



BucksVision
Visual Impairment Charity

RNIB Supporting people
with sight loss

Spring 2018

Newsletter



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BucksVision



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Welcome

This month's introduction is different from my usual review of the updates and features within these pages. Instead, I am going to use it as an opportunity to talk about something that is a "hot topic"!

That topic is **data protection** and a change to the law that is happening in May of this year, with **General Data Protection Regulation** (abbreviated to **GDPR**) coming into effect.

Now, please bear with me, I appreciate that data protection may not be the most exciting of subjects but the changes that are happening are significant. So, why am I mentioning it here? Well, the first thing to say is that GDPR is about ensuring that companies treat people's data responsibly. In particular, people should understand how their data is being used, with no "nasty surprises".

Here at BucksVision we are reviewing our systems to ensure that we comply with best practice. I must add that we have been ably supported by our national partner, RNIB, who have provided useful guidance and training to us.

Under the new rules, you can specify exactly **what** information you would like to receive and **how** you would like to receive it. If we send you information that you would prefer not to receive, **please let us know**. We are keen to ensure that our communications are useful, interesting and... **welcome**.

So, **welcome** to this edition of our Newsletter, we hope that you enjoy reading it and remain extremely grateful for your support.

Steve Naylor
Chief Executive

Ian Jenkins, Our Marathon Runner



Ian Jenkins is running the marathon to raise money for us. Anne and Steve met with Ian to find out more.

Ian, why did you want to run the Marathon?

I have applied for a ballot place for six years with no success. I'm 35 now and I want to run the marathon before I hit 40. My mum has been supported by BucksVision, so I was delighted to discover that the charity had a space allocated.

Does your mum have sight loss?

Yes a few years ago my mum woke up having lost 70% of her vision. It was a difficult time.

So she found out about BucksVision?

Yes. As my parents came to terms with the sight loss my dad found BucksVision and contacted you for advice on what support was available for my mum.

How did you get into running?

I have always been sporty, I used to play football for a number of years and I also worked in a gym.

What is your training regime?

I am running every weekend now to prepare. I did have Christmas off so I could fully enjoy the food! I started back up in January and have built up to running 14 miles.

I hope to push it up again to 16 miles then gradually increase it up to 23. Then in the run up to the marathon I will decrease the miles I am running so am fresh and raring to go!

Do you listen to music whilst you run?

Yes I have an iPod and playlists to run to. I listen to old school dance music, indie, old rock music, anything really!

How long do you think it will take you to complete the marathon?

My half marathon in September took me 1 hr 58 min so my aim is to do it in under 4 hours. This may be difficult to achieve but I am certainly going to give it a very good try!

Will your family and friends come down to support you?

Yes. My family are staying over the night before. We plan to have a relaxing evening so I am all ready for the big day.

And what about you, what's your background?

I am key account manager at Quanta. We provide recruitment services to companies.

Does everyone at work know that you are doing this?

Yes they all do and have been very supportive. Now Christmas is out of the way I have been around asking for sponsorship!

Thank you for talking to us Ian and very good luck with your training.

So far Ian has raised half of his £2,000 target. If you would like to support Ian to meet his target please donate via his page on www.virginmoneygiving.com or call the office.

Donate



Living with Loss of Sight Course

If you have recently been diagnosed with sight loss why not attend a Living with Sight Loss (LWSL) course, delivered by RNIB.

LWSL courses provide information, advice, support and practical solutions for people new to sight loss.

They'll help you to adjust to your sight condition, increase independence and boost your confidence. You will also get the chance to meet and share experiences with others in similar situations.

These courses are for adults of all ages. Friends, family members or anyone close to you are also encouraged to attend.

What topics are covered?

- Welfare rights
- Getting out and about
- Tips and gadgets for everyday living
- Assistive technology

- Eye health
 - Wellbeing
 - Leisure, hobbies and interests.
-

How to attend

The next course will take place on **Friday 6 July and Friday 13 July** from 10.00am to 3.30pm each day at our office in Aylesbury.

If you would like to book a place/s please call the office on **01296 487 556** or email **reception@bucksvision.co.uk**

Phone Groups

If you're unable to attend a course in person, why not join an RNIB Phone Group instead?

They are led by a facilitator and cover similar topics as a face-to-face course. You'll have the opportunity to chat to others and find out useful information.

Phone groups run for four short sessions, over four weeks. Contact us or RNIB to find out more.

As mentioned in the Winter Newsletter our re-launched arts and crafts competition will take place on Friday 27 July at the Quarrendon and Meadowcroft Community Centre.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a programme for the event which outlines the timings for the day, the classes available to enter and the competition guidelines.

Whether you wish to enter or simply want to come along on the day we would love to hear from you!

On 15 April 1988 BucksVision's brand new Resource Centre was officially opened by the late Sir Ian Gilmour MP.

