

SRSB

Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind

INSIGHT

SPRING 2014

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our latest newsletter which we hope you enjoy. Up to now the weather has been kind to us this winter with no disruption from snow and ice so we hope that this continues.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITIES

Christmas Lunches and Social Evening

At our Christmas social evening more than seventy people attended. Many thanks to Mike Lewis for wonderful entertainment. He soon got plenty of you up dancing so we assume you all enjoyed the evening. Thanks also to our special guest, The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr Vickie Priestley.

Many thanks also to Dennis for his excellent entertainment at the Christmas lunches attended by over 300 people during the week.

SRSB Christmas Raffle

Altogether you sold raffle tickets totalling £2,525 which was a slight decrease on last year but we are still delighted with your efforts. Thank you to everybody who helped us by selling tickets and also to those people who included a donation for SRSB which we very much appreciate.

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.

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

As reported in our last newsletter Jacqueline Juden left our employment

in the Equipment Centre last November. We have recently appointed Rob McCann as Equipment Centre Co-ordinator and he takes up his post with us at the beginning of March. Rob joins us having previously worked at Sheffield College and we look forward to welcoming him in his new role with us. Rob is well equipped to advise people on suitable equipment, having a visual impairment himself.

Many thanks to Kyle Crossland for covering the Equipment Centre in the interim period.

We have some sad news regarding one of our volunteers and a former staff member, Mick Windle, who sadly passed away in early January. Mick was a minibus driver with us for many years but had to give up this role 2 years ago due to ill health. However, he stayed with us as a volunteer, assisting in the Equipment Centre until last December. He will be sadly missed.

On a more positive note, Ricky Coleman another volunteer who used to volunteer in the Equipment Centre as well as being one of our clients, has had to leave us as he has secured employment with Marks & Spencer. Well done Ricky and thank you for the help you gave us.

SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES AT SRSB MAPPIN STREET CENTRE

Equipment Centre

Remember that we have a stock of this year's Calendars and Diaries. **SRSB** large print calendars cost £3.75, Diaries range from £4.95 for pocket size, to £7.95 for large desk diaries. The diaries especially are going fast so do drop in or let us know if you need one as we may not be able to get more stock in.

We are also offering a new service in the shop for watch battery replacement with prices starting from £4. Most watches can be handled on site now instead of having to be sent away.

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 ranging in price from £50 to £800. 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. Please call in to **SRSB** for a demonstration.

Sight and Sound Exhibition

Sight and Sound have been providing solutions for people with visual impairment for 30 years. They are having an exhibition at our centre on Wednesday 5th March from 10am to

3pm. Do drop in and why not visit our Equipment Centre at the same time.

Activity Centre

Just to remind you we have a daily set of activities here in our centre, together with regular short outings, talks etc as well as a freshly cooked lunch.

We have a few spaces to accommodate more people on most days and door-to-door transport may be available on one of our minibuses or we can help arrange alternative transport. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Olwen at **SRSB**.

Any Old Wool?

If you have unused balls of wool that you do not need then we would be pleased to make use of them in our craft area. Just drop them off at reception when you are next passing our way. Thank You.

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 £4 per person to attend the social plus £2 if we are able provide transport.

Computer Training at SRSB

This is available at our Mappin Street Centre whether it is using Windows based computers with the inbuilt magnification aids or you require more specialised magnification/ speech packages. Please contact Darren at **SRSB** to arrange an initial chat and

demonstration of what is available as well as free training in computer use.

Charles Bonnet Get Together

We meet every 3rd Wednesday in the month. We welcome any new members. If you or anyone in your family may be suffering from this Syndrome get in touch with **SRSB**. Bessie and the friendly group will welcome you.

Note: - Charles Bonnet Syndrome affects some people with visual impairment – they see things which are not there, which can be very disturbing.

