is a residential care home which specialises in care for elderly people with a visual impairment. Currently there is a vacancy at Cairn Home for a permanent resident and we also have a room reserved for respite care.

If you are considering permanent residential care in the future then a stay in the respite room at Cairn Home is a good way of seeing whether you think you would be happy living there. Permanent vacancies do occur from time to time so it is better if your name is on the waiting list, which usually is not too long.

If this is something that you are interested in finding out more about then please contact Kevin McGrath,

Manager at Cairn Home for further information.

**Tel: 0114 266 1536.**

### **Day at the Races**

Sunday 17th April, time to be advised  
Wetherby Racecourse.

This is Wetherby Races Family Day which includes a Mascot Race (our own mascot, Ellie, is entered for this race!)

We have negotiated discounted admission tickets and the total cost per person, including coach and admission to the paddock area is £18 per person, Children under 16 accompanied by a parent £10.

We hope you will be able to join us on what promises to be a fun day out, especially supporting our mascot Ellie.

We are planning to leave Sheffield from a central pick up point at 10am and with the last race at 5pm we would expect to be back in Sheffield by 7pm

Please give us a call to book your place, payment by cash, cheque or card required at time of booking.

### **Mappin Writers**

The Writers' Group

I have a few interests that keep me sane  
Music, reading, and watching sport  
It's very hard living on your own  
So much time to spend deep in thought.

One outlet that I've always loved  
Is composing poetry and prose,  
I enjoy writing stories be they crime or romance,

When I'm inspired anything goes!  
I've always written over many years,  
Inspired by a poet I admire

Now I've joined this writing group  
It's really kindled my desire  
To share with others my words and thoughts  
I've hitherto kept to myself,  
I have quite a few stories and a book of poems,  
They're just gathering dust on a shelf!  
Sharing our talents is good for us all,  
No-one judges or scorns what we write,  
My Fridays are now so much fun  
Hearing everyone's work, a delight!  
We have a chat, a drink and a meal,  
The morning is gone in quick time  
I'm so very glad I've joined this group  
It has inspired me to compose this rhyme!

Kay Wood      January 2016

### **Disabled Access Day – Kelham Island Museum – 12th March 2016**

Kelham Island Museum will open for free on 12th March between 10am and 4:45pm. There will be special activities for people with disabilities of all ages.

There will be touch tours of the Museum with opportunity to use the TacMap Plan of the museum, along with Penfriend which gives audio description of the exhibits.

There will be many other activities including stories for children, a tour of the museum with sign language guidance and much more.

For more information see  
<http://digbig.com/5bmmxs>  
or telephone: **0114 272 2106**

### **Blind and running to extremes**

Simon Wheatcroft is a blind ultra marathon runner, who has run in

several marathons to raise money for **SRSB**.

In 2014, Simon ran from Boston to New York before completing the New York Marathon.

Simon has now won the chance to achieve another extreme ambition.

After hundreds of entries, IG and Harlequins shortlisted three worthy finalists and gave supporters the chance to decide who would achieve their extraordinary. Combining online and text votes received at Big Game 8, Simon was announced as the winner. Through the help and support of IG and Harlequins, Simon will test the boundaries of what is humanly possible and have the chance to become the first ever blind person to run solo the 4 Deserts Marathon in Namibia in May this year.

More info at <http://digbig.com/5bmmxt>

### **Blind brothers standing in election**

Two brothers Kyle and Kurtis Crossland are standing in the forthcoming council elections. Both were registered blind when they were young children. We are pleased to see young people taking an interest in the democratic process and hope their interest will encourage others, as well as drawing attention to issues affecting people with visual impairments

We congratulate them both on their selection and wish them both well.

### **RNIB Talking Books**

RNIB Talking Books is celebrating its 80th birthday by making the service completely free for all blind and partially sighted children and adults in

the UK. Every year RNIB Talking Books provides more than 1 million audiobooks to people with sight loss. There are over 23,000 titles to choose from so there will be something for everyone. You can choose to receive your books on DAISY CD (one book per disc) or USB stick (three books per stick) depending on your personal taste. Talking Books are also available by digital download, as RNIB also have a range of titles to buy from their online shop.

For more information you can contact RNIB direct on **0303 123 9999**

If you want to discuss the differences between RNIB and Calibre's talking book services then please contact your Community Advice Officer at **SRSB**.

