



**Oxfordshire**  
Association for the Blind

**Newsletter**

*May*  
**2017**

## **Remembering Colin Dexter**

**We were very sad at OAB to hear of the death of Colin Dexter. As many of you know, he was a great supporter of OAB. In this edition of the newsletter, you can read our colleague Judith Wood's memories of working with him.**

**Talking of memories, you will also find a piece from Daphne Dorman, who has been running the Oxford Macular Group for an amazing 25 years. There is also information about how audio description can help you follow your favourite TV programmes, a special offer for miniature railway enthusiasts, and a new recipe for you to try.**

**Finally, we have been reviewing our OAB collection boxes, which are to be found in shops, pubs and offices across the county. They are an important source of income for us and we'd like to encourage our readers to ask at your local shop, café or community centre if they would be kind enough to have a box. Just let us know if you get a 'yes' and we'll contact them to arrange it. Don't forget to get in touch if you have a question about any aspect of visual impairment – we're here to help!**

**Ana Novaković**

**Acting Director** ■■■

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## Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

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

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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

*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*



# Forthcoming workshops at OAB

## African studies

Are you interested in history and African culture? Come along to an adapted workshop on Friday 9th June 1-3pm.

## Staying DigiSafe

Are you interested in learning more about staying safe online, whether online banking is really secure or if you can trust online shops? Come along to a short workshop run by OAB and Barclays Bank to learn more about digital safety.

Tuesday 20th June  
10.30am-12.30pm.

## Introduction to smartphones and tablets

Come along to a workshop for those interested in how people with a visual impairment can access smartphones and tablet computers. This is a great introduction and hands on session. This session is run by RNIB and OAB on Thursday 29th June at 10.30am or 2pm.

## Make A Difference

Had enough of blocked pavements, broken crossings and bus drivers who don't stop for you? Then our 'Making A Difference' workshop is definitely for you. Don't get cross, get really MAD. We'll show you how. Come along and discover the secret of complaining in a way that actually gets results. Armed with your new skills, you'll be ready to tackle every obstacle in your path! 'The Art of Effective Complaining' will be presented by RNIB on Thursday June 22nd. Good fun guaranteed - but book soon because places are limited.

For further information or to book a place on any of these courses please contact Mark Upton on:

01865 725595 or email:

[markupton@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:markupton@oxeyes.org.uk)



# Colin Dexter 1930 – 2017

I am sure all our readers are aware that Colin Dexter, the crime writer inextricably linked with Oxford in the public imagination through his Inspector Morse character, died at his home in the city on 21st March. He was wonderfully supportive of OAB, and we asked Judith Wood, OAB's Senior Sight Adviser who worked with Colin Dexter in the course of several fundraising events for OAB, for her memories.

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Judith first got to know Colin Dexter on his visits to the Oxford Eye Hospital, where he was a patient; he would often wander over to OAB's sight support desk for a coffee and a chat. Right from that first occasion, Judith recalls, people in the waiting room would come over, check he really was the famous writer, and ask for his signature – and he always replied with 'great



**Judith and Colin at the opening of The Campoli Centre at Bradbury Lodge**

charm and dignity', asking people about themselves and not once suggesting he might be inconvenienced by their attention.

It was, says Judith, Colin Dexter's idea that they should talk to the Randolph Hotel about how the hotel might be able to help OAB. And so the two of them put their heads together with Michael Grange,

the Randolph's General Manager, and came up with the idea of a fundraising charity dinner, generously sponsored by the Randolph. Colin Dexter was the after dinner speaker and the event was a huge success – so they repeated it a few years later! Judith met with him several times at the Randolph in the course of planning the event, and comments on how cheerful and kindly he always was – even when approached by strangers in the middle of his lunch.

OAB assisted him in return - with information, advice about equipment, and help with living with his sight loss (he lived with macular disease for many years). He was incredibly generous with his time and a great supporter of the charity in many ways, including acting as our Champion during our fundraising campaign for the new building. We will miss him, and extend our thoughts and sympathies to his family. ■■■



**The Countess of Macclesfield and Colin**

# Daphne Dorman and The Oxford Macular Group

Daphne Dorman, who is well known to many readers of this newsletter, has been involved with the Macular Society since 1989 – just two years after it was founded. She talks here about her years with the Society.

“When, in 1987, Elizabeth Thomas gathered together some fellow sufferers and two ophthalmologists with an interest in macular disease, the Macular Society was born. It now has over 300 support groups across the UK! I’ve been involved since I was diagnosed with AMD in one eye and for a time worked as secretary to the Macular Council. These were most interesting years, learning about new treatments and deciding which research projects to fund.



