



SRSB

Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind

INSIGHT

Spring 2013

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN SHEFFIELD

INTRODUCTION

A belated Happy New Year and welcome to our Spring newsletter. We hope that the recent snow and ice did not cause you too many problems. 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 Dennis on Tuesday and Debbie on Wednesday for wonderful entertainment. Both of them got plenty of you up dancing so we assume you all enjoyed the evening. Thanks also to our special guests on Wednesday, The Lord Mayor of Sheffield, Cllr John Campbell and the Lady Mayoress, Catherine Taylor.

SRSB Christmas Raffle

Altogether you sold raffle tickets totalling £3140 which was a slight increase on 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

Home Collection Boxes

Many of our clients have a small home collection box in which they save their loose change to donate to us. Whilst each box may only hold a few pounds cumulatively they raise thousands of pounds for us each year. If you already have a box and would like us to collect it then please let us know.

If you don't have a box but would like us to send you one then please give us a call.

Thyroid Eye Disease

This is an eye condition which does not seem to get much attention from sight loss organisations, probably because it is not a major cause of people losing their sight. However for people with this condition it can be very uncomfortable and worrying. Further information is available from the Thyroid Eye Disease Charitable Trust at <http://www.tedct.co.uk/> or **Tel: 0844 800 8133**

Cairn Home

Currently there are no vacancies at Cairn Home for permanent residents but we do have a room reserved for respite care so if this is something that you are considering please contact Kevin McGrath, Manager at Cairn Home for further information.

Tel: 0114 266 1536.

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.

Flat to Rent

We have a flat to rent at Crosspool. It is a ground floor flat with a bedroom, kitchen/living room and shower room. If this might be of interest to you please telephone Olwen Greensides at **SRSB** for further information or to arrange a viewing.

Equipment Centre

We continue to add new products to the Equipment Centre.

Large print puzzle books are now available in the equipment centre from £2. Along with the usual stock of talking watches, mobile phones and lighting, we also have a selection of used equipment such as big button phones available at bargain prices.

For people who use a boom box to listen to Sheffield Talking News or other audio material via a USB stick, we stock a new boom box called the boom box plus which is much smaller and also has an FM radio. These are available to purchase for £24.

Due to the increasingly slippery weather we are now stocking snow and ice grips which fasten onto the bottom of your shoes with Velcro. A wider range of these shoe grips are also available online from amazon.co.uk.

2013 Calendars and Diaries

We still have in stock a few of our large print calendars, price £3.75, A6 pocket diaries, price £4, A5 desk

diaries, price £5.80, and A4 Desk diaries price £7.

These are all available from our Equipment Centre.

Used Equipment for Sale

Telesensory Olympia portable video magnifier. This is a few years old but is still in very good condition. Originally cost £1,500 so a bargain at £250.

We also have a range of desktop video magnifiers for loan or sale with prices ranging from £100 to £750.

For Sale on Behalf of Clients

Topaz desktop video magnifier in immaculate condition - £1,300 (originally cost £2,400 new last year)

Monomouse magnifier which plugs into a TV. Hardly used, so this is a bargain at £40.

Clearview+ desktop video magnifier with 19 inch flat screen monitor - £650.

Please enquire at **SRSB** for a demonstration of any of these items.

100th Birthdays Congratulations

Many congratulations to Alice Brooke who celebrated her 100th birthday recently.

A New You for Spring

Friday 26th April 1pm to 4:30pm

Calling All Ladies - free advice on hair, make-up and colour will be available in the foyer at Mappin Street centre with Alison Mitchell from House of Colour and hairdresser Linda Newton. All welcome.

Health and Beauty Centre

Just a reminder that we have a chiropodist, hairdresser, massage

therapists and others who offer services in our Health and Beauty Centre. Please contact Carol on Reception at **SRSB** for more information or to make an appointment.

Bank Cash Machines (ATMs)

Barclays Bank, the first major bank to sign up to the RNIB 'Make Money Talk' campaign has fulfilled its commitment and now more than 75 per cent of its ATMs "talk." Blind and partially sighted people can now take along their earphones and plug them into one of more than 3,000 Barclays speech enabled ATMs, and access their money.

To use the new technology customers need to plug in a set of earphones to the audio jack and privately listen into the options that will be read out.