Health and Beauty Centre

The services provided by our visiting professionals continue to prove extremely popular. Remember you can book to see our chiropodist and hairdresser by ringing our main number. You can book for massage by contacting Sarah Bryan directly: - Telephone: **0114 233 9693** or Email sarah@sbholistic.co.uk

Guided Relaxation

Sarah Bryan also has available for sale a CD, Creative Relaxation for Busy People by Lisa Read. This is a CD with series of short 10 minute guided relaxations which can be used wherever you like. Contact Sarah (as above) for more information.

Tai Chi

The Tai Chi group which meets every Friday afternoon at our Mappin Street centre has been very popular with participants over the last two years. People find it an excellent way to relax; it also increases circulation and

improves balance. This class is suitable for people of all mobilities.

If you want to find out more or join the group then please contact **SRSB** as soon as possible.

HOLIDAY

Royal Sandringham and the Norfolk Broads

Sunday 8th to Friday 13th June 2014.

Includes coach tours to Norwich and the Norfolk Broads, Steam Boat Trip, entrance to Royal Sandringham House and Gardens. Entertainment every evening.

This looks like being an exciting new holiday destination now being offered by Creative Travel. All for £377 per person including Dinner, Bed and Breakfast.

Please contact Olwen at **SRSB** as soon as possible if you are interested as we are sure this holiday will book up very quickly. If you have ideas for other places for our holiday trips then please call Olwen to put forward your suggestions.

NEWS AND NOTICES

RNIB Talking Book Service

Many of you may use the RNIB talking book service which is currently fully funded by Sheffield City Council Library Services. Unfortunately, due to severe funding cuts by the council, Library Services are not able to continue to fund this service which in the last year has cost £37,000 to provide. Therefore with effect from 1st April the RNIB talking book service will only be available if you are willing to pay the annual subscription yourself.

With the recent changes by RNIB which no longer provides or repairs the CD players they have reduced the annual library subscription to £50. Library Services in Sheffield recognise how valuable it is for people with sight problems to have access to audio books and we are making arrangements with them for an alternative service but we cannot provide any details of this until the council budgets are finalised in early March.

We appreciate that this change will be worrying for some people but please be assured that if you are currently using the RNIB talking book service we will be contacting you before the end of March to make arrangements to transfer you to the alternative service if you do not wish to take on the £50 annual RNIB subscription yourself.

SRSB Audio Library

The library at our Mappin Street Centre has a large stock of audio books on cassette tape but very few people are using these now so we have decided to dispose of the books. If anybody would like some of these books they are available for collection from **SRSB** free of charge.

Discussion Group

One of our clients, Alec Jenner, would like to start a discussion group, here at our Mappin Street Centre and has submitted this article

'Would anybody be interested in forming an ideas group?

The sorts of issues that we might like to discuss can be agreed at the first

meeting. They may be sight specific, political, social, cultural, environmental or on any other subjects that you think might be interesting.

We have put a few ideas together but these are only suggestions;

Is the NHS doing everything it can for blind and partially sighted people?

How do blind and partially sighted people contribute to Society?

How should society treat us?

What is to become of the welfare system? (Disability living allowance, bedroom tax etc)

Has capitalism lost its moral compass?

How far has society gone in treating men and women equally (Women Bishops, equal pay etc)

We are holding the meetings on the first Monday of each month, 11am to 1pm. If you are interested just come along at 11am or phone us on **07534 067 255** for a chat about what you think we should be doing.

The first meeting is Monday 3rd March – looking forward to meeting you

Anne and Alec Jenner'

After the meeting you might like to have lunch in our café and continue your discussions.

SRSB Insight Event

Sheffield Town Hall, Wednesday 9th April, 3pm to 5pm.

We are holding our annual event at the Town Hall where we showcase our services. There are a limited number of seats for people and last year many people were disappointed not to be able to attend so if you would like to

attend please book your place by calling **SRSB** as soon as possible.

New Social Group

Some of you may be familiar with or have heard of the Ravenscroft Group which has been running for many years, based at the Resource Centre on Stradbroke Road. This group has now relocated to **SRSB's** Mappin Street Centre and is meeting every Monday instead of Tuesday. The group is also looking for new members to join them, men or women of all ages are welcome.