### **RP Support Group**

Our last meeting was the beginning of December when we had a very interesting talk on technology from one of our clients Mark Skelton. Everyone was fascinated and we are very keen to get Mark into our centre for a Technology Day sometime later in the year. Our next meeting is planned for March. We will let people who have expressed interest know the date as soon as it is finalised with staff from the Eye Department. If you've not been before then please let us know if you want to be added to the RP list.

### **Welfare Benefits**

#### Benefits changes

There have been many changes to existing benefits and more are anticipated in the future so if you have any queries, or particularly if you have

any forms that require completion, please do not hesitate to contact us so that we can arrange for a Community Advice Officer to speak with you. Personal Independence Payment is gradually replacing Disability Living Allowance for people born after 8th April 1948. This has already started and people are being contacted by the DWP; over the coming months everyone will gradually be transferred to the new benefit. You will be contacted by the DWP and given instructions on what you need to do and the process involved. We would strongly urge you to contact us before responding to any correspondence.

### **Charles Bonnet Syndrome**

Representatives of **SRSB** were invited to the launch of a new website for a campaign group for everyone working towards a greater awareness of Charles Bonnet Syndrome. The website is called Esme's Umbrella and it was started by Judith Potts, whose mother Esme, had Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

Judith Potts was at the launch of the website which took place at the House of Commons along with Bessie Goddard who is the person at **SRSB** who runs the Charles Bonnet Syndrome support group at our Mappin Street Centre. As far as we know this is the only support group in the country for the condition at the time of writing this article. They were joined at the launch by Dominic Ffytche (clinical advisor to the group) and Dr Sarah Wollaston MP.

We are delighted that this website has been set up and look forward to working with the group on further raising awareness of Charles Bonnet Syndrome.

<http://digbig.com/5bmmgg>

### **Helpline for older adults**

A new helpline for older adults was launched UK wide before Christmas last year.

It's called Silverline and the number is : **0800 470 80 90.**

Its aim is to provide free confidential information, friendship and advice to older people 24/7 every day of the year.

### **Drop in sessions**

We hold a regular drop in session every Monday. One of our Community Advice Officers is available from 9:30am to 4pm. This has proved popular most Mondays and has enabled people to be seen more quickly than if they had to wait for an appointment. So if you have any queries, problems regarding benefits, housing, support, equipment etc. or just want to have a look around our Centre, then feel free to pop in or give us a ring to have a chat.

Please contact Joanne at **SRSB** for further information.

### **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 on: - **0114 249 6000.**

More information can be found at <http://digbig.com/5bgjet> although this may be temporarily unavailable at times during the web page redesign.

February

Hairspray  
A Raisin in the Sun  
King Charles III  
Waiting for Godot  
The 39 Steps

March

Gangsta Granny  
Swan Lake

April

Single Spies

June

Flowers for Mrs Harris  
The Government Inspector

July

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang  
Contractions  
A Dream

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

It is also encouraging that more performances at the studio in the Crucible are being audio described at the moment.

### **Chesterfield Theatres Access Group**

The aim of this welcoming group is to improve accessibility at Chesterfield Theatres by gathering feedback from the general public, in the form of discussion. The next meeting is on Wednesday 17 February at 5.30pm in the Pomegranate Theatre Bar.

There will also be an audio described performance of Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap on Saturday 12 Mar, 3pm

Contact the Chesterfield Theatres Arts Officer

carole.copeland@chesterfield.gov.uk  
or for the box office call

**01246 345 222.**

### **Tea Dance**

Saturday 20th February  
11:30am to 2pm at **SRSB**

Back by popular demand! This will be our third Teadance in conjunction with the University of Sheffield. Everyone who has attended before had a wonderful time dancing with the volunteers from Volunteering Sheffield. The volunteers are given Visual Impairment Awareness Training before the event and are so enthusiastic to give our guests a great time! When we have a breather, students who are part of different societies at the University, put on performances of music and dance. The Ballroom Dance Society will be there to lead the dances. We also provide refreshments and sandwiches at lunchtime too.

This event is **FREE** and is available exclusively for **SRSB** clients and their guests, but please let us know if you would like to come so that there will be enough sandwiches for everyone!