**Daphne Dorman**

“When I retired in 1992, I started the Oxford Macular Support Group with a meeting at my house in Woodstock. One of those who attended was Vivienne Greene, widow of Graham Greene, the novelist. She was a keen supporter and on one occasion invited a group to a fundraising strawberry tea at her house in Iffley. Apart from a delicious tea, we were able to view her famous Dolls’ House collection.

**“Until my second eye developed AMD and I was registered blind, I was able to visit newly diagnosed patients and encourage them to join our group. We are a flourishing group of loyal supporters, and new members keep coming along. I know they enjoy meeting each other as well as the talks and demonstrations that we organise.**

**“On 25th May the Oxford Group is celebrating its 25 years with a tea party. I’m now looking for someone to take over the leadership of the group - but I hope to be around to support and join in for many years to come!”**

**Would any of our readers consider taking over the Oxford Macular Support Group? Or perhaps two friends might share the role? Please let us know at OAB if you’re interested, and we’ll put you in touch with Daphne. ■■■**

## **Did you know?**

**There are now five other macular support groups in Oxfordshire, in Abingdon, Banbury, Goring, Kidlington and Witney. Contact details on page 15 or call us on 01865 725595. ■■■**

## **Audio Description at Oxford Playhouse**

**On Saturday 24th June at 2.30pm there will be an Audio Described performance of Jane Austin’s “Emma”.**

**It will be preceded by a touch tour at 1.00pm.**

**Marking 200 years since Jane Austen’s death and keeping faithfully to the original story, this new production brings her famous characters vividly to the stage.**

**For more information or to book call 01865 305305**



# Children, young people and families project by Angela Howard

Back in February, a small group of visually impaired children aged between 7 and 11, were given a fantastic opportunity to complete an Arts Award “Discover” course, facilitated by staff at the Museum of Natural History, Oxford.

The course was held over two Saturdays, one at the museum and the other at OAB.

The children and their parents were given a touch tour of the museum and a chance to handle a variety of objects, as well as have a go at different mediums of art, as the museum partnered up with two independent artists, Zoe and Ellen.

Zoe introduced them to the idea of memory boxes and using a variety of materials and textures to imitate



Daniel's “Box full of memories”

some of objects that they had handled. Ellen, on the other hand, included printmaking using mount board and string to create a structure of a dinosaur.

Both activities were very tactile and it was great to hear the children share their experiences.

They each created a portfolio which was then assessed as part of the course, and then they were all invited back to the museum a few weeks later to be presented with a certificate.

Well done to all! ■■■



# All aboard for a mini train ride!

A weeks ago, OAB got a rather unexpected phone call. It was from the Cutteslowe Park Miniature Railway, and they were calling to offer OAB some free tickets to ride the railway. It came about because a member of the public had found a set of mislaid railway keys and returned them. Offered a bottle of wine as a token of thanks, he declined and asked the railway simply to do something for OAB instead. We have no idea who this person was! But if he's reading this, thank you very much.

The miniature railway is operated by the City of Oxford Society of Model Engineers. Many of the volunteers who run it are skilled model engineers; they may spend years building the beautiful little locomotives that they run on the track in Cutteslowe Park.



**Full steam ahead in Cutteslowe Park**

Don't worry if you are less agile or have any special needs. All the access points are level and user friendly, and there's even a special carriage that will take a wheelchair.

If you're interested in free tickets, please contact us at OAB on 01865 725595. We can also give you information about opening hours. ■■■

## Cookery Corner!



### Oven-baked risotto

This recipe for an Italian-style risotto is one of my all-time favourites; I've probably made it more than any other recipe. After years of risottos than required endless stirring, this one (based on a recipe from Annie Bell) just gets popped in the oven for 25 minutes.

The ingredients here are the basic recipe. But you can add anything you want. Fresh herbs are good, as are mushrooms, leeks or peas. Or try adding taleggio in chunks just as it goes in the oven; the cheese goes into lovely melting globs (but miss out the parmesan in this case).