This group is to enable people with a visual impairment to meet socially and enjoy themselves, whilst at the same time develop and maintain their independence. People must be able to travel independently.

Initially the format of the meetings will be along the lines of that currently operated by the Ravenscroft Group as follows:

- 1st Monday of each month – Ten Pin Bowling at Hollywood Bowl, Centertainment, meet at 10am outside Yorkshire Bank, Commercial Street.
- 2nd Monday of each month, 10am to 12.30pm – **SRSB** Mappin Street Centre. Enjoy refreshments together with a brain teasing quiz and other activities. Anybody who wants to do so can then stay for lunch in **SRSB's** café, or you may decide to go for a pub lunch.
- 3rd Monday of each month – An outing to somewhere of interest

- 4th Monday of each month, 10am to 12.30pm – **SRSB** Mappin Street Centre, same as 2nd Monday of the month.
- 5th Monday of a month (when this happens) – Meet at the Winter Gardens at 10am.

However, with new members the format can be varied as it is the group that decides what outings and activities are planned.

Outings that the Ravenscroft self-help group have previously organised include trips to Cleethorpes, National Railway Museum in York, Science & Industry Museum in Manchester, Royal Armouries in Leeds and Kelham Island Museum in Sheffield.

If you can travel independently and would like to join in please give us a call. If you are not too confident travelling independently but would like to try the group then still give us a call as we may be able to find somebody to accompany you for a few meetings to help you get the confidence to travel on your own.

Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP) Support and Information Group

We had a festive RP meeting in December. Over mince pies we enjoyed an informative get together. We had a couple of new members who really found it useful.

Our next RP Group meeting is planned for Wednesday 19th March so please come along. It is at our Mappin Street Centre, starting at 2:30pm

If you are interested please contact Joanne at **SRSB** for more information.

It would help us enormously if you could telephone us to let us know you will be attending.

Glaucoma Support and Information Group

Whilst the first few meetings seemed popular there have been very few people wanting to attend recently. Therefore we have not currently planned the next meeting. If you have glaucoma and feel a meeting would be useful please contact us and let us know the best time of day we could hold a meeting, how frequently would you like to meet, what sort of topics would you like speakers for and any other suggestions you have for running a group.

A New Group for People Struggling With Sight Loss

We all know that losing your sight isn't easy for anyone, but there are some people who find it really hard to cope with it. The "Support and Sharing" group will be starting in March, and we hope it will help people who are struggling.

A group of about eight members, with two leaders both of whom are blind themselves, will start on Tuesday, 4th March 2014 and will run fortnightly for six sessions. It will be a group where people can talk openly and share their worries and concerns with others, with some guidance. It won't be anything heavy, there might be some laughs as everyone gets to know each other and share things. Sessions will be on Tuesday afternoons, from 2 to 4 pm.

If you would like more information about the group, please contact Olwen, Joanne or Dyane at **SRSB**

Welfare Benefits

Many benefits are in the process of change or may change over the next year or so. There are changes also to Housing Benefit which may reduce the amount some people are entitled to. If you are affected by any changes and would like advice then please do not hesitate to contact our Community Advice Officers. It is important that if you receive any communication about your benefits from DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Pensions Service, Sheffield City Council etc that you contact us straight away to avoid losing benefits or being put on the wrong benefit. This is particularly important if you are currently in receipt of Incapacity Benefit (IB) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

Memory Loss

Age UK has recently started a Memory Loss support service: -

"Age UK Sheffield's Memory Lane in the Park is open to all older people living with memory loss. We are based in the community building at the lovely Norfolk Heritage Park and we offer a friendly and stimulating day out for our members.

"We offer a friendly place for people to meet each other, chat and join in a variety of activities, entertainment and outings. There is the opportunity for fun social activities and companionship in a safe and supported environment. Our staff and volunteers provide a social environment which aims to

reduce isolation and help members mix and enjoy each other's company. There are charges for the six hour day which currently stand at £61 plus £5 for a meal. For more information please contact Anne Meehan on **0114 250 2878** or look on the web at <http://digbig.com/5bjjqq>

Fundraising

Please have a read of the enclosed Fundraising News as there are some interesting articles in there.