### **Juiced Music Night – for all 18+ years young**

Once again Kyle is arranging an evening of live music. We will meet on the 29th of February and the 1st of April. Kyle will let people know a week before these dates where exactly we will be going as it depends what's on. If you have suggestions or if you are interested in coming along then please contact Kyle at **SRSB**

## **Viva Voce**

Dear **SRSB**

My name is Abbi Hennell, I am a student at the University of York and have set up a free online audio magazine for young visually impaired people. The magazine is part of a volunteering project called Viva Voce (word of mouth). It is written, recorded and produced by University of York students.

We are very keen for this to have a wide impact and have started off with a smaller edition to get feedback and are hoping to do more in our Spring edition in March. We also have funding to expand into CD format if the magazine is popular but have had to start on an online platform to gauge interest.

Website: [vivavocemagazine.co.uk](http://vivavocemagazine.co.uk)

Email: [vivavoce@yusu.org](mailto:vivavoce@yusu.org)

Note that there were a few technical problems with the Viva Voce website when it was launched in the autumn. As far as we are aware these have been resolved. Please do let them have feedback, and let us know if you have difficulty contacting them.

## **City Taxis**

City Taxis have told us they have improved their systems so they can store customers' details. They obviously store address, mobile number and landline. Now they can also add details to a listing to include the fact that a customer has a visual impairment and uses a guide dog etc. in order to prevent the same details being discussed every time a taxi is ordered.

You can reach City Taxis on **0114 239 3939**.

## **Comic Book Writing Competition**

Have you ever fancied writing for a comic book? We have been asked to share this information about a writing competition for teens and adults who are blind or visually impaired. The last day for submissions is March 6th 2016. To find out more visit the Comics Empower website at: - <http://digbig.com/5bmmtm>. Good luck!

## **EYECAN PROJECT UPDATE**

### **Braille**

Do you read braille?

In April we are looking at holding a braille group meeting. Braille groups are held in locations around the country such as London, Reading and Bristol. They are looking to start a northern group and they are thinking of Manchester and Sheffield.

I have been tasked with asking the braille community if anyone would like to attend a meeting, where the topic will be braille.

This can include braille codes, braille displays and the availability of braille. It could also talk about the frequency of meetings.

If you would be interested in receiving more details give Alan Thorpe a call.

### **Braille Classes**

While talking about braille, I have had a small number of enquiries about braille classes. If you would like to learn braille give Alan a call to see how we can help.

## **Computer Training**

A reminder of a computer class that takes place in Hillsborough, where those people who have enough sight to read the print version of this newsletter can attend a course that is for the visually impaired. Please contact Alan Thorpe for more information.

## **Pottery Class**

We have got some people interested in the Pottery classes we are hoping to arrange, but for the classes to go ahead we need two or three more people to agree to attend?

However these classes do have a cost and if we are not able to find any more people we may have to withdraw the classes due to the cost.

Once again call Alan Thorpe to talk the options over.

For further information on Braille computer training or pottery class please call Alan on **0114 220 7007** or **07961 406739** or email [Alan@eyecan.org.uk](mailto:Alan@eyecan.org.uk)

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

### **100th Birthday Congratulations**

Many congratulations to Laura Mower, Edith Letch, Kathleen Cuttall, and Frank Burgin who celebrated their 100th birthdays recently.

## **CAMPAIGNS & ISSUES**

### **Tactile Paving Consultation**

Last November we held a successful consultation about the Department of Transport proposals for the revised guidance on the use of tactile paving.

We submitted our responses after a detailed and thorough discussion. These are currently being considered along with all other submissions. We will let you know when we hear any more.

## **Bus Timetables**

There have been some minor changes to bus timetables recently with a few more due in early February.

If you need to find out details about the changes please ring Traveline on **01709 51 51 51**.

## **Tram Train rail works**

Essential weekend engineering works to prepare Sheffield's tramlines for Tram Train will continue over the next few months putting the innovative UK pilot scheme on track to run between Sheffield and Rotherham from 2017.

Revised timetables and services are planned to operate on the Yellow and Purple Supertram Routes on 13, 14, 27 and 28 February 2016. Blue Route Supertram services between Malin Bridge and Halfway are unaffected.