We plan to have an event to commemorate the 30th birthday and all those who were involved in raising money to build it. Part of the celebration will also involve officially opening our refurbished resource room.

If you have any memories or pictures about the opening in 1988 please get in touch with us. **More details about the celebration will be circulated shortly.**

Sir Ian Gilmour opens our new Resource Centre 30 years ago



Interview with a Volunteer



Alma, first of all, tell us how long you have volunteered for us and what you do.

I started last August. I take a lady shopping in High Wycombe for clothes, around Boots, to the post office or anything else needed. Then we have a cup of coffee together and I really enjoy her company and I think she enjoys mine so we've been matched really well.

Now, you weren't born in the UK, were you?

No, I'm an Armenian, born in Tehran, Iran.

So what brought you over here?

I finished my education in the '60s and wanted to come to London where everything was happening. So I applied to do a nursing course in the UK and did my training at Wycombe and Amersham hospital in 1967.

And what sort of nursing did you do?

I did general nursing to begin with then I went to St Mary's hospital in Paddington and did a one year Operating Theatre specialist course. Four years prior to finishing my training I had met my late husband, John. I went back to Tehran for a year but John followed me and we got married there. We then returned to Wycombe, where I got a job in the hospital. We had two sons

Lisa Redford, Volunteer Supervisor, chats with Alma Pearce

together and I've been here ever since.

So how did you come to get involved with us?

After I retired from nursing I joined the Movers and Shakers in High Wycombe to do Tai Chi. After our Tai Chi session we normally have a speaker in. One Tuesday the speaker was yourself, Lisa, and I was so impressed with the talk that I thought that I must join this fantastic organisation.

So you don't regret going to Movers and Shakers that day then?

Definitely not! I'm glad I went! I love shopping and rummaging round the shops so it's nice to take someone and explain what's going on, read bits of information and just enjoy ourselves.

When you're not volunteering for us or going to Movers and Shakers, what else do you do with your time?

I socialise a lot. I never turn down the opportunity to go out with friends! I also enjoy gardening and playing poker. I have two grandchildren living close by and my granddaughter is doing drama at Jackie Palmers, so I go to all her shows.

If someone you knew was thinking of volunteering for us, would you tell them to go ahead and give it a try?

Definitely. You get so much satisfaction from helping someone and you can enjoy a few hours away from your ordinary weekly chores doing something different.

If you would like to volunteer for our shopping role or you are visually impaired and would like to know more about this service, please call the office and ask to speak to Lisa.

Phone **01296 487 556** or email **iredford@bucksvision.co.uk**

Goalball launch - a fantastic success



On Saturday 3 February BucksVision and Goalball UK launched the Paralympic sport of Goalball at the birthplace of the Paralympics, Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

Sixty people attended, a mix of players, potential volunteers and other organisations. The day was a fantastic success with everyone trying out Goalball and having a lot of fun!

Our many thanks go to Goalball UK who led the session and to Tesco, Tring Road, Aylesbury who provided refreshments. We are also grateful to Aylesbury Vale District Council and Persimmon for their grants.

Goalball Club Dates

Now we have launched the club there will be monthly sessions open to all to learn how to play the sport.

The upcoming dates are:

Saturday 21 April

Sunday 13 May

Saturday 2 June

Sunday 24 June

All sessions are from 9.00am to 12.30pm at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

If you missed the launch and are interested in playing Goalball please get in touch we would love to hear from you!

MK Museum

Last November a group of BucksVision members and volunteers visited Milton Keynes Museum to reminisce about the area.

The growth of Milton Keynes since it became a new city back in 1967 led to the discovery of many artefacts buried in the ground and provided a rich insight into how people lived in the area many years ago.

After been shown around a Victorian school room and living areas we wandered down the museum's street of shops where we were able to look into sweet shops, bootmakers and tailors from bygone years. We then enjoyed a fantastic picnic lunch provided by a team of museum volunteers.



Wycombe Museum



On Wednesday 7 March, we visited Wycombe Museum, famous for its chair collection.

We arrived early and split into two groups, each group had the opportunity to experience two interactive sessions. Led by our knowledgeable guide, Keith, we explored the museum, including a replica 1920's kitchen, where we learnt about the life of a servant during the era.

We also enjoyed a handling session with Mandy, including a copper kettle, flat iron and an original washboard. The smell of the soaps and cleaners from the past inspired many memories, which the group shared with each other during the afternoon.

Best apps

Henshaws have put together a list of apps which are specifically created to assist people with sight loss in their day to day lives.

They can help with identifying objects, reading text, magnification, navigation and much more.

We have highlighted a few of the apps below but please contact the office for the full list.

SEEING AI

The app, currently only available on iOS, uses the device's camera to perform a number of useful functions including:

Reading text

It can read documents just by placing text in front of the camera or you can take a photo of the document and it will read it to you.