Limbric – Computer Course

Over the past 5 years there has been a computer course held in Hillsborough for visually impaired people who have enough sight to see the screen just using the standard accessibility features within Windows.

Another new group of learners started in early January. We always need new students to keep future classes going. It is a great opportunity for visually impaired learners as there are no other classes like this held in the city.

It is a friendly relaxed place to learn more about computers and how to use them.

For more information contact Alan Thorpe on **0114 220 7007**

Window-Eyes free for users of recent Microsoft Office versions

Window-Eyes screen reader has been released in a free version for users of Microsoft Office 2010 and above. This is a slightly reduced version (compared to the commercial version). You can find more information at: - <http://digbig.com/5bjkmm>

We would be pleased to hear feedback from anyone who tries this software, as we have not been able to evaluate it yet.

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>

February	Tom's Midnight Garden Seven Brides for Seven Brothers Happy Days Translations
March	Wonderful Tennessee Fiddler on the Roof
April	Fame Dirty Dancing
May	Brassed Off One Man Two Guvnors Boeing Boeing

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

100th Birthdays Congratulations

Many congratulations to Margaret White, Dorothy Reardon, Phyllis Pepper and John (Jackson) Taylor, who all celebrated their 100th birthdays recently.

Poems of Love and Life

Congratulations to Tom Illingworth of the Mappin Writers group who has just

had a collection of Poems of Life and Love published.

Tom is a long standing and stalwart member of our Mappin Writers Group which meets every Friday at our centre. They share their work and have recordings of some of their writing which were performed for their event as part of the Sheffield Off the Shelf festival.

Members of the group, as well as all of us are really proud of Tom's achievement and have always enjoyed his work because he is such a romantic.

If you are interested in obtaining a copy of Tom's book of poems then please contact Olwen so we can order them. (We have got a copy if you want to have a quick look before you buy).

Cairn Home

Cairn Home, our residential care home at Crosspool, enjoys high levels of occupancy but vacancies do occur from time to time. For anybody thinking about residential care but who is a little unsure what a residential care home is like then why not book into our Respite Room which is available for short term bookings of just a few nights. Alternatively you can have a look around at any time. For further information please contact Kevin McGrath, Manager at Cairn Home, on **0114 266 1536**.

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.

Two medical students Bukky and Sophie completed their placements with us shortly before Christmas. They had quickly proved themselves popular and valued members of the team and really enjoyed their placements here.

Currently we have two more medical students Mark and Matthew who many of you will have met in the centre or may have been lucky enough to be one of the people visited by them. They are with us until Valentine's Day. They have very recently been joined by Kirsty and Matt who are both Occupational Therapy students who will be with us until the beginning of May working in our Activity Centre and extending the range of activities on offer.

Tacmap

At TacMap, we have the expertise to make spaces accessible to visually impaired people. Tacmaps are tactile and visual maps that enable blind partially sighted and also sighted users to know what facilities they can find within a space. We produce maps that can be read in advance giving you more confidence, independence, dignity and extra safety. In a society where most of the signage is visual, our maps give you essential information about a place you want to go and visit. The visual version of our maps produced for hotels, parks, bus stations, schools, cinemas, arenas and museums will be available soon from our website. Our tactile guides can be

seen and borrowed in the Equipment Centre at **SRSB**.

Please visit our website for more information <http://tacmap.co.uk> and don't hesitate to contact us at info@tacmap.co.uk or on **07540 428 654** if you have any comment to make or question. I look forward to hearing from you.

Patricia Dieng, Director of TacMap.

SRSB Teadance!

Saturday 29th March. 11:30am to 2pm.
SRSB's Mappin Street Centre

Back by popular demand! We held our first Teadance last year and everyone that came had a wonderful time dancing with the volunteers from the University of 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 dancing societies at the University, put on performances. We also provide refreshments and sandwiches at lunchtime too.

