



Oxfordshire

Association for the Blind

Newsletter

February
2015

Happy New Year!

I hope that the New Year has started well for you and that you had an enjoyable Christmas. I certainly enjoyed attending some of the Christmas Lunches for the Groups for Sight Impaired People around the county. The Lunches were a great success and a further example of the hard work and organisation of our dedicated volunteer workers. As many of you know through personal experience, our volunteers help us in so many ways, including organising group activities, visiting to assist sight impaired people, Information Technology, administration, fundraising, newsletter packing, radio delivery, newsletter reading, practical help on the building and many other ways. We are immensely grateful for all of their efforts on our behalf.

I'm pleased to say that our IT volunteer, Guy, will be receiving the City of Oxford Award for his services to our organisation in February. Congratulations, Guy. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to our Christmas Appeal. Your kind help enables us to continue to develop our services to sight impaired people all around the county. One of the activities that we are looking to expand this year is our Awareness of Sight Impairment Training to other organisations. We're often asked by our members to try to raise awareness of the abilities and needs of visually impaired people, and in offering this training to organisations we are aiming to do just that. If you know

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The Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

Registered Charity No.1140556 and Company Limited by Guarantee No. 07465300

**Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Rivermead Park,
Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL.**

Telephone 01865 725595 Fax 01865 725596

E-mail : information@oxeyes.org.uk • Web site : www.oxeyes.org.uk

Opening hours 9.00am - 4.00pm weekdays

Chair : David Warr; Vice-chair : Adrian Hill; Treasurer : John Hewitt;

Director : Colin Cure; Client Services Manager : Mark Upton;

Administrator : Sarah Milrose; Accounts : Michael Ling;

Group Welfare Officer : Mary Gregory; Information Worker : David Thompson;

Senior Sight Advisor : Judith Wood; Volunteer Co-ordinator : Caroline Ludden;

Fundraiser : Rebecca Benney; Advice Worker : Angela Howard;

Development Worker : Ana Novakovic;

*Your Newsletter is compiled and edited by David Thompson
We are extremely grateful to Neil Stockton at Radio Cherwell
for his assistance in producing the audio edition of this Newsletter*



Directors Article

of an organisation that would benefit from the training, please do ask them to get in touch with us. I hope that 2015 is a good one for you. Best wishes, Colin. ■■■

Saturday Opening

Our Resource Centre will be open to visitors Saturday 7th March from 9.30am to 12.30pm. We will have our experts on hand to show you around the equipment and explain what services are available. To book an appointment please call us on 01865 725595. ■■■

OAB on Facebook

Just a quick reminder that OAB are now on Facebook! If you're a Facebook user why not "Like" our page and follow our regular updates. You can find us by searching Oxfordshire Association for the Blind on the Facebook search bar. ■■■

Come and join us

Don't forget you can show your support for us by joining our membership scheme, we have a membership form on page 8. ■■■

OAB Database

We would like to offer our sincere apologies to anyone that has received this newsletter in error or in a format they haven't requested. We are currently having a few database issues since we have updated our IT systems and we are in the process of moving to a new database. If you have received this in error or in the wrong format please contact Sarah or Mark at OAB on 01865 725595 . Thank you for your patience at this time. ■■■

Do you live in Cherwell?

May we take this opportunity to remind people living in the Cherwell District of Oxfordshire that OAB has secured funding that enables us to make a contribution to the cost of travel for them when visiting us at Bradbury Lodge in Oxford. For further information call us on 01865 725595. ■■■

Tribute to PD James

It was with sadness that we learned of the death of the marvellous author Phyllis Dorothy James, Baroness James of Holland Park, OBE, FRSA, FRSL, who kindly spoke at our Fundraising Dinner in April this year.

Phyllis was born in Oxford in 1920. From 1949 to 1968 she worked in the National Health Service and subsequently in the Home Office, first in the Police Department and later in the Criminal Policy Department. All that experience was used to great effect in her highly successful and much praised novels. She was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and of the Royal Society of Arts and served as a Governor of the BBC, a member of the Arts Council, on the Board of the British Council, and as a magistrate in Middlesex and London. She was an Honorary Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple. She won awards for crime writing in Britain, America, Italy and Scandinavia. She received honorary degrees from seven British



universities, was awarded an OBE in 1983, and was created a life peer in 1991. In 1997 she was elected President of the Society of Authors.

