



**Oxfordshire**  
Association for the Blind

**Newsletter**

**August  
2017**

## **A wanderer returns**

By the time you read this, Colin will have returned to OAB from his travels and be back in the Director's seat. I will be leaving and moving on to pastures new, but I'm sure I will keep in touch with a fantastic team of colleagues and many friends I've made here over the years.

We have also said goodbye to Angela, who has moved with her family to Cornwall – just in time for summer by the sea! We wish Angela very well for the future and are pleased to let you know that Ellie Pearce has taken over the work we do with children and young people. She has loads of energy and ideas so I'm sure you will be hearing more from Ellie.

Do keep your ears open too

for news of our **ActivEyes** group. The group is planning to hold some of its monthly social meetings in different locations across the county. It's a very friendly and informal group and we hope lots of people will come along to meet them and find out more about **ActivEyes** activities.

We also hope you'll be keen to join our raffle. We've included 2 books of tickets and would be grateful for your support.

And finally, the **AGM** is coming up in early September and we hope to see many of you there. There's an invitation on the back cover.

Have a lovely summer!

Ana Novaković ■■■

# Contents

- |          |  |           |  |
|----------|--|-----------|--|
| <b>1</b> | Director's article   | <b>9</b>  | Cookery corner   |
| <b>2</b> | Contents<br>OAB contact details                                    | <b>10</b> | Calling all theatre goers                                    |
| <b>3</b> | Forthcoming workshops at<br>OAB and ORCAM article