Dedicated YX, Y1 and L1 bus services will replace trams during the works. Replacement bus service timetables and information can be found online at [supertram.com](http://supertram.com) and [travelsouthyorkshire.com](http://travelsouthyorkshire.com); on Twitter @SCSupertram and @TSYalerts; via Traveline on **01709 51 51 51**; and on posters at tram stops.

Passengers in South Yorkshire will be the first in the country to benefit from pioneering Tram Trains that will provide a direct service from Sheffield city centre to Rotherham Central and



Parkgate, travelling on street tramlines and the national rail network.

### **Bus Pass Orange Wallets**

Orange Wallets are now being sent out with new and renewed visually impaired bus passes. If you haven't received an orange wallet you can request one by ringing **0114 221 1419**.

### **STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

We are pleased to say that we have now filled the vacancies we had advertised and the staff who started at the end of last year are settling in and becoming invaluable members of the increasingly vibrant **SRSB** team. We look forward to a thriving future and to exciting new developments.

The newest members of staff are:-

**Mobile Information Officer** - Julie Turnbull started on 2nd November 2015.

**Finance Manager** – Angela Argenzio started with us on 7th December 2015.

**Activities Centre Manager** – David Cox started with us on 1st December 2015.

**Community Engagement Officer** – Liz Bowman also started on 1st December 2015.

**Volunteer Co-ordinator** – Debra Smith started at **SRSB** on 21st December 2015.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

#### **MIU and Community Engagement Activity**

The MIU and Community Engagement Team, with invaluable support from their enthusiastic and knowledgeable VIP volunteers, have been out and

about over the winter months attending a range of events and venues across Sheffield.

Recent highlights include supporting a 'Healthy, Wealthy and Warm' Event in Heeley, where the team spoke to local people and a group learning English about how to keep your eyes healthy, followed by a day at Totley Farmers' Market promoting the services of **SRSB** and demonstrating equipment that can help people with sight loss. A conference of Sheffield's Health and Practice Champions provided a perfect opportunity to raise the profile of the Mobile Information Service to voluntary community health organisations from across the city. This resulted in further bookings at a Women's Health Day in Sharrow and the 'Beat the Winter Blues' event in Lowedges where the eye health and **SRSB**'s services messages reached two very diverse communities.

Julie Turnbull, the new Mobile Information Officer, has also built links with Sheffield Carer's organisation, Dementia Action Alliance and City Taxis and is busy filling the spring and summer diary of events with a range of exciting new projects, including taking the MIU along to Sheffield's popular 'Park Runs' on Saturday mornings.

#### **'Optimeyes' Project**

Community Engagement Officer, Liz Bowman, is also the project worker for 'Optimeyes'. This is a regional joint project working with other sight loss organisations from Hull, South Lincs, York, and North Yorkshire in partnership with RNIB to share good

practice and ideas about new ways to identify and help members of the public who may already be suffering a degree of sight loss but are unaware of the support services available at **SRSB** or their local sight loss charity. This two year Lottery Funded project, targeting the 50+ age group, also focuses on passing on information about how to keep your eyes healthy, the importance of diet, exercise and regular eye checks and trying to stop or reduce smoking. Much of this work takes place through community outreach engagement events and the Mobile Information Unit so Liz and Julie are particularly interested in hearing from any groups whose members fall predominantly in the fifty plus age range who may wish to book an eye health talk or visit from the community engagement team.

### **Volunteers welcome in the Community Engagement Team**

The 'Optimeyes' project also focuses on building the confidence of clients with sight loss, not only around everyday living skills but also by encouraging them to become volunteers or join in with campaigns for change and improvement to services that affect visually impaired and blind people. Some of our clients and beneficiaries from the first year of the project are already active volunteers on the Mobile Information Unit and help with community talks and visual impairment awareness training, passing on their own experiences and advice to both the public at large and those more recently diagnosed with an eye condition. Others have become

group leaders, peer mentors or telephone befrienders. We welcome any new enquiries or offers of help from clients and supporters, old and new, about getting more involved with volunteering for the Community Engagement Team. Training and full support will be provided and travel/ lunch expenses where applicable.

### **Visual Impairment Awareness Training**

Julie and Liz have recently taken over the role of delivering Visual Impairment Awareness training. They started in January by training Home Safety Officers at South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service how to recognise signs that someone may be finding everyday tasks more difficult due to sight loss. This can be done during their fire safety home visit checks, and has already proved successful as half a dozen people have already been referred to **SRSB** this year. **SRSB** is also interested in hearing from any other potential partners who may be able to offer help in extending the range of referral routes available to people with sight loss in Sheffield who are not currently aware of **SRSB's** services.