When we heard her entertaining talk at our Dinner in April, she spoke about how she was learning to cope with the progressive challenges of dry macular degeneration. She clearly approached her visual impairment with great fortitude and determination. Her charm and good humour shone through very strongly and we are most grateful to her for honouring our event. Her husband died in 1964 and she is survived by their daughters, Clare and Jane, five grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. ■■■

Meet the team: Mary Gregory

In this edition, we'd like to focus on our longest serving member of staff, who many of you will know, Mary Gregory.

When Mary joined OAB in 1977, the charity had very few members of staff. Mary was the new Crafts Officer.

In those days, craft workshops for people with visual impairments were the norm. They created woven cane rims for trays, knitted dishcloths and made pot scourers and peg bags. One man made willow baskets, while another assembled wooden stools. With this little cottage industry thriving, someone had to sell it all. So Mary spent her weekends travelling all over the county – to steam rallies, village fairs and shows, and local bazars. On one occasion she and a helper put up a tent at a steam rally, then disappeared inside it to shelter from the pouring rain, with sandwiches and a bottle of homemade wine for cheer. A considerable time later, they peeked out to

discover the tent was alone in the middle of the field, surrounded by water, and requiring rescue by a tractor. Mary describes these as 'wonderful years'.

As time passed, the craft classes became social groups, and Mary became OAB's Groups Worker. Along the way, she demonstrated specialist visual impairment equipment, ran Information Days, and organised holidays where visually impaired people could have a break in specialist hotels at seaside resorts.

Today, as the charity's part-time Groups Worker Mary is still the key link person back to OAB for people all over Oxfordshire. She supports eight social groups that mostly meet fortnightly, delivering the next year's large print diaries and calendars, picking up talking watches that need new batteries and organising visits to OAB's resource centre. Mary runs one of the groups herself and has done

for many years.

Mary remains hugely enthusiastic about the charity's work, and is often turned to for the knowledge and experience she has built up over 37 years of service.



OAB comes to Witney

We had a great day running an OAB information day at Henley library on the 27th November 2014, thank you to those of you who came to see us and to the library staff for being so friendly and helpful.

I am pleased to say that we will be running another one at Witney Library, Welch Way, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 6JH on Wednesday 4th March 2015 from 10.30am until 2pm.

If you, or someone you know, has difficulty with their sight, why not come along and talk with one of our representatives who has expertise in special equipment and services.

We will bring a small selection of special equipment and will be pleased to meet you. For further information please contact Angela Howard on 01865 725595. ■■■

Android comes to OAB



As you may know, we have been able to demonstrate the Ipad to clients interested in using a tablet, portable computer. Now we are able to demonstrate an example of an "Android" based tablet computer. It carries software that allows access for people with limited vision.

This software also runs on some "Android Smartphones" as well which means that they can be made accessible to VIPs.

For more information or to book an Appointment call us here on 01865 725595 and ask for Mark. ■■■

CCTV for you?

At Bradbury Lodge we have a range of electronic magnifiers, commonly known as CCTVs because they are a closed circuit in that the camera usually feeds directly to a screen. These magnifiers are quite large and require adequate table space in order to be used properly. However, for some visually impaired people they are an invaluable aid to independence allowing them to keep up with personal correspondence, read newspaper articles, etc. Indeed some artists with sight loss use them to carry on with their creativity. Most of the CCTV magnifiers we have are on loan from the UK suppliers in order that we can demonstrate them to clients. However, occasionally we do have them donated to us and, once we have had them checked for safety, place them with clients who would find them useful. If you would like to come and try out a CCTV Electronic Magnifier just give us a call on 01865 725595 to book an appointment. ■■■

Oxford and District Club for the Hard of Hearing

We are a mixed social group who have impaired hearing or an interest in hearing impairment issues. The club also has a deafblind member. People who have a visual impairment are extremely welcome to join us. The club has a varied programme. The first Wednesday in the month is a Bingo afternoon. Then there are talks, entertainment, club meals, luncheon outings, and games afternoons. At every meeting, the members donate items for a raffle. Light refreshments are provided at a small charge.

The club meets every Wednesday from 2.00pm till 5.00pm at the Oxford Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre, Littlegate Street, St. Ebbe's Street Oxford, OX1 1RL. New members are always, welcome, so why not come along and join us. Contact details for further information: Tel/Minicom: 01865 243447, Email: Oxford.HoHClub@gmail.com ■■■



Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind is registered as a charity in England and Wales No.1140556 and as a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales No. 07465300

Membership and donation

Membership

Annual Membership

(£10.00)

Life Member

(£250)

By becoming a member, I/we agree to be bound by the articles of association of OAB (which is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity).
A copy of the Articles of Association is available on request.

