



Oxfordshire
Association for the Blind

Newsletter

February
2017

Springtime at OAB

Despite the gloomy weather (as I write, it's damp and grey outside), the days are at last getting longer and at OAB we're all looking forward to the spring and planning for a busy year. You'll notice a new feature in this edition of the newsletter – a Cookery Corner where you'll find a recipe, along with the odd cooking tip. Please do let us know what you think and also, if you cook the recipe, how it turns out! You might also be interested in reading about Mary Pitman's experience using audio description in the theatre. Do you have an experience you'd like to share? Or a recommendation

of a service from OAB or another organisation? We'd love to hear from you and perhaps include your contribution in the next newsletter.

Finally, those of you who know Mark Upton, our wonderful Client Services Manager, are probably aware that he has been off work for a few weeks due to operations on his eye. I'm sure you will join with all of his colleagues in wishing him well. We hope that by the time you read this, spring will be in the air and Mark will be fully recovered and back at OAB.

Ana Novaković

Acting Director ■■■

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Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

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**Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way,
Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL.
Telephone 01865 725595**

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

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;
Advice Worker : Angela Howard.

*Your newsletter is compiled and edited by David Thompson
We are grateful for the assistance of OXTALK, Oxford's talking newspaper,
in producing the audio edition of this newsletter*



Introducing Ellie



My name is Ellie Pearce and I'm delighted to be the new Volunteering Coordinator at OAB. At my interview I was really struck by everyone's friendliness and was very pleased to be invited to join the team. I haven't worked in the field of visual impairment before, so I'm really enjoying learning about this area and have been particularly excited to try out some of the specialist equipment available, from liquid level indicators to OrCam glasses.

For the past eight years I've been doing research at the University of Oxford, looking at how humans create social networks and build cohesive communities, for example through singing together. My latest study looked at whether genes can influence things like how easy someone finds it to put themselves in someone else's shoes, and how happy they are with their romantic partner.

Although I've really enjoyed researching, I've increasingly wanted to do something more practical that helps people directly. The volunteering I've done in various charities, working with people with hearing impairments, learning difficulties or mental illness, has been extremely valuable and enjoyable, so I'm very happy to be able to support others to reap the rewards of volunteering with OAB. It has been wonderful to start meeting our volunteers and clients and I really look forward to working together. Thank you for making me feel so welcome!



ActiveEyes

We are a group of visually impaired people who meet regularly for social, sporting and other activities. For example, coming up we have...

VI Tennis:

March 30th

April 27th

Cycling with Wheels for All:

March - 3rd & 17th

April - 7th & 21st

Museum Touch Tours

March 9th

April 6th

May 11th

We are also planning a sensory nature reserve walk in Banbury and rock climbing at Brookes University.

For more information call 01865 725595. ■■■

Oxford Museum touch tours

Local Oxford museums are offering themed touch tours for visually impaired adults on the following dates:-

9th March,

Back from the Dead
Penicillin and Antibiotics,
Museum of the History of
Science

6th April,

Life Cycles,
Pitt Rivers Museum

11th May,

Life of the Brain,
Museum of Natural History

For further information and to book a place please contact Susan Griffiths on 01865 282456. ■■■

Newsletter choices

Did you know you can receive your newsletter in alternative formats?

We can send large print or a memory stick through the post or you may choose to receive the newsletter by email.