A final reminder that both the MIU service and Community Engagement Officer can be booked, free of charge, to visit your group or organisation. We also offer a simple, non-medical vision screening test as part of our service if required.

Contact Julie or Liz by email to: [community@srsb.org.uk](mailto:community@srsb.org.uk) or **0114 267 7761**

## **VOLUNTEERING AND VOLUNTEERS**

Happy New Year everyone.

My name is Debbie Smith and I am the new Volunteer Coordinator here at **SRSB**, I joined the organisation late December 2015 and have been warmly welcomed and supported by all the staff, volunteers and clients involved here at **SRSB**. Thank you one and all.

So another year begins at **SRSB** and as usual we are very grateful to all the volunteers that enable our services to carry on being effective in the most positive of ways.

**SRSB** are actively recruiting volunteers to support our many services and we are especially looking for volunteer drivers/escorts to accompany VI people on outings, appointments and to support access to leisure activities. Training and inductions are provided with ongoing support throughout the volunteering experience.

There are currently students from the Sheffield Universities and Sheffield College enjoying and gaining valuable experience as they undertake their work experience placements here at **SRSB**. David Cox, Activity Centre Manager is overseeing student opportunities and any enquiries regarding students should be made to him.

Our reminiscence group, which meets here at **SRSB** Mappin Street on Monday mornings, is being visited in March by Sheffield Museums who will be offering a tactile and audio

described walk down memory lane , the main focus being post WW2 Sheffield. This group is facilitated by volunteers and I would like to thank Carol for helping to get the Sheffield Museums involved.

**SRSB** would also like to thank Sheffield Museums and Caroline Rawle for agreeing to deliver this to the group, the group is really delighted to be offered this opportunity and hope to organise more of the same or similar in the future.

There are many volunteer roles within **SRSB** working alongside staff and clients as well as volunteer roles behind the scenes such fund raising support, admin/office support.

Volunteers can offer their time at **SRSB** by supporting sports, centre activities, access to leisure activities, youth club, **SRSB** outings, befriending and much more.

Should anyone be thinking about volunteering with us at **SRSB** please get in touch with me Debbie Smith, telephone **0114 267 7742**  
email: [Debra.Smith@srsb.org.uk](mailto:Debra.Smith@srsb.org.uk)

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

### **Activities Centre**

Do you live alone, or do you want a day away from your spouse or family? If so, why not try our Activities Centre? We can usually provide door to door transport with our minibuses, you will get refreshments, a home cooked lunch, a range of activities and most importantly, have some company with

people, maybe even make some new friends.

Our staff, volunteers and placement 'staff' from universities, colleges and other organisations provide a very warm welcome and a great deal of care for all of our clients. Nothing is too much trouble or effort, it really is a friendly place to spend time in.

If you would like to try the Activities Centre please give us a call and we will arrange for one of our Community Advice Officers to visit you and provide more details.

### **Singing Groups**

I started as a full time permanent employee at Mappin Street on December the 1st 2015, which already seems like a long time ago. There has been a lot of singing; according to Ella Fitzgerald the only thing better than singing is more singing. So, as well as singing on a Wednesday, there is also singing on Monday, Thursday and Friday. The singing is for pleasure and the joy of the company of others. I provide the song words in large font format where necessary and we take a trip down memory lane via Tom Jones, Julie Andrews, Dean Martin, Emmy Rossum, Eliza Doolittle and many, many others.

The Wednesday group, the SRSB Singers, will be going out again soon visiting care and social settings in Sheffield to sing with others. We are also singing in Victoria Hall in October 2016 as part of 'Sing for Sight' week; joining on stage the Millhouse Green Male Voice Choir and the South Yorkshire Police Brass Band. One for

the diary. David Cox, Activity Centre Manager.