If you would like to make a donation we would be very grateful

Donation

£10

£20

£50

Other amount

If you are eligible, please Gift Aid your payment by signing the declaration on page 11

Please complete your name and address details. If you wish to pay by standing order, please also complete the form on the facing page and return to us at:

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Oxford, OX1 4XL.

Signed

Date

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Email _____



Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL.

Phone : 01865 725595 Fax : 01865 725596

Standing order instruction

To the Manager:.....Bank plc
at:
.....
.....Post Code

Please pay to CAF Bank, 25 Kings Hill Avenue,
Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ
Sort Code 40-52-40

For the credit of Oxfordshire Association for the Blind
Account number is 00015471

The sum of £..... (in words).....
on theday of20.....
and the same sum on the same day in each succeeding
month / quarter / year (**delete as appropriate**) until further
notice and debit my account number

Signed **Date**

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

Have you remembered GiftAid?

Baking Days take the biscuit!

We had a fantastic time before Christmas making and decorating festive gingerbread biscuits. Everyone was busy mixing, rolling and cutting the biscuits, and soon the smells of them cooking wafted around the building! Once out of the oven the group

decorated their own biscuits with icing, sprinkles and even marshmallows. Our next baking morning is on Tuesday 31st March at 10am, if you would like to join in please contact Sarah Milrose on 01865 725595. ■■■

Craft Session at OAB

Are you interested in joining us for an arts and crafts session at OAB? Why not come and join Sarah and Angela for an enjoyable afternoon and don't worry no experience is necessary and all materials will be provided. The session

will take place at the Bradbury Lodge on Wednesday 11th March from 2-4pm. If you would like to book a place please contact Sarah Milrose on 01865 725595 or admin@oxeyes.org.uk. ■■■

VIP Dance Class

The class is open to everyone with visual impairment from 16 years upwards and no upper limit! For those with severe sight impairment or no sight at all there will be sighted guides available to assist. The style of dance is modern/contemporary. To book call 01865 725595

Date 12th March 2015
Time 3.00pm to 4.30pm.
Venue St Luke's Church Hall, Canning Crescent, Oxford, OX1 4XB.
Cost: £5 waged, £3 unwaged to include refreshments. ■■■

Gift Aid Declaration for present and future donations

If you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax, ticking one of the Gift Aid Boxes means we can claim money from HM Revenue and Customs based on your donation, increasing its value by 25%.

Please treat only this payment as Gift Aid

Or

Please treat this and all other donations to OAB
after this date as Gift Aid

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand that the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Please notify OAB if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Signed **Date**

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

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Your Support Does Make a Difference



We rely on individuals and local groups within the community to assist us with raising awareness and funds. For example, Jo Kalies, who runs a football team for visually impaired children, organised a charity bubble football match back in November (see photo above). Half the proceeds went to OAB.

The Kidlington and Woodstock Rotary Club raised money for OAB from a 10K race at Blenheim in the autumn and a Christmas collection held outside Sainsbury's in December, where they also distributed information

leaflets about the work of OAB. The BMW group in Oxford made a donation to OAB as a proportion of employee fundraising during the course of 2014.

Our thanks go to the above and to all those who have supported our work over the past year. If you, or someone you know, is considering planning a fundraising activity on behalf of OAB in 2015, we can provide you with some ideas, information and resources. Simply contact OAB on 01865 725595 or email fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk



Christmas Appeal

Thank you to everyone who made a donation to our 2014 Christmas Appeal. Thanks to your generosity we have received over £2,000 which will enable us to continue our work into 2015 to further develop the services we provide from our Resource Centre in Oxford and around the county.

It's still not too late to make a contribution, should you wish. Our donation page remains open at <https://www.justgiving.com/OABChristmasAppeal/> where you can make a secure online donation. Thank you. ■■■

Bike Oxford

Be part of the OAB team for the Bike Oxford sponsored event which will take place on Sunday 13th September. Starting and finishing in Oxford, riders can select one of three circular routes taking in some of Oxfordshire's finest scenery. To find out more about taking part email fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk or call 01865 725595. ■■■

Keep On Recycling

If you're having a clear out please remember that we are still recycling unwanted jewellery, mobile phones, old or foreign coins and banknotes. Please bring them in to the recycling box located in the foyer at OAB or contact us and we can send you out special recycling envelopes for you to return them in.