The app also includes the ability to read **handwriting** although this is still a “work in progress”.

Identifying a product based on its barcode

It snaps a photo and reads the name of the product and any other information stored within the barcode.

Recognising people and providing a description of their visual appearance such as their gender, facial expression and other identifying characteristics.

Recognising images within other apps - just tap “Share and Recognise” with Seeing AI.

It also boasts colour and currency detection and more.

iOS / Free

BeSpecular

“Let blind people see through your eyes” is their tagline and this app matches sighted volunteers with visually impaired users.

The visually impaired person takes a photo of what he or she needs help with and attaches a voice message, which is sent to a community of volunteers (or sightlings as they call them). Within minutes, the user receives a reply and then rates out of five stars the helpfulness of the volunteer. This app is great because you get a description from a real human being, it's very accessible and it's quick.

iOS / Android / Free

Magnifying Glass with Light

This app enables the user to very simply magnify text or objects up to 10x. You can have the light on or off and simply tap to focus.

The simple features all work well with VoiceOver and it's great for someone with a low level visual impairment for things like reading menus or receipts.

iOS / Free

Soundscape

Created by Microsoft Soundscape provides information about your surroundings by creating the effect of 3D sound.

It can run in the background in conjunction with navigation or other applications to provide you with additional context about the environment. Your phone tracks movement using location and activity sensors, and lets you move toward a self-set audio beacon.

iPhone 5S or later

iOS / Free

Walking Group



From April we will be starting up again, enjoying Buckinghamshire's beautiful countryside. Walks vary in length and terrain.

If you are not already on our walking group list and would like to join us, please give the office a call or email [Lisa Redford](mailto:Lisa.Redford@bucksvision.co.uk) [iredford@bucksvision.co.uk](mailto:Lisa.Redford@bucksvision.co.uk).

Gardening

As we approach Spring and the weather gets warmer our minds also start to turn to gardening.

Thrive is an organisation which uses gardening to change lives. They have also created practical guides on how to carry on gardening when you have

various disabilities, including visual impairment. They provide useful hints and tips on digging, weeding, mowing, pruning, sowing seeds and garden design.

If you are interested in any of their publications get in touch with us on 01296 487 556.

Telephone Befriending

BucksVision is pleased to announce that we have launched our telephone befriending service.

We are seeking both members and volunteers to join so if you have sight loss and would like a friendly chat with someone weekly, fortnightly or monthly, please give us a ring and let us know.

Organisations can refer people to us for this service by emailing lredford@bucksvision.co.uk or calling the office.

Volunteers can be visually impaired or fully sighted so if you would like to help BucksVision without even moving from your armchair, then here's your opportunity!

Skills required:

- a friendly telephone manner
 - a good listener
 - a caring, friendly, helpful and understanding nature.
-

Anyone not already a volunteer will need to go through our volunteer process.

If you want to find out more get in touch with us; we look forward to hearing from you.



Little Match Girl Theatre Trip

The Little Match Girl and other Happier Tales by Jean Ley

I was lucky enough to be included on a trip organised by BucksVision to the Oxford Playhouse's 'The Little Match Girl' on Saturday 17 February. The show was described as one of imagination and mystery based loosely on a selection of Hans Christian Anderson's stories.

It turned out to be a kind of Christmas pantomime, very skilfully produced, heart-warming and achingly sad at the same time. **I would not have missed it for all the world.**

It is a long time since I have been on a coach trip. We made an early start as we were to be split into two groups for Touch Tours before lunch and the performance. The Touch Tours consisted of talking with some of the cast, actors and musicians who told us about the production and most importantly

showed us their beautifully made costumes.

Pride of place was the homeless Little Match Girl herself, an eerily lifelike puppet of 4/5 years of age. On stage she was operated by a puppeteer dressed in dark blue who crouched on stage and operated the strings that made her movements look so real.

For lunch I can recommend the basement of the Ashmolean opposite the theatre. They serve the best coffee I have had for a long time! I came across an easy movement class for older people which I would have liked to join but my radio bleeped and it was time to go back to the theatre. On the way back, we noticed how many beggars there were, with some sleeping on the pavement.

We took up our places in the stalls, row M and I feared the worst. However, though I could only see an illuminated rectangle of the stage, I did at least



Linda & Judy meet the Little Match Girl

have a basic understanding of what was happening. The audio description through the earphones I was wearing filled in the details.

The Little Match Girl persuaded various characters to light a match and each time a version of a Hans Christian Anderson story was enacted by the company of Ole and the Shuteyes to the accompaniment of music and dancing.

The mistreatments of poor Thumbelina were realistic to the point that I worried for the children in the audience.