### **Minibuses**

We were horrified a few weeks ago to learn that thieves had targeted one of our minibuses. During the night they had stolen the catalytic converter (part of the exhaust to you and me). This meant the minibus could not be driven and as a result it was off the road for nearly a week. This has caused considerable inconvenience to all those people who would have travelled on the minibus and considerable expense to **SRSB** although we are very grateful to both City Taxis and to our Steven and Rose whose bus we were able to hire for some of the days. We are still awaiting delivery of the replacement minibus for Dennis, his current bus is over 12 years old. It recently broke down but we have been very lucky to be able to get it repaired. Hopefully the new minibus will be with us by March or April. Fingers crossed that the trusty old bus keeps going a little bit longer!

### **Equipment Centre**

We now have a non-slip mug with a fitted lid to stop spillages. The mug uses a suction base to reduce slippage and a clever way to release the suction using the handle. So far this is proving to be very popular at £14.95, we keep having to order more stock

As usual we have a wide range of other equipment such as watches, clocks, telephones, mobiles, anti-glare specs, lamps and many other gadgets.

All of these are especially suitable for people with visual impairment.

### Used Equipment for Sale

We have a range of used equipment for sale including various electronic video magnifiers which can be tried on a free loan. Please call in to **SRSB** to see what's available or for a demonstration.

### **Computers and Technology**

Darren Furness, our Technology Officer, offers training on various technologies including computers with either magnification or speech, smart phones, tablets etc.

This training is proving increasingly popular as the range of new technology grows. The training is on a "one to one" basis and there is no charge. For an informal chat please contact Darren at **SRSB**.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

### **Exhibitions**

**Thursday 25 February - 10am to 3pm**

There will be a combined exhibition: -

**Dolphin** will be exhibiting a wide range of computer packages, and magnifiers;

**Enhanced Vision** – will be exhibiting Electronic Magnifiers;

They will be joined by **Calibre** who run a library service of audio books which are posted direct to members at home.

See the enclosed flyer for more details of the above exhibition.

**Optelec 23rd May - 10am to 3pm**

Optelec will be here with their range of video magnifiers in May – more details in the next newsletter.

## **CULTURE CLUB**

Way back in November we had a couple of trips to the theatre to see a fantastic performance of The Bodyguard and a very different interpretation of Daphne du Maurier's classic Rebecca. We also had our annual trip to Chatsworth to see the Christmas lights which this year were based on Kenneth Graham's classic Wind in the Willows. In Early December we had our Christmas catch up, Jackie from Sheffield Theatres joined us to talk about access and to get our ideas and opinions. We enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies whilst discussing ideas for the forthcoming year. The first week of the new year saw us back at the theatre to see a fantastic performance of Showboat and last week we managed a last minute trip to see Annie.

Our new flyer has just gone out which is full of theatre trips and interesting days out. We are off to see Hairspray, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, Guys and Dolls, Swan Lake, Rocky Horror Picture Show, Tom - the Musical, Thriller Live and we'll be booking more throughout the year.

Forthcoming day trips include Ripley Castle and Gardens, Normanby Hall and Gardens, Castle Howard, Kirkstall Abbey and the Abbey House Museum. A number of these include bespoke talks or touch tours. We are also looking forward to the Sheffield Philharmonic Chorus anniversary performance in June at the City Hall – an evening with Vaughan Williams.

For further information on any trips or to be added to our mailing list for Culture Club outings please contact Joanne Ardern at **SRSB**.

### **Book Club**

We are looking at changing the time of our monthly book club and we'd welcome your suggestions. We are also trying to recruit new members so if you are interested please contact Joanne at **SRSB**.

### **HOLIDAYS AND TRIPS**

We are starting to think about holidays for 2016. In recent years we have only been organising holidays within the UK but in the past we have organised holidays to places like Spain and Turkey. If you have any suggestions of possible places to go on holiday then please let us know.

We hope we will soon have details of possible holidays in places such as Llandudno or Great Yarmouth. If you want us to send you details of these as soon as we hear then please call Aletheia at **SRSB**.

We will also be thinking about the annual day trip – should it still be to the traditional seaside resorts or somewhere different? Would you also like a trip to see Blackpool Illuminations next autumn?

Please let us have your thoughts on all these ideas by contacting Aletheia at **SRSB**.

### **LEISURE EVENTS, SPORT AND SOCIAL GROUPS**

#### **Sports and Leisure groups**

There are a wide range of sports and leisure activity groups for visually impaired people in Sheffield.