If you have a large number of items, we may be able to collect them from you. For a full list of the items we can take please see the Recycle for OAB page on our website in the Helping OAB section, or contact the OAB office. ■■■

Get them while they're fresh

We still have some large print diaries and wall calendars in stock. We also have telephone and address books, in A5 and desktop sizes. For more information or to order call Sarah at OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

Heating Help?

We are grateful to South Oxfordshire District Council for this edited article from their Outlook magazine ■■■

Are you struggling to heat your home?

We're part of a group set up to tackle fuel poverty in our county. The group is called the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network. The group offers free, impartial advice about keeping warm and well in winter, including tips on saving energy, managing fuel bills and fuel debt, switching suppliers, and benefit entitlement checks. So, if you're facing a difficult winter in terms of heating your home or want some general advice, give the Affordable Warmth Helpline a call on 0800 107 0044. ■■■

VIBNO

VIBNO (which stands for Visually Impaired But Not Old) is a group for people aged 18 - 50 to meet socially and have fun.

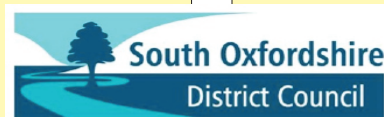
For more information about VIBNO please contact Nicola Pamphilon 01869 331778 or e-mail flashnp@aol.com ■■■

OxPots

Is a small, friendly pottery group who meet once a week in Oxford, for adults who have little or no eyesight. Would you like to meet others with this condition and experience for yourself what you could achieve with a bit of help from our friendly tutor?

No experience necessary and help and guidance will be given. Come along and join us for cup of tea and cake. Contact – Angie 01865 373251. ■■■

The work of the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind is assisted by funds from



Listening Learning Leading



Clubs and groups for VIPs in Oxfordshire

Abingdon & District Macular Group

Eleanor Dangerfield
01235 531857

Banbury Macular Group

John Critchlow **01608 685293**

Banbury Society for the Visually Impaired

Enid Smith **01295 269568**

Carterton Visual Impairment Group

Rosemary Pearse **01993 841383**

Chipping Norton Friends of the Blind

Mary Gregory **01608 810899**

Didcot/Wallingford

Pam Organ **01235 813391**

Goring Macular Group

OAB **01865 725595**

Henley VIP Group

Mike Pooley **01491 628284**

Look Oxfordshire Support for families of VI children

Julie Hinton **01189 722322**

Kidlington Macular Group

Tom Wright **01865 376482**
Marita Ferrett **01865 373104**

Oxford Macular Group

Daphne Dorman **01993 811084**

Oxfordshire Retinitis Pigmentosa Group

Peter Jackson **01865 873246**

“OXVIC”

Oxford Visually Impaired Club

OAB **01865 725595**

“Oxpots” Pottery Class

Angie **01865 373251**

Thame and District Society for the Visually Handicapped

Jean Mander **01844 212983**

“VIBNO”

Visually Impaired But Not Old!

Nicola & Kevin
Pamphilon **01869 331778**

“VIVA”, North Oxford

Liaison Officer
Ron Sears **01865 553063**

Wantage Blind Social Club

Mary Greenfield **01235 764646**
Secretary
Hazel Aldred **01235 765849**

Witney Area

Day Centre (Mon -Fri)

Lynne Pratley **01993 706824**

Oxfordshire Social and Community Services Sensory Impairment Team

A countywide team of specially trained staff supporting people of all ages affected by sensory impairment

Manager Neelam Ahmed

Visual Impairment Team

Beverley Downs
Kate Laybourne
Meg Jones
Serena Glister
Sue Miles
Jessica Brown

Senior
Elizabeth Agar

Telephone 01865 894935

visual.impairment@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Hearing Impairment Team

Zelda Yarker, Catherine Thurbin,
Ben Smith
Rebecca Nolan,
Mark Cove

Telephone 01865 894925
SMS - 07713329501

Sensory Impairment Team

Abbey House
2nd Floor
Abbey Close
Abingdon
OX14 3JD

Out of hours social services, emergency freephone 0800 833408



Carers Oxfordshire

A service for all carers



To make it easier for Carers to access support

To listen to Carers' needs

To give information, advice and support to Carers

Please telephone 0845 0507666

Or email carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Or go to www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk

