



**Oxfordshire**  
Association for the Blind

**Newsletter**

November  
2016

## Colin Cure leaves OAB - but it's au revoir, not adieu



**Ana Novaković**  
Acting Director

At the end of September we said a temporary goodbye to Colin Cure, our Director. As you may remember from the last newsletter, Colin is taking an 11-month sabbatical and by the time you read this,

he'll be winging his way to Australia and New Zealand. It will be a very well-earned break and we wish him all the best.

While he's away, I will be doing my best to step into Colin's shoes as Acting Director. I've been working in the organisation for several years; I started as Volunteering Coordinator and went on to set up various projects including the IT training scheme, and to run visual impairment awareness workshops. There's a great team of colleagues here so I'm confident that OAB will continue to flourish in Colin's absence.

Two people have joined that

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## Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

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### **Opening hours 9.00am - 4.00pm weekdays**

**Chair** : David Warr; **Vice-chair** : Guy Lawfull; **Treasurer** : George Little;  
**Acting Director** : Ana Novaković; **Client Services Manager** : Mark Upton;  
**Fundraising Manager** : Laura Howdill; **Administrator** : Gail Webb;  
**Accounts** : Michael Ling; **Group Welfare Officer** : Mary Gregory;  
**Volunteering Co-ordinator** : Ellie Pearce; **Information Worker** : David Thompson;  
**Senior Sight Advisor** : Judith Wood; **Fundraiser** : Tess Simpson;  
**Advice Worker** : Angela Howard.

*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*



## Director's Article

team since the last newsletter - a big welcome to Tess Simpson, our new fundraiser, and Ellie Pearce who is the Volunteering Coordinator. We'll tell you more about Tess and Ellie in the next newsletter.

Later in this newsletter, you'll find news of many of OAB's activities and services but I'll just mention the new work that we are developing for children and young people with visual impairments. This is going really well; we recently ran a very lively children's art workshop, while some of the other activities and events have been in collaboration with organisations including Oxfordshire's visual impairment team and the Natural History Museum.

Finally, it seems horribly early to say this but it will be my only opportunity so here goes...

A very Happy Christmas to all our readers and best wishes for 2017.

Ana Novaković ■■■

## Annual Raffle

Congratulations to the winners and our thanks to all those who entered the annual raffle which was drawn on World Sight Day, 13th October at Bradbury Lodge.

The first prize was £200, the second prize was a meal for two and the third prize was £50.

The funds raised will help our work with blind and partially sighted people and we are most grateful to everyone who supported us. ■■■

## Large print for you at OAB

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is upon us once again and that means it is time to order your large print wall calendar and diary for 2017! The wall calendar comes as size A3, the diary comes in three sizes, pocket size, A5 and A4 which is the desk diary.

We also have a selection of large print puzzle books including Sudoku, word search and crosswords. To order yours just give us a call on 01865 725595. ■■■



**Two tigers perched on pedestals!**

Over the summer ActiveEyes members visited both Heythrop Zoological Gardens and Cotswold Wildlife Park, as well as taking part in a bus event organised by RNIB and the usual tennis, cycling and social meetings.

Heythrop was the highlight visit for many of us. Never have we been so close to some of the biggest of the big cats – tigers and lions. Almost within touching distance (well within six feet), we watched as the animals were put through their paces as TV and movie stars. Yes, these fabulous creatures

are the very same ones that have featured in The Jungle Book, Endeavour, Jaguar car adverts and lots more besides. Along with the camel ride and the penguin parade it all made for a great day out.

Don't forget, we continue with our ongoing tennis and cycling sessions, social meets and more. By the time you read this, we will also have visited the Festival of Visually Impaired Sports in Coventry and tried our hands at even more activities. I'm sure that we can find a way of running a few of these here in Oxfordshire! ■■■

# Technology Demonstration Day

On the 1st and 2nd December we will be hosting one to one demonstrations of a piece of equipment called the Orcam. This device consists of a small camera mounted on spectacles, which is attached via a cable to a processing unit about the size of a mobile phone. This processor can interpret any printed text that the camera is shown, whether it is menus, signs on walls and doors, leaflets or magazines, and transmit it to a discreet speaker behind the user's ear. It is simple to use and requires just a little training and practice to

master. Unfortunately this technology does not come cheap, starting at £1,600, so we are pleased to be able to provide this opportunity for our clients to try it out.

The demonstrations will be held on an hourly appointment-only basis, starting at 10.00am with the final appointment at 3.00pm, so it is important that those wishing to attend let us know when they want to make a booking. So if you want to have a look at the Orcam in action or for more information call Mark or David at OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

 **ORCAM**



**Come and try the new Orcam at OAB**

## Happy 90th birthday, Mary!

We'd like to say a very Happy 90th Birthday to our dear friend and colleague, Mary Sitch. Many of you will know Mary as she has been working for OAB, in one capacity or another, for nearly 40 years. Mary started working as our Crafts Organiser around the county in 1977. Soon, she "made a start" on organising a crafts group in Witney. As you may have guessed, it was more than a start! The strong group which Mary formed has gone through a series of changes of venue. Under Mary's leadership and with a marvellous band of volunteers the group found a comfortable home at the Elms Day Centre in Witney, until the centre was moved to a new location eight years ago. After a marvellous trip to the lovely setting of our friend Horace Holifield's, Mary saw the need for a regular outing for the group. The group now meets four or five times a year, often at Horace's house, plus an annual visit to our Resource Centre at OAB, so that all of the members can be kept up to date on the current

equipment and services that we have available.

A lot of challenges have been met over the past 39 years but Mary's determination and commitment to our clients have seen the group through and I know how grateful group members, past and present, are. Those of us fortunate to know Mary, enjoy her enthusiasm, keen sense of humour... and her ukulele playing! Happy Birthday, Mary. We hope you have a great time. Colin. ■■■

## Smartphone and tablet workshop

The Online Today workshops run by OAB and RNIB have been a great success, with many coming along to discover how a visually impaired person can access a smartphone or a tablet computer, through in-built speech and magnification. The workshop is fairly introductory but all levels are welcome. The next session will be Thursday 8th December at 10.30am or 1.30pm here at Bradbury Lodge. To book your place please contact Mark Upton on 01865 725595 or [markupton@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:markupton@oxeyes.org.uk) ■■■

## **Leslie Rubies OAB Client**

**When I was ten years old my mother noticed that I was holding books closely to read. By thirteen I couldn't read print, by sixteen I was registered blind. I attended a special school, Chorleywood College and was taught Braille. I went on to train and qualify as a Chartered Physiotherapist at the R.N.I.B School of Physiotherapy in London.**

**My Argentinian husband and I met while working in London at the Central Middlesex Hospital. We spent nearly a year in Spain where I had a job in a rehabilitation centre. Whilst there we met other physios who, like us, wanted to travel. Five of us in a converted mini bus travelled across Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal.**

**My last job was at the Witney Community Hospital physiotherapy department. I retired in 2008 since when I have been learning some new skills. One of these is mobility training. I'd gradually lost my peripheral vision and had stopped going out alone so the training was vital for me to get**

**out and about. With the help, encouragement and skill of the Sensory Impairment Team I learned to use a long cane and I now go around my village on my own, without stress or worry. It has been amazing.**

**What is even more amazing is that I am writing this on my i-pad, after receiving tuition at OAB from the highly skilled and ever patient Mark Upton. I am not just learning to word process but finding out all the amazing things that can be done. It is wonderful for keeping up with old friends, receiving photos that I can show to my husband and talking face to face to my son who lives in Argentina. Not to mention the whole world of the internet, finding out things, asking questions and getting immediate replies.**

**I enjoy many hobbies such as dancing and a spinning class on a static exercise bike. I have also enjoyed horse riding with the Riding for the Disabled Association, tandem riding and swimming. I can't finish without mentioning that I speak Spanish fluently and found the experience of learning a foreign language very stimulating.**



# **Children and young people scheme**

## **by Angela Howard**

**As Colin embarks on his exciting adventures I am pleased to say that the charity is too! as we recently secured funding to enable us to organise and run a range of activities for visually impaired children, young people and their families.**