However, I perked up when the Emperor, wearing a flesh



Meeting Thumbelina

coloured knitted onesie complete with knitted penis, demanded a referendum of the audience on whether he had any clothes on or not. When he was unconvinced by the result he immediately demanded a second referendum!

The finale was very sad. The Little Match Girl had only three matches left. She insisted that they should all be struck and as the third one fizzled out, she laid down on the pavement and died.

At the end of the performance the cast spoke about homelessness and there was a collection for Crisis as people were leaving.

From the Archives

Joan Woodward, 29, was born totally blind but her story is one of special achievement, courage and success.

'You've got to have a go!'

JOAN Woodward of Stone, lives in a world without colour, a place where a few prams parked on a narrow Aylesbury pavement can prove a potential major hazard.

Because 29 year-old Joan — a telephonist at Barclays Bank in Aylesbury's Market Square — was born three-months premature and totally blind.

Her story is one of achievement, courage and success at bringing a special kind of personal colour into the darkness of a life without sight.

Last weekend, she won her second bronze medal at the eighth

by SHERON DAVIS

months that winning last year's bronze in the 400 metre race was just a 'sheer fluke.'

"Two of the five entrants last year pulled out so I had to get the bronze," she said, laughing.

Medal

Yet, the circumstances in which she took the coveted medal far from undermine the win. It was 88 degrees in the shade, her first attempt at such a distance, and her opponents included 1984's Olympic gold medalist.

says she cannot take her sporting career too seriously and doesn't mind admitting she does no training at all.

For her, life is just too busy to find the time.

Not only is she Chiltern Sports Club publicity officer, a member of the Luton and District Climbing Club and Cain and Abel club, a keen rambler, and an avid tandem rider, she was recently amongst a party of blind telephonists who undertook an ascent of Mount Snowdon.

Cycling



□ Joan proudly holds aloft her bronze medal won at the national games for the blind.

remarkable person she is.

"I believe you have got to have a go. You don't know what is going to happen as each day comes and I think you have to make the best of the opportunities

there is no guide — just the race starter to point the entrants in the right direction.

"Often it is the simple things in life that become something quite major," she said and cited going round the

On a regular tidy up of the office staff came across this gem of an article, 'You've got to have a go!', about Joan Woodward, one of our longest serving volunteers.

"29 year-old Joan - a telephonist at Barclays Bank in Aylesbury - was born three months premature and totally blind.

Her story is one of achievement, courage and success at bringing

a special kind of personal colour into the darkness of a life without sight.

Last weekend, she won her second bronze medal at the eighth National Games for the Blind in Manchester in the 200 metres running event with a time of 47 seconds in the final."

An extract of article originally published in the Bucks Advertiser on 19 July 1985

Other Activities

Music at Lunchtime

St Marys Church Aylesbury

Don't forget if you live in Aylesbury St Marys Church host **concert performances every Thursday at 12.45pm.**

Cost is £4.00
18 and under go free.

Upcoming concerts

12 April Oliver Nelson, violin
Vasilis Rakitzis, piano

19 April Kevin Cahill, guitar

Memory Lane Wycombe Museum

This event is an opportunity for people of all ages to meet socially and share their stories of the past. They are free, drop-in, and last about 45 minutes. All are welcome.

Drop In | Free
Tuesday 10 April at 11am

For sale

Optelec ClearView C

A desktop magnifier only three years old, with stand.
In good condition. OIRO £500
Collection from Chalfont.

I-Pad Air for sale

With protective cover three years old. £100.

Optelec Scanner and Opetlec Reader

OIRO of £300
Collection High Wycombe only.

Optelec Desktop Magnifier

With Stand. OIRO of £100
Collection from Aylesbury

Collection boxes

If you have a home collection box we would be delighted if you could count up the money you have collected and send it in to us.

You can then continue to use the box! Thank you for your continued support.

Useful Contacts

● **Bucks Integrated Sensory Service (BISS) - 01296 479 970**

For support dealing with sight loss at home in Buckinghamshire.

● **Sensory Advice Resource Centre (SARC) - 01908 401 135**

For support dealing with sight loss at home in Milton Keynes.

● **RNIB - 0303 123 9999**

Advice and support with all aspects of sight loss.

● **Macular Society - 0300 3030 111 (Helpline)**

Information and support for people with macular conditions.

● **Age UK Bucks - 01296 431 911**

● **Age UK Milton Keynes - 01908 550 700**

Support for older people to help them achieve and maintain independence and wellbeing.

● **MK Reader Service - 01908 231 123**

Support with reading and shopping in Milton Keynes.

● **Talking News Federation - 01793 497 555**

Information on local talking newspapers.

● **British Wireless for the Blind - 01622 754 757**

Radio sets on free loan for people who meet the criteria.

● **BucksVision - 01296 487 556**

● **143 Meadowcroft, Aylesbury, HP19 9HH**

● **www.bucksvision.co.uk**