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

EMPLOYMENT

As mentioned in our last newsletter our Services Development Committee is currently looking into how we may best support people to secure employment or set up their own business. In addition supporting people who are in employment but struggling to do their

job effectively due to their sight problems is also high on our agenda. We are in the process of surveying people of working age to identify the obstacles and challenges they face in finding suitable employment so that we can develop the most appropriate type of services. In the meantime if you have any suggestions as to how we could best support you please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you would like any advice or support now to either to retain your job or find work please do not hesitate to contact us.

CAMPAIGNS & ISSUES

Accessible Health Information

'Losing Patients'

Many of you will remember the launch of the national 'Losing Patients' campaign which took place at our centre in Mappin Street in 2009. The campaign aimed to ensure that all NHS patients were given all information in a format accessible to them, including options for braille, large print, audio versions. This included all general information, letters, and reports containing personal medical information both at GP surgeries, clinics and hospitals.

NHS Staff Training

Progress has been slow and varies from area to area. We have been steadily working in many ways to build on the progress stimulated by the campaign. Dyane Midgley has contacted all surgeries across Sheffield to try to get them involved by offering a free 1 hour sensory

awareness session. Many of the surgeries have invited her to deliver sensory awareness training to relevant staff when the surgery is closed. This has been highly valued by the staff and led to a great improvement in their awareness of the extent of visual impairment as well as their awareness of how to meet the needs of people with visual impairment.

We would encourage people to always ask for information in a format accessible to them so that they do not have to rely on friends or family to read things for them especially where this may include very personal information. We would also encourage people to ask if their surgery has taken up our offer of free staff awareness; if not encourage them to contact **SRSB**. If you are having trouble in this respect please do continue to contact us so that we can take the matter up on your behalf.

NHS Accessible Information Initiative

In the light of this we are pleased to see the new initiative to make information accessible being taken by NHS England:

Their main aim is to improve people's health. This includes making information both accessible and comprehensible – this then enables people both to understand their condition and to take the appropriate measures to improve their health. It also helps people to be involved in decisions that affect them.

They are planning to write a new guidebook for NHS and social care organisations across England, such as

your GP, hospital or council. The guidebook will be an 'Information Standard' which is a set of rules which organisations must follow.

The guidebook will tell organisations how they should make sure that patients, service users and carers can understand the information they are given. This includes making sure that people get information in different formats if they need it, for example in large print, Braille or Easy Words and Pictures.

The guidebook will also tell organisations how they should make sure that people get any support with communication that they need, for example through having a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter or an advocate with them.

They want to know what you think before they write the guidebook and are now asking you for your views.

You can find out more information at www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo

This page has links to the surveys for patients as well as organisations and professionals who work in the NHS

If you have a question about this work you can also email them at england.nhs.participation@nhs.net or telephone **0113 825 1324**.

We would encourage people to seize the chance to make their views known and complete the survey which is available in a variety of formats at www.england.nhs.uk/accessibleinfo

Please note that the survey must be returned or completed online by 21st February.

Changes to Bus Pass concessions

South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority are considering proposals to remove some of the benefits afforded to bus pass users. This will remove the extra benefits provided in South Yorkshire and bring the benefits into line with the national concessions for England

The proposals mean that: -

- All bus travel before 9.30am will be charged at the normal fare – this applies to senior citizens as well as disabled passengers
- Train travel within South Yorkshire will no longer be free for bus pass holders – all train travel. (Tram travel after 9.30am will still be covered by the bus pass.)
- The Free Bee bus round the town centre will no longer be provided.

These changes are necessary due to the funding for these concessions being cut.

We have only learned of these proposals as we go to print with this newsletter so we are currently considering how best to challenge the proposals. In the meantime we would encourage anybody affected by the proposals to contact their councillors as a matter of urgency.

You can find out who your councillor is at <http://digbig.com/5bjmcm> - enter your postcode to obtain links to your councillors, click these for their contact details. Alternatively you can phone the council on **0114 273 4567** to ask who are your councillors.

If you would like any help to contact your councillor please contact Patrick at **SRSB**.

Railway Staff Awards

Congratulations. We were pleased to hear that Shaun Leonard was recently awarded the award for Ticket Office Employee of the Year for his work helping all customers at Sheffield Midland Station. Shaun has been registered blind since 1973 and has always been very keen to support people with visual impairment to plan journeys and help them make the best use of the support which can be provided at stations – especially when people have to change trains in places that are unfamiliar.

Bus Passes

Is your bus pass about to expire? It can be renewed up to one month before it is due to expire.

If you have a visually impaired mobility bus pass with an eye symbol you can contact us to get the pass renewed.

If you have a senior citizen pass you can renew it at one of the Travel Information Centres. You can also renew it online at <http://digbig.com/5bjjra> if your address is unchanged and you do not need a new photo. However if you are registered blind or partially sighted, we would encourage you to apply for a visually impaired mobility pass as this helps to make the driver aware that you may require a little more assistance.

If you travel by bus and experience any really good service from staff then

please do let us know the details so we can pass on compliments to our contacts at First and Stagecoach – if you can give us exact details of the location, date and time and the bus service number they will be able to pass on your compliments to the staff and commend them. Equally though, but becoming more rare, if you experience problems then do let us know so that they can address any issues with staff.

Streets Ahead

Alan Thorpe met representatives of Streets Ahead recently to discuss arrangements being made at temporary pedestrian crossings where the main crossing is being upgraded.

They visited two sites to establish the difficulties visually impaired people have around temporary pedestrian crossings while a new crossing is under construction.

Recommendations are being taken up as a result – these will mean that the marking off and separation of the temporary signals from ones being installed should be clearer and allow more space for pedestrians. They will also be taking up with their suppliers the need to have temporary signs which have an audible buzzer and/or a rotating tactile cone fitted as on permanent signals.

There is an internet link which takes you to the Streets Ahead Road Improvement web site, on that web site is a map indicating where future Traffic Signal works are being carried out around the city,.

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

Other information can be found at <http://roadworks.org/>

These websites are not fully accessible to screen readers.

If people want to report problems relating to roadworks or other issues such as broken paving or pelican crossings which aren't working properly this can be done via the website <http://digbig.com/5bjjrx>

(The council is aware that the map and the page for reporting do not load properly in some versions of Internet explorer especially IE11. They are working to get over this – if you have problems you can use a different browser such as Firefox or Google Chrome.)

You can also contact them by email at streetsahead@sheffield.gov.uk or telephone on **0114 273 4567**.

For more information about Streets Ahead you can contact Alan Thorpe by email at info@eyecan.org.uk or by telephone **07961 406 739**

Supertram Works and tickets

Just to keep you up to date on developments relating to Supertram.

Roadworks in the Meadowhall vicinity which affected supertram in that area should be finished by the time you read this newsletter.

The first phase of rail replacement work, which began last July, on the section of supertram track between Spring Lane and Park Grange Croft tram stops saw almost 5,000 metres of rail replaced. Over the next ten years many more miles of track will be replaced. There are no immediate

plans for work in the next couple of months and we will keep you up to date about which areas will be affected in future.

If you want to receive updates about this and other important news please let us have an up to date email address – we can also send out weekly information about things such as cinema film times with audio description and other events.

CULTURE CLUB

At the beginning of December we visited the City Hall for Keith Roe's Christmas Cavalcade. Everyone had a great time and we've already secured tickets for his spring Celebrity concert. We followed this later in the month with our Christmas Catch Up at Mappin Street. Over mulled wine and mince pies we discussed future events and trips. There were some great suggestions and we're busy working through the list to get a schedule ready for the coming months. It is our intention to visit some indoor attractions over the next two or three months followed by further outings to venues out of the city over the spring and summer months.

We started the New Year with a trip to the Christmas Musical at the Crucible. The audio described performance of Oliver lived up to the reviews. We had an excellent touch tour prior to the performance. We've got numerous theatre trips already booked for the forthcoming months including Dirty Dancing, Brassed Off, One Man Two Guvnors, Fame, Let it Be and Fiddler on the Roof. We've also got a visit to

The Deep (a Sea World in Hull), Wentworth House, Crich tram museum, and to the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park.