**I feel very fortunate to be taking on this new project since returning from maternity leave in August as well as keeping part of my previous role developing more activities for our adult clients as well. So far, we have organised a variety of activities for families including a trip to the Cotswold Wildlife Park and a visit from Crocodiles of the World! Both had an animal handling session and the children and parents seemed to really enjoy themselves – and OAB staff too! I never thought I would see a crocodile at OAB; luckily there were no escapees!**

**During the summer months we also assisted the Oxfordshire**

**County Council's Visual Impairment Team as they organised a trip for visually impaired children to visit the Riverside Centre in Oxford. This was a fantastic day and included canoeing along the river Isis and building and cooking on a real fire. We were also very lucky with the weather which is always an added bonus living in Britain. We also worked jointly with the Visual Impairment Team and Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity to run a Paralympics event for VI children and young people to give them a "taste" of various VI sports including visually impaired tennis and goalball. This was another fun day and a chance for them to learn some new skills or develop existing ones – well done to all! Gold medals all round.**

**More events that we have coming up in the future include a tactile dinosaur and crafts workshop and Arts Award at**



the Museum of Natural History. The Arts Award is a series of recognised qualifications offered by the Arts Council and Trinity College London. We also have the Christmas pantomime at the Oxford Playhouse in December!

We are also aiming to develop and run more activities at our resource centre. We have recently run another successful art workshop for VI children and are looking at arranging other workshops including drumming and yoga.

If you would like any further information about any of our activities for either VI children or adults or have any ideas about what you would like to see us running please contact me on 01865 725595 or email [angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk).

Being part of the OAB team and watching our services develop is very rewarding and it is certainly looking like another good year ahead.

Angela Howard ■■■

## OAB baking days are back!

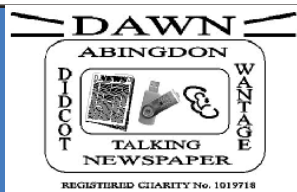


### Something's cooking!

We are pleased to say that our baking days are back and there is no better way to start than by counting down to Christmas! Come and join us on Tuesday 6th December 2016 from 10.30am until 12pm, where we will have fun cooking up some festive treats! For more information or to book a place please contact Angela on 01865 725595 or email [angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk). We hope to see you there



# DAWN - Didcot, Abingdon & Wantage Talking Newspaper



Founded in 1993, DAWN is a member of the National Talking News Federation. Our patrons are the mayors of Didcot, Abingdon-on-Thames and Wantage.

Each week, over one hundred visually impaired listeners in the south Oxfordshire area receive by post a yellow pouch containing a USB memory stick with a 90-minute audio recording of articles from the local newspapers – mainly the Herald series – and other interesting items and information. They can listen to the recordings on portable MP3 players, which we donate to them, and then return the memory sticks to us in the pouches as post-free Articles for the Blind. The service is provided completely free of charge.

DAWN is financed by charitable donations, and is run entirely by around

40 volunteers. Working on a rota system, nine of these volunteers produce the weekly edition in about two and a half hours every Wednesday evening at the Abingdon Health & Wellbeing Centre.

The recordings can be streamed from our website, [www.dawntn.org.uk](http://www.dawntn.org.uk), which also gives more information about DAWN.

To become a DAWN recipient, please email [info@dawntn.org.uk](mailto:info@dawntn.org.uk) or telephone the Secretary on 07429 637266.

Dr Tony Gillman (Chairman – DAWN).

## Addendum from OAB:

If you are not resident in the DAWN area, there is still likely to be a local talking newspaper service for you. Please do call us and we'll advise you. The number is 01865 725595.



# This year at OAB.....

Thanks to your donations and support, 2016 has been a great year



**OAB went to the museum**



**Crocodile world came to OAB**

These are just a few of the activities experienced by our friends



**VI Tennis players pause for a picture in Abingdon**

**We look forward to lots more enjoyable OAB activities and events in 2017, so watch this space!**

# A good read. The OAB book club

According to a recent world wide survey reading came top as the most relaxing activity, closely followed by listening to music and having a bath. So why not join our book club and let the audio narrator take you on a journey of the imagination. We listen to a range of literature from detective thrillers, to fantasy Sci Fi, to romance fiction. There is something for every taste.

Each member of the group is given an audio version of the novel or biography either on CD or a memory stick. OAB can also provide the equipment needed to listen to the book.