Most of these groups have been running for many years but as some of the older members are no longer able to take part in the activities the groups are always looking for new members to join them so that the activities can continue. In particular, the groups currently looking for new members are the Visually Impaired Walking Group, the Bowling Group, Ten Pin Bowling Group and the Macular Group. The Bowling Group are also currently wanting some sighted volunteers to help them.

Why not try something different? As well as the group activity you have the opportunity to make some new friends.

For further information please get in touch with the named contact on the enclosed list of self-help, sports, and leisure groups. Alternatively please get in touch with **SRSB**.

#### **Tandem Cycling**

Our trailer for the tandems should be sorted very soon so we are now looking for volunteers to be tandem pilots. If you know family or friends who are interested please ask them to contact us for a chat, once we have enough volunteers for a session we can arrange a meeting to look at dates and venues and whether we need to organise any practice sessions to let people get used to riding the tandems.

It would be good to get a group of volunteers so that people don't have to commit to every ride we do. Once we are up and running we would like to have regular meetings so we can look at how we coordinate and fund the group long-term. We are really looking forward to getting out there so come on and get involved!

Please contact  
Peter Stancill on 0114 267 7749.

### **Reminiscence Group**

This group began in May 2014 at **SRSB**, and was originally set up by Occupational Therapy Work Placement students, and is now run by volunteer Carol. The group is focussed on what our clients would like to talk about and is guided by Carol who is herself blind.

The group particularly enjoy discussing the history of Sheffield, but they also discuss personal stories about holidays, war experiences, etc.

Sometimes people will bring objects in to talk about and sometimes they hold a quiz. They start with a subject and then end up wherever the conversation takes them!

Reminiscence has lots of benefits. It helps to share experiences and it may also help to rekindle interests through discussion.

If you are interested in coming along to the group, please contact **SRSB**.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES**

### **Little Sparklers**

At present we have many young members so instead of visiting a play

centre for our Christmas party we stayed at the centre and Father Christmas came along. The group continues to grow and we have a number of new faces which is fantastic. We have a very varied programme this term including music, sensory and messy sessions.

We continue to get good feedback and regularly get families from all over the region attending.

### **Children's Activities**

Once again we held our Christmas party at Monkey Bizness, it was a great success with over 100 children attending along with their families. Father Christmas was extremely busy.

Once again this month we joined Action for Blind People for their regional theatre event at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. This year it was Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, It was a fantastic day, the children had lunch and then had the chance to try on the costumes and meet the cast before enjoying the audio described performance.

We aim to plan more theatre trips and activity days throughout the year.

### **Youth Club**

We continue to run our weekly youth club, we try and keep the sessions exciting and interesting, forthcoming activities include pancake making, Valentines crafts, a visit from Lush and a celebration of the Chinese New Year. We enjoyed an away day as a festive treat when we visited Hollywood Bowl for a ten pin bowling session. It all got very competitive but

Khalil stormed through to become the champion. We celebrated his win with a slap up meal of pizzas and ice-cream. We are hoping to arrange more 'away days' in the warmer months.

We are also linking in Action for Blind People, taking along some of the young people to three residential experiences that are running through the year. They are funded by the Field Study Council and give the children the chance to work towards the John Muir award which encourages people to connect with, enjoy, and care for wild places.

### **Actionnaires**

Actionnaires is a free multi-sports and activity club for visually impaired children aged 4 -17. The club runs every Sunday at Westfield sport Centre. They do a variety of activities including football, wall climbing, archery, animal handling, fencing and horse riding. Every fortnight the sessions also include a swimming session, the club has sole use of the pool so it is ideal for those who struggle with busy public pools. Children can bring along siblings or friends, under 8's must be accompanied by an adult. For more

information on forthcoming activities please contact Joanne.

### **NEWSLETTER**

Please remember we would be delighted to hear from you with articles for our newsletter or ideas for topics we could cover in future editions.

This newsletter is available in a variety of formats. If you are struggling to read this newsletter, then please contact us to discuss other formats. The formats currently available are:

- 16 point print on yellow paper
- Print at a font size to suit you on a variety of different coloured paper
- Braille
- Audio in MP3 format on a USB memory stick
- Email

If you have the newsletter in MP3 format on a USB stick we provide a small wallet so that you can return the memory stick by Freepost to us so that we can use it again for the next newsletter. Please return these as soon as you have read the newsletter.

### **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**



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