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**.

Book Club

The book group continues to run monthly with its regular members. We always have a lively discussion and a lot of laughs. Please contact us if you would like to join us.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

We had our Little Sparklers party at Jungle Mania; Father Christmas came along and so did Mooney the music man, a great favourite with the children. The following weekend we held our big party for children from 0-16 at Monkey Bizness. We had over 80 children attend the event. Father Christmas came along to distribute presents and everyone had a great time. Booking the venue just for our group really helps as it enables the children to have more space to run around and play.

Last month we have our annual trip up to West Yorkshire Playhouse to the Action for Blind People's regional theatre event. We took a full coach up to Leeds to see the audio described performance of Jungle Book. The children loved the event, they had chance to meet the cast they also get a lovely packed lunch provided by Action for Blind.

We are in the process of planning a make-up/beauty day for February half term. We have a lovely lady who works as a beautician who has volunteered her services. We're hoping to run this for teenage/young adult girls, teaching them how to do make-up and hair and looking at tips and equipment that could help.

Further information from Joanne at **SRSB**.

LEISURE EVENTS AND SPORT

There are a wide range of sports and leisure activity groups for visually impaired people in Sheffield. These are all detailed in the enclosed list of self-help, sports, and leisure groups.

In our last newsletter we mentioned that we were looking at possible new sports and leisure activities in conjunction with SIV which operates the former council leisure centres including Ponds Forge, Hillsborough and Concord. We didn't get much feedback from you about this so we are now working with SIV to put on some multi-sport taster days. More details in our next newsletter.

British Blind Sport National VI Youth Events

Swimming Gala

Wednesday 12th March 2014, 10am to 4pm - Tudor Grange Leisure Centre, Blossomfield Road, Solihull, B91 1NB

5-a-side Football Tournament

Saturday 10th May 2014, 10am to 4pm - Birmingham International Futsal Arena, Birmingham, B19 2LF

British Blind Sports are running both these events which are open to blind

and partially sighted children aged 9 to 17. Further information on either event from George Ferguson at British Blind Sport on **07792 710 570**

Goalball

Goalball is a fun, fast paced sport for visually impaired and sighted people aged 14+. Our fortnightly Goalball sessions are continuing strongly. We now meet at Sheffield City College, Granville Road.

Several new players have joined Sheffield Goalball Club recently who we hope will be a big success and bring us luck in winning as many tournaments as possible! Goalball can be played for fun or competitively, hopefully a little of both. If you would like more information on Goalball or attending our training sessions please contact Kyle Crossland at **SRSB**.

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.

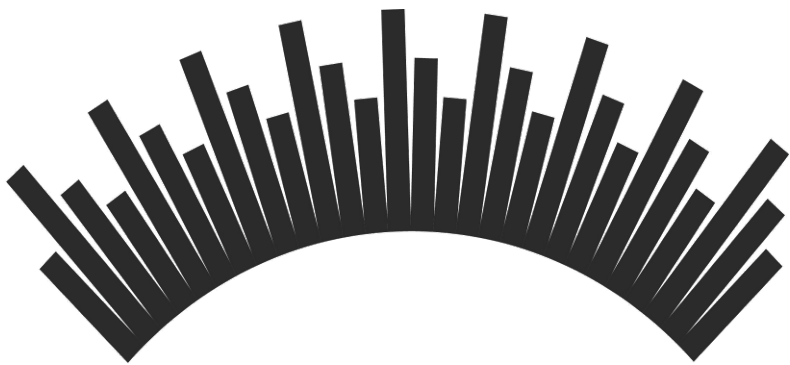
This newsletter is available in a variety of formats. If you are struggling to read this newsletter then please contact us to discuss other formats.

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

Our next newsletter will be arriving with you in May. Do let us have things which you think would be of interest to others.



SRSB

Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind

Making a Difference in Sheffield



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