There are usually six people in the group and a group leader. Discussions are wide ranging and pull in our life experience as well as giving our opinions on the book at hand. Sometimes the story can be the starting point for a wider discussion about the

themes and underlying ideas in the book.

We share our likes (and dislikes!) about the characters and whether or not we found the narrative convincing. All the books that we choose are accessible and provide plenty to talk about – even if the discussion may not always be strictly book related! At a recent book club meeting we had a lively debate about the best way to make a cup of tea.

Come and join us; the OAB Book Club is a stimulating hour and a half and a chance to make new friends. The biscuits are good, too.

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month at OAB from 11am until 12.30pm. Please call Angela for more details on 01865 725595 or email [angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk).

Paul Roberts



## **Dreaming Spires tenpin bowling**

**We are a group of blind and visually impaired tenpin bowlers who meet regularly at the Bowlplex situated in the Ozone Leisure Park near the Kassam Stadium, Greater Leys, Oxford. Some of us bowl in national competitions and recently we qualified for the BBS Hay Moffat memorial tournament in Sheffield in November. We are the current holders of the trophy and are looking forward to defending it. Then in early December, we will start the winter league. We have been going for over 10 years and would like to see more Oxfordshire visually impaired people bowling. So why not join us on a Friday afternoon at the bowling alley near the Kassam Stadium? All levels of bowlers are welcome so come along and try a great sport. We are a friendly team. It does not matter on your level of sight, it is how well you bowl. Contact me Kevin Pamphilon 01869 331778**



## **VIBNO**

**VIBNO is a group for the 18 – 50 age group in Oxfordshire to meet socially and have fun.**

**We meet on the second Wednesday of the month. Our meetings include having a drink and a chat at a pub, dining, playing skittles and Aunt Sally and visiting places of interest. Since the last newsletter we have enjoyed a drink and a catch up at the Black Horse Pub and an Indian meal at Tiffins Restaurant in Kidlington. In August we spent a lovely afternoon at Alex, Barbara and Julian's for our summer picnic when once again we managed to dodge the rain and have the sun shining!**

**Partners, friends and family are welcome to all events.**

**For more information and details of our programme please contact Nicola Pamphilon 01869 331778 or e-mail : flashnp@aol.com**



We are grateful to South Oxfordshire District Council for these edited articles from their South News magazine ■■■

## Awards for inspirational young people

The Young Achievers Awards honour remarkable young people whose achievements are inspirational and make our communities better places to live. Young people aged 11 to 18 living in the district may be nominated to receive an award of up to £250 in recognition of their achievements in the arts, sports or voluntary services.

If you know someone who should be nominated for an award email us at [grants@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:grants@southandvale.gov.uk) or call 01235 422405. ■■■

## Hate crime

Although incidents of hate crime have slightly increased nationally in recent months the numbers in southern Oxfordshire remain low. Hate crime includes hostility or prejudice towards a person's disability, race or ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

Victims can report the matter to local police via the 101 number. The police take all reports of hate crime and hate incidents very seriously. Alternatively, a hate crime can be reported to The Hate Crime Network by emailing [info@hatecrimenetwork.org.uk](mailto:info@hatecrimenetwork.org.uk) or by telephone on 0300 1234 148.



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



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# Clubs and groups for VIPs in Oxfordshire

## Abingdon Macular Group

Eleanor Dangerfield  
01235 531857

## ActivEyes

Guy Lawfull 01865 725595

## 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

## Dreaming Spires Ten Pin Bowling Club

Kevin Pamphilon 01869 331778

## Witney Macular Group

Sarah Salcombe 01993 771828

# 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 : John Fearn-Webster**

## Visual Impairment Team

**Beverley Downs,  
Kate Laybourne,  
Meg Jones,  
Serena Glister,  
Jessica Brown,  
Jane Cluff,**  
Senior :  
**Elizabeth Agar**

Telephone 01865 894935  
[visual.impairment@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:visual.impairment@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Hearing Impairment Team

Zelda Yarker, Catherine Thurbin,  
Ben Smith,  
Rebecca Nolan,  
Mark Cove,  
Senior : Neelam Ahmed

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](mailto:carersoxfordshire@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
Or go to [www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk)