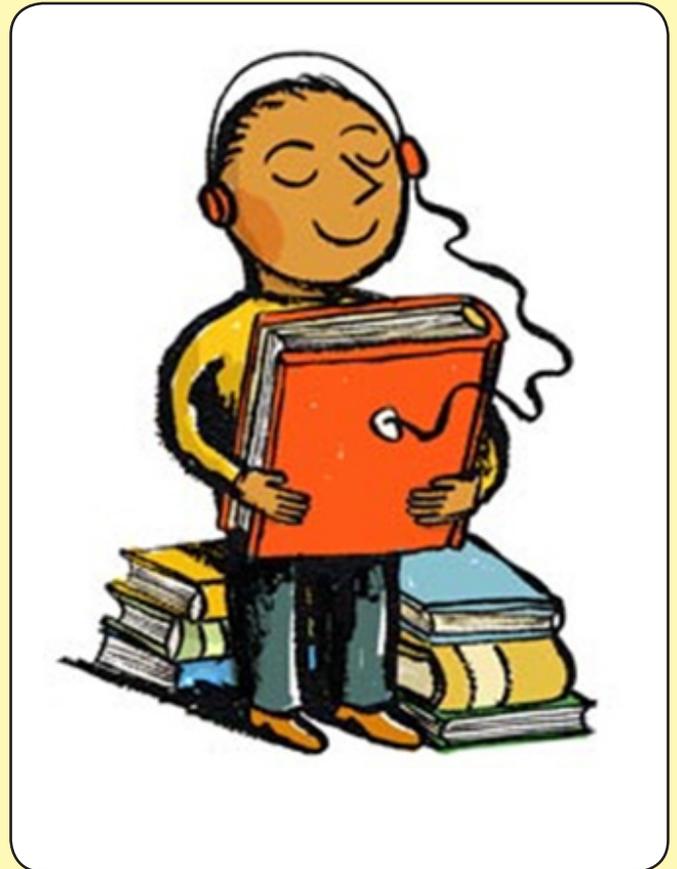
The newsletter is also on our website: www.oxeyes.org.uk as Microsoft Word, .pdf, mp3 audio and HTML formats.

To let us know if you require your OAB newsletter in an alternative format call us on 01865 725595 or email : GailWebb@oxeyes.org.uk



OAB audio book group

If you enjoy reading, whether audio book or print, come and join us at the next audio book group. We meet at OAB, Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Oxford, OX1 4XL on the last Wednesday of every month at 11am until 12.30pm to discuss the latest book and more. Refreshments provided. For more information please call Angela on 01865 725595 or email angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk



OAB information day

We had a very successful day at Banbury library in November. Thank you to those of you who came along to see us; we hope you found your visit helpful. For our first stop of 2017 we will heading south in the county this time and visiting Didcot library, 197 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8RU on Tuesday 14th March 2017 from 10.30am to 2pm.

If you, or someone you know, has difficulty with their sight, why not drop in and talk with one of our OAB representatives. We will bring a small selection of specialist equipment and will be pleased to meet you. For further information please contact Angela on 01865 725595. ■■■

Mary Pitman at the theatre

Introduction

In this article, Mary Pitman talks about her enjoyment of live theatre, where she makes use of audio description to help her follow what's going on. Audio description is a verbal commentary giving information on the visual elements of a performance. During the quieter moments, an audio describer tells you what is happening. The description will include things like body language and visual jokes, but only what is essential for you to fully enjoy the show. In the theatre, there's often a touch tour before the performance. This is a chance to go on stage and explore the set, costumes and, sometimes, meet some of the actors. Once the performance starts the description is transmitted into the auditorium and you pick it up through a headset.

Mary's story...

Mary lives with her husband Roger and guide dog Piper in Thame. She started losing her sight many years ago and is now registered blind. Mary is an avid theatre-goer and a keen user of audio description.

She first heard about audio description on the television over ten years ago, when she wanted to watch a new David Attenborough series. Although at first she thought the idea of audio description 'a bit odd', she actually found that the programme 'suddenly came to life'. Then she started taking advantage of audio description in the theatre too and now says she wouldn't consider going to a play without it – it would just be 'a waste of time' for most productions. Mary comments: 'Like most things, you might

need to give it a couple of tries', but would definitely recommend trying it out. At first, Mary didn't bother with the touch tours that precede most live shows. Then she attended one for War Horse at the National Theatre in London. The production is famous for its astonishing life-size horse puppets and Mary says that without the touch tour, this would have been beyond her imagination. Now she goes to all the touch tours, as does her husband who, she says, enjoys them as much as she does.

An added bonus is that at most theatres, and certainly at the Oxford Playhouse, Mary can take her dog Piper in with her – though there's always the option of leaving him with theatre staff. And what's been her favourite play there? 'The Kite Runner – it was brilliant!' If you'd like more information about using audio description, phone OAB on 01865 725595.



Calling all theatre goers

The Oxford Playhouse has some great audio described shows coming up. From 18th – 22nd April, it's Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, one of the most celebrated comedies of the 20th century. The following month brings I Capture The Castle, Dodie Smith's classic coming of age story brought to life in a new musical. It runs from 16th to 20th May. For both these shows, the audio described performance is the Saturday 2.30pm matinee. Tell the box office you're booking for the audio description and you'll get a reduced price ticket for yourself and your companion. Most audio described shows also offer a free touch tour at 1pm – a fabulous opportunity to go up onto the stage and experience the set close up. You might even meet an actor or two! Phone the Oxford Playhouse box office on 01865 305305. You can request an audio brochure by phoning 01865 305399.