**Risotto recipe, serves 4**

- 1) Heat oven to 170 fan / 190 C.
- 2) Warm up one litre chicken or vegetable stock.
- 3) Melt a good knob of butter in a medium-sized heavy casserole and fry one finely chopped onion for a few minutes until it's translucent.
- 4) Add 300g risotto rice (eg Arborio or Carnaroli). Stir and cook for a minute or two.
- 5) Add 150ml white wine and stir till absorbed. If you don't want to use wine, just use the same quantity of stock.
- 6) Add the chicken/vegetable stock, along with plenty of salt and pepper.
- 7) Bring to the boil, pop in any additional ingredients, cover, and cook in the oven for 25 minutes.
- 8) When it comes out, stir in around 100g grated Parmesan. The risotto should be a thick dropping consistency. You can scatter some extra Parmesan over the top before serving. ■■■

## Audio description

As you may remember in our last issue we discussed Audio Description (AD) within the theatre. Did you know that AD is also available on your TV, set top box, satellite/cable service or online demand services? Although how you access this service will vary depending on your system, it is available for around 30% of the content – and this is increasing. This service is not just for the tech savvy. For a lot of TV services you just need to press the AD button on your remote, often looking like this:



Sky, Virgin media, Netflix, Amazon Prime, BBC, ITV and Channel 4 plus many others provide live and on demand description. AD is also available at cinemas, theatres, museums and sports venues. To find out more about it give us a call on 01865 725595. ■■■

## Mama Mia! is coming to Oxford

This “Smash Hit” musical is coming to Oxford for the first time, with performances from 14th to 25th November 2017 at the New Theatre.

Set on a Greek island paradise, a story of love, friendship and identity is told through the songs of ABBA.

Sophie’s quest to discover the father she’s never known brings her mother face to face with three men from her distant romantic past on the eve of a wedding they’ll never forget.

The audio-described performance is on Tuesday 21st November at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £8.75 each.

For more information or to book your place call Gwen Cruden on 01865 373378. ■■■

# **Volunteers wanted for the OAB home visiting scheme (please spread the word!)**

**If you know someone who might like to volunteer with us as a home visitor please ask them to get in touch.**

**This would involve them giving one hour per week to visit a visually impaired person in Oxford, Abingdon, or Kidlington, to support them with activities such as sorting out correspondence, getting out of the house for a coffee, or staying in and having a chat.**

**Training and support is provided, and OAB pays for a police check and reimburses travel costs.**

**For information about the role or to request an application pack, please contact Ellie on: [volunteers@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@oxeyes.org.uk) or 01865 725 595. ■■■**

## **Do you live in Kidlington?**

**Would you like a volunteer visitor during the evening once a week?**

**We have a lovely local volunteer with no one to visit – she works during the day and is only available to visit someone in the evening.**

**Our volunteers are fully checked and trained and can visit for a chat or to share activities with you, such as going through the post, cooking or going out for a walk.**

**For more information please contact Ellie on: [volunteers@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@oxeyes.org.uk) or 01865 725 595. ■■■**

## **Dreaming Spires tenpin bowling**

We have just qualified for the BBS Trios final in Sheffield in May after finishing in 3rd place in our division.

Once again we are looking forward to some hard games against some good teams from all over Britain.

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

All levels of bowlers are welcome so why not come along and try a great sport.

Contact me Kevin Pamphilon  
01869 331778. ■■■

## **Oxpots!**

Oxpots is a pottery group for visually impaired adults supported by a tutor and volunteers. It runs weekly on Tuesdays from 1.30 to 3.30pm at St Edwards School, Woodstock Road, Oxford.

For more information please contact Angie on telephone number 01865 373251. ■■■

## **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.

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](mailto:flashnp@aol.com) ■■■

## **LP diaries**

It is still not too late to purchase your large print diaries or calendars.

The diaries come in pocket size, A5 and A4 Desk diary.

For more information or to order call us on:

01865 725595. ■■■

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

**We recently contacted everyone on the South Oxfordshire District Council postal database for planning related matters to ask if they wished to continue to receive notifications by post or if they were happy for us to contact them by email.**

**This is part of the council's commitment to reduce paper usage and postal costs, communicate in the best way and to ensure we keep your details up to date.**

**If you would like to receive regular updates about planning issues in South Oxfordshire please email: [planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk) or call 01235 422600.**



## **Message in a bottle**

**This is a voluntary scheme whereby personal information is available to emergency services if someone suffers an accident or sudden illness. This is particularly relevant if someone is living on their own and there is no-one around to pass on information in the event of an emergency. Your details are stored in a plastic container which you put in the door of your fridge. Participants are given 2 stickers, one of which goes on the inside of the front door and the other on the outside of the fridge door.**

**For more information or to obtain a container call us on 01865 725595. ■■■**

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



# 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 Group

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

## Witney VIP Group

Mary Sitch 01993 811687

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