People will be given several choices and asked to press the appropriate option on the key pad. For instance, a customer may be asked to press 'one' to select cash withdrawal and 'two' to select balance enquiry. On each key pad the 'five' has a raised dot which enables people with sight loss to navigate the key pad. To find out the location of your nearest machine visit: <http://ask.barclays.co.uk/branchfinder/> We can tell you that most Sheffield branches of Barclays have a talking cash machine and Barclays cash machines at supermarkets also talk. You just need to take with you your own headphones which have a 3.5mm jack plug (this is standard for most lightweight headphones).

And finally, although other banks have yet to make the same commitment to talking cash machines, remember that anybody can use a Barclays cash machine, you do not need to be a Barclays customer.

Audio Described Performances at Sheffield Theatres

If you would like further information on the 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/5bgjet>

February	The Full Monty Soul Sister
March	The Mousetrap The Daughter in Law Acorn Antiques
April	The 39 Steps 9 to 5
May	Yes, Prime Minister The History Boys

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

Bents Green School Reunion

Did you attend Bents Green Open Air School, Partially Sighted Department prior to 1955? If so a couple of your former school friends would be delighted to hear from you with a view to organising an informal get together. If you are interested please contact either Jean Linton (nee Allsop) on **0114 243 7820**, or Peter Bartholomew on **0114 239 9398**.

Please do get in touch as we are really looking forward to hearing from as many of you as possible.

Age 50+ Swim Bus

Do you live in Lowedges, Batemoor or Jordanthorpe. From the beginning of February a new minibus service will pick up people over 50 for midday swimming sessions at Norton.

Instructors will be available to those that want them. The minibus will drop people off again after the session.

For more information please call **0114 237 8724**.

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 can usually 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 most days. If anyone is interested in attending to find out if it would be suit them, then please contact Olwen at **SRSB**.

Singing Groups

You will remember we have previously mentioned the Singing Group run by David Cox who was on placement as an OT student in January 2011.

Since then David has continued to return in his own time to keep the Singing Group going. His enthusiasm and that of the group members have

taken the groups he runs from strength to strength.

If anybody would like to join this group which meets on a Wednesday at our Mappin Street Centre please call us.

Monthly Socials

We also have a social evening, usually on the third Thursday of each month. Transport is usually available for visually impaired people. This is a great opportunity to catch up with people you know and to meet new people. Light refreshments are provided and we have a variety of great entertainers. We would be very pleased to see some new faces.

We make a small charge of £5 for the social, including refreshments and transport.

Please ring Olwen at **SRSB** for more information.

CAMPAIGNS

Stop for Me, Speak to Me

This is a national campaign coordinated by RNIB aimed to improve visually impaired people's experience of bus travel. Their national survey highlighted a number of issues which were a problem across the country and with all bus operators. (For more info see <http://digbig.com/5bgydc>)

We recently held a meeting with RNIB, visually impaired people from across South Yorkshire, and senior executives from SYPTE, and the bus operators Stagecoach and First.

The biggest problem is getting the right bus to stop and for visually impaired travellers to identify which bus is which. There are particular

problems where two buses stop one behind the other at a stop. There are also problems in getting drivers to give clear information.

The representatives from the bus companies acknowledged the concerns that were aired, and are clearly very keen to make a lot of improvements.

Both First and Stagecoach confirmed that they do have a policy that drivers should stop at all stops for that service if anyone is waiting. They also regard 'customer care' as a priority for all drivers and accept that some drivers do not live up to the high standards expected of them.

They are taking the concerns back to their companies to make plans to improve their policies and training. We hope to arrange further meetings and public events with them.

In the meantime please let us have your feedback on your experiences of bus travel. We can raise issues on your behalf. We would also be very pleased to hear about your positive experiences where a driver has been especially good as the companies are keen to praise high standards and raise other staff to the same level. Please contact Patrick at **SRSB** with any feedback.

HOLIDAYS, DAY TRIPS AND OTHER OUTINGS

Holiday to Lytham St Anne's, September 2012

Our holiday started at **SRSB's** Mappin Street centre where we all met up ready to join the coach and were

bemoaning the weather as the heavens opened. The coach was delayed due to flooding en-route but we were all in holiday mood and determined to enjoy ourselves. While waiting several of us availed ourselves of the VIP cafe and had lunch. And we all mingled, chatted and caught up on the latest topics of interest.

When the coach arrived we were greeted by our courier Jilly and driver Paul. Ours was the last "pick up" so we had a comfortable, uninterrupted journey arriving in St. Anne's some two and a half hours later to be met by the very helpful Langdales Hotel staff and served tea and coffee in the ballroom while our luggage was unloaded and taken to our rooms.

After a quick change it was time for dinner, a varied menu throughout the week, and the entertainment later that first evening was provided by an accordion player/singer, preceded by the inevitable Bingo!

The following day, Tuesday, we were off to Southport straight after breakfast where some of our party spent time in the market, shopping arcades and antique centre in the famous Lord Street. Others spent time in cafes watching the world go by.

Meanwhile, back at the Langdales Hotel there was a tea dance, open to the public, which was enjoyed by those of our group who chose not to go to Southport.

It was back to the hotel by a scenic route in the afternoon where our courier and driver kept us entertained with a running commentary, passing

through small villages (eg Kirkham), passing the Lytham windmill, pointing out places of interest and farmland that looked for all the world like paddy-fields and lakes as far as the eye could see, under inches of flood water.

After dinner we were taken on a tour of Blackpool Illuminations which are spectacular and took us back to our childhoods! There were animated tableaux of nursery rhymes etc., a tribute to Neill Armstrong, references to the Queen's Jubilee along the route and all the way fantastic overhead displays on every lamp post and building. The trams were all lit up, moving and decorated – one as a boat, another as a train and a large rocket. The display went all the way from the Pleasure Beach to Squires Gate. There was less congestion on the Promenade than expected but it still took us well over 2 hours to traverse the whole and then return the same way, so we saw the show from all angles. All the time Jilly was describing the display for the benefit of those who could not see it all.

On Wednesday morning we set off on our planned outing to Skipton market. The weather was a little improved and there were open air market stalls, lots of shops/boutiques/ a craft and antique fair and plenty of goodies to buy. Away from the market square Holy Trinity church was an oasis of peace where several of us rested and reflected a while. One disappointment apparently was that the fantastic castle was only open from 10am-12pm so there was insufficient time to visit it. There were lots of cafes and the

Church Vestry tearooms for our party to refresh themselves.

Then it was back to the coach and Paul took us on a scenic trip of the countryside including the Vale of Bowland and surrounding moors and farmland. On our journey back there was a short hold up due to a flooded road, but while the police sorted out the traffic we occupied ourselves with a few jokes, a name game, a bit of a sing-song and tea/coffee were made for us by Jilly and Paul. The evening entertainment that night was provided by a very good singer.

Our itinerary for the next day, Thursday, took us to the Lake District. Once again Jilly and Paul gave us a commentary on the way. We passed through Ambleside and stopped first at Grasmere where the poet Wordsworth lived. His family are buried in St. Oswald's churchyard there. The church is well worth a visit and next door to it is Wordsworth's Daffodil Garden.

There's also the famous Grasmere Gingerbread on sale in the village which is made in what was once the tiny village school.

From Grasmere we went through Bowness/Windermere and stopped at Bowness where, with the weather being a bit kinder, several of us went for a cruise on Lake Windermere. Others sat by the lake and were entertained by the resident swans and yet others wandered around the little shops and cafes.

Those who stayed in St. Anne's explored the town, several "shopped

until they dropped," went on the beach, down onto the Pier or into the Ashton Gardens which were directly opposite the hotel (but rather waterlogged to say the least!) For anyone who didn't want or were not able to go far the hotel provided refreshments all through the day. It was only a short distance from the amenities and all the staff were very helpful.

Meanwhile - as we were returning from Bowness we passed through more spectacular scenery, moors and mountains, even more fields turned into enormous lakes with all the flooding and we were told to expect "a surprise" that evening.

Knowing we were leaving early the next morning and not wishing to miss the evening's entertainment I hastily packed as much as I could before going down to dinner - and it's a good job I did for the singer/comedian Jason and his wife Shirley kept us so helpless with laughter it was 11pm before some of us reluctantly started back to our rooms. The hotel owner, a member of staff and our driver dressed up as nuns and a priest and acted out a parody of "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria" to music from "The Sound of Music." This was followed by another costume change where, to the strains of "Hiawatha" Paul as the Indian brave and a "squaw" acted out the story with Paul "swimming" across the river (floor) to meet his "love." The whole evening was hilarious and a lovely finish to our stay.

On the journey home on Friday morning there was a free raffle with several prizes. We arrived back at Mappin Street about lunchtime where as usual our stalwart Olwen was waiting for us, helping wherever necessary and ordering taxis for those who wanted them.

Despite the weather it was a lovely holiday. Everyone seemed to give the resort a "thumbs up" - it is level and easily reached from Sheffield. There's plenty to do and you are only a short bus ride from Blackpool. We generally agreed I think that it was not long enough - three full days crammed with events - another "free day" in the middle to give us time to recharge our batteries would have been nice to explore St. Anne's itself - the marble church where Les Dawson married his wife Tracy was pointed out to us in passing but it would have been nice to be able to actually walk around the area.

Once again our thanks go out to Olwen and everyone involved in organising the holiday. Where are we off to next?

Seven days would be nice - Olwen has the Creative Travel brochures for next year. Why not talk to her, have a look, make suggestions - let's try and get a bigger complement together next time. This is the fourth holiday I have been on and have enjoyed them all - without them I wouldn't have got away at all and I think quite a few of you could say that.

Pat Marshall

Holidays for 2013

We hope that Pat's article about St Anne's has given you a flavour of the type of holidays we organise in conjunction with Creative Travel and perhaps encouraged you to think about joining us on a holiday this year.

We are in the process of planning what holidays to organise this year through Creative Travel.

We have already organised a holiday to Teignmouth for six days Sunday 16th June to Friday 21st June. Dinner, Bed and Breakfast for £382 at the 3 star Cliffden Hotel which specialises in holidays for blind and partially sighted people. The price includes coach travel to/from Teignmouth, coach tours most days, Steam Train Ride, and evening entertainment.

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

Llandudno Holiday Offer

The Belmont Hotel in Llandudno is offering a seven night break from Wednesday 27th February for £150 per person. For more information contact the hotel on **01492 877 770**. Please note that you need to make your own travel arrangements.

Day Trips

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

COMMUNITY ADVICE OFFICER NEWS

Benefits

You will probably have heard in the media that there are proposals to change various government benefits. Not all the details have been finalised yet, but we know that as a result of campaigning in conjunction with RNIB, some important improvements have been made for visually impaired people. Some changes are due to start in April but some are being phased in over the next few years. We would advise you to contact us if you receive any letters about benefits from DWP, Jobcentre Plus, Pensions Service, Sheffield City Council or any other organisation. It is always better if you seek advice straight away and do not complete any forms until after you have discussed your situation with one of our Community Advice Officers.

CULTURE CLUB

Culture Club

We've had a busy few months with the Culture Club. At the end of October we went to see Chicago at the Lyceum, November saw us back there for audio described performances of Ladykillers, Vagina Monologues and Woman in Black and in December to see Taste of Honey and Little Voice. In December we also went, for the second year running, to see the Christmas Cavalcade at the City Hall; we've had such good feedback about this event that we have already booked for a similar event to be run in the spring. We started this year with a trip to the Crucible to see a fantastic

performance of My Fair Lady. Prior to the show we had a touch tour giving clients the chance to feel the costumes and props.

In December we held a Christmas get together at Mappin Street, giving clients the chance to enjoy a mince pie and mulled wine and give us feedback on previous trips and ideas for future outings.

To receive the current information that we have about the trips we have organised please call Olwen or Joanne at **SRSB** to have your name added to our mailing list.

RP SUPPORT GROUP

We had a lovely pre-Christmas meeting. Alan Thorpe spoke about his life, his guide dogs and his gadgets. We continue to get around 30 people attending each meeting and as always Mr Achyra, Consultant Ophthalmologist from The Royal Hallamshire Hospital, attends for a question and answer session. Our next session is planned for 6th March. Please let us know if you hope to attend.

GLAUCOMA SUPPORT GROUP

We are holding our second Glaucoma Support Group meeting on 3rd April at 2pm. We have David Harris from the International Glaucoma Association coming along to do a presentation. This will include demonstrating how to effectively apply the eye-drops and which type of applicators might be suitable.