Fun for children and young people

by Angela Howard

I am pleased to say that our new project for visually impaired children, young people and their families is going well and forever developing. In the autumn we worked together with staff at the Museum of Natural History in Oxford who ran a tactile dinosaur workshop for visually impaired children. The children got to handle fossils that are hundreds of million years old and make their own out of a plaster cast. Everyone seemed to really enjoy themselves shown by the big beaming smiles at the end of the activity which is always great to see.

Leading up to Christmas, we ran another fantastic children's art workshop at OAB. It's always lovely to see what the children make, they are always very individual and imaginative!



Fun at the dinosaur workshop

We then had our Christmas pantomime (Oh yes we did!) as a group of us went to see Cinderella at the Oxford Playhouse, which included a touch tour and a brilliant opportunity for children and their families to meet the cast prior to the show! We are aiming to develop our joint working with other organisations this year as well as developing the activities we run at OAB. By the time you read this a small group of visually impaired children will have started on an Arts Award, an excellent opportunity for them to work towards



Brilliant time at the Pantomime!

a recognised qualification offered by the Arts Council and Trinity College London. Two sessions are being held, one at the Museum of Natural History and the other at OAB. By the time you read this, we will also have seen African drumming workshops running at OAB for both visually impaired adults and children, which I think OAB staff are looking forward to taking part in too. If you have any ideas about the kind of activities you would like to see OAB

organising throughout this year, please get in touch as we would love to hear your thoughts. Please contact Angela on 01865 725595 or email angela.howard@oxeyes.org.uk ■■■

Textile workshop for visually impaired children aged 5 to 13



Come along, have some fun and learn the art of weaving and making your very own pom poms at OAB (Oxfordshire Association for the Blind), Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL on Saturday 18th March from 11am to 1pm. All materials and refreshments will be provided and no previous experience needed. There is no charge but donations are welcome. For further information or to book contact Angela on 01865 725595 or email angela.howard@oxeyes.org. ■■■

Cookery Corner!

For the first recipe in our Cookery Corner, we've chosen a dish in one pot, as recommended by our trustee Guy Lawfull, who is registered blind and a fabulous cook. This is extremely simple and very delicious.

Paprika Chicken

Serves 4

- 1) In a casserole or heavy saucepan, heat a little oil and brown a chopped onion.
- 2) Sprinkle over 1 dessertspoon plain flour. Stir and allow to cook for a minute or so.
- 3) Add 2 tablespoons paprika. Stir in.
- 4) Add 1 tin chopped tomatoes. Stir in.
- 5) Chop and add 1 green pepper.
- 6) Add chicken pieces eg 8 thighs or 4 quarters.
- 7) Add water so the chicken pieces are just covered.

8) Bring to a simmer, then cook on low temperature until the chicken is cooked – around 45 minutes.

9) Season with salt and pepper.

10) Before serving, stir in one small pot soured cream and sprinkle with chopped parsley.

Cooking tip

This recipe is really nice served with rice. Of course, dealing with boiling water can be tricky with little or no sight so here are a couple of ideas...

Use the absorption method, so there's no hot water to deal with - a 2:1 ratio of water to rice by volume (eg 2 cups water to 1 cup rice).

Or lower the rice into boiling water in a metal sieve or colander. You can lift the whole thing out when cooked, and deal with the water once it's cooled down.

Please do let us know what you think of this column. If our readers like it, we'll keep the recipes coming! ■■■

Gloves, gauntlets and guards

As a visually impaired person who enjoys cooking I am well aware of the perils of using the oven! Here at Bradbury Lodge we have some help “at hand” to prevent accidental burns in the form of oven gloves and gauntlets (longer than regular gloves).



Always use good quality oven gloves

These ambidextrous gloves are knitted in soft, flexible Meta-Aramid, the same material used to protect firefighters from intense heat. Proven effective up to a scorching 350°C (well above the limit reached in

domestic ovens), they'll give you dependable protection from painful burns, and they have a knitted cotton lining for extra comfort!