Please let us know if you hope to attend.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

We had a busy December with 2 Christmas parties, the big **SRSB** party was held once again at Monkey Bizness on the 15th. It was a fantastic evening, we had nearly 100 children attend, Father Christmas came and everyone had a really good time. We've had some lovely feedback from parents and children. We were really grateful to Saira and Michelle from the Visual Impairment team who came along to help.

We had 10 children come along to our Sparklers Party which we held at Jungle Mania on the 19th December. Again we had Father Christmas and we also had Julia, our music lady, along to do us a Christmas sing-along session.

In December we also helped out with Actionnaires trip to Xscape at Castleford for a snow tubing and tobogganing session. We provided Minibuses and staff, everyone had a great day, but lots of wet feet and cold hands on the way home!!

We started the year with a trip to the Lyceum Panto. It was an audio described performance of Cinderella. We had 30 children and adults attend and again feedback has been very positive.

We then went to West Yorkshire Playhouse for the annual RNIB/AFBP event. This year it was an audio described performance of Wind in the Willows. This regional event attracts over 300 children, with **SRSB** taking over 50. It was a brilliant event, the

children had a lovely light lunch and a fantastic touch tour.

We've got plenty planned for 2013, more theatre trips, days out and activity days.

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

STAFF

Unusually for **SRSB** we have a few staff changes to tell you about this month.

Helen Ford and Sheila Osborne, our Activity Centre Supervisors, left at Christmas. We are currently recruiting a replacement but in the meantime it is business as usual with Ralph Barton deputising, very ably supported by Debbie Weller who usually works in our café.

Jin-ger, one of our cleaners and a volunteer in our cafe, also left at Christmas as she returned home to Malaysia to take up a job there. A new cleaner is due to start at the beginning of February.

Bob Addenbrooke, one of our minibus drivers has also just left us so we are recruiting for this role as well.

We are sorry to see all these staff leave, for a variety of different reasons, but we wish them well for the future.

LEISURE EVENTS AND SPORT

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**.

Sheffield VI Ten Pin Bowling

This year we have had 4 teams entered into the British Blind Sports summer pair's league, all four of these teams managed to finish in the top four of their respective leagues three of which qualified for the national finals held in Swindon on 17th November 2012.

We had a very good and successful weekend where all eight of the players came away with at least two awards. We must say a big thank you to **SRSB** because without the use of their minibus we would not have been able to compete. Celtic Bhoys (Lee Hartley, Tony Clark and Jordan Clarke) won the event and between them won several awards including high scores, best scratch team and handicap knockout winners. Girl Power (Jean Linton, Natalie McMillan and also Stephanie Harris who could not make it on the day but made a big contribution throughout the summer with her consistent bowling in the league) came 3rd and also won their league. Jean was also named the most improved female bowler of the year. Turkey Trio (Kyle, Kurt and Sylvia Crossland) came 4th and also won the high handicap game. We have won other events this year too and hope to continue our best run in years.

We are all about meeting up and having a good time as well as entering teams into national leagues. We meet once a fortnight at the 1st Bowl Centre

in Firth Park at around 18.45 to start playing at 19.00. We are always looking for new players of all ages and skill levels, if you fancy giving it a go please contact Lee Hartley on **07725 745 110** or by email lgh1980@googlemail.com

1st Bowl Centre is also the venue in May each year for British Blind Sports Ten Pin Bowling finals that are sponsored by Westfield Health. The centre is very disabled friendly and the staff there are great. The centre is easily reached by many buses from all over the city and has a big car park too.

Lee Hartley

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.

Enhanced Vision and Dolphin

On 27th February from 10am to 3pm there will be the opportunity to try Enhanced Vision's range of video magnifiers from small pocket sized devices through to large desk top models that will also interface with your computer. Dolphin will also be here demonstrating their range of accessible computer software.

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 three students who have very recently started their placements with us.

Alice is a medical student with us for six weeks. Alison and Shivani are Occupational Therapy students who are with us for three months.

Some of you will be lucky enough to see them either on home visits or working in our Activity Centre.

We will let you know how they get on in future newsletters.

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.

This newsletter is available in a variety of formats including audio format on CD, braille, by email, or print in the font size of your choice on a variety of different coloured paper. If you are struggling to read this newsletter then please contact us to discuss an alternative format.

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



5 Mappin Street, Sheffield, S1 4DT | Registered Charity No: 1047257

TEL: 0114 272 2757 | Email: info@srsb.org.uk | www.srsb.org.uk