Oven guards

We also have oven guards which are silicone tubes designed for use on the front edge of the oven shelf. Although they get hot they don't get as hot as the metal shelf, reducing the risk of burns, and also provide a little security to help stop your cooking sliding off the front of the shelf. For more information or to book an appointment to come and see them call Gail or David on 01865 725595. ■■■

Join our OAB bike oxford team

If you are looking for a challenge for the year then look no further...

OAB are seeking to recruit a team for the annual Bike Oxford event.

This can be single or tandem cyclists, sighted and VIP's, beginners or experienced cyclists.

In 2015 our Bike Oxford team had such a wonderful experience, raising much needed funds and positive publicity for our brilliant charity.

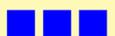
We can't promise you good weather but by being a part of our team, you will receive free race entry for the distance of your choice – 25, 50 or 80 miles - a free t-shirt and post-race refreshments. All we ask in return is that you raise £140 for OAB, to celebrate this being our 140th year of existence!



An OAB Bike Oxford team

We can help you with fundraising ideas and setting up an online sponsorship page and/ or provide you with paper sponsorship forms if you would prefer.

Please call our Fundraising Manager Laura Howdill on 01865 725595 to find out more, or email her if you would prefer at LauraHowdill@oxeyes.org.uk.



Dreaming Spires tenpin bowling

In December we played for the Jonathen Mitchell memorial shield, held in Oxford. There was some good bowling and only 5 pins between 3rd and 1st place. The winner was Kevin Pamphilon for the very first time!

We are currently playing in the BBS Winter Trios league.

Why not join us on a Friday afternoon at the bowling alley near the Kassam Stadium?

All levels of bowlers are welcome. Why not come along and try a great sport. Contact me Kevin Pamphilon on 01869 331778. ■■■

Oxford Macular Support Group

Daphne Dorman, who has run this group for 25 years, plans to retire from the leadership this year.

Is there somebody (or a small team) who would be prepared to organise the four annual meetings?

Please contact Daphne with ideas or suggestions on 01993 811084. ■■■

VIBNO

VIBNO is a group for people 18–50 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 pizzas at the Red Lion Pub in Kidlington and had our Christmas event at the Six Bells Pub in Kidlington with delicious basket meals and followed by presents from Secret Santa.

So if you are a VIP aged between 18 and 50 and want to socialise and have fun, come and join us. 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 this article from their Outlook News magazine ■■■

Fighting Fraud

Last year, thanks to successful prosecutions we stopped £315,000 going to people who made fraudulent claims for council tax relief.

We also guaranteed that more than £67,000 which had already been claimed will be paid back to us.

The reclaimed money can be used to support council services across the district. Your help is a vital part of fighting fraud - if you suspect that someone you know is committing council tax fraud, **REPORT IT** on 01235 422483 or email: fraud@southandvale.gov.uk ■■■

It's clay time!

Have you ever thought of having a go at working with clay? Well there is a Oxford based group called OXPOTS which does just that. It's a nice friendly group for blind and partially sighted adults where you can try your hand at pottery with support from a tutor and volunteers. No previous experience is necessary.

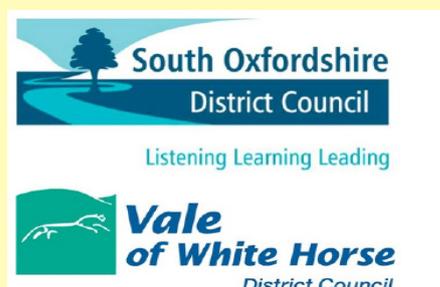
There is a £5 fee for a 2 hour session which is run weekly on Tuesdays from 1.30pm – 3.30pm at St Edwards School, Woodstock Road, Oxford during term time. Carers/ drivers are very welcome. (Please note: you need to be able to manage stairs as it's upstairs in the school.)

For more information contact Angie on 01865 373251. ■■■

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

Chris Turner 01235 511044

“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

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

For more information about
these groups call 01865 725595

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

Jessica Brown

Jane Cluff

Senior :

Elizabeth Agar

Telephone 01865 894935

visual.impairment@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Hearing Impairment Team

Zelda Yarker, Catherine Thurbin,
Jess Scrace, Franca Casula,
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
Or go to www.carersoxfordshire.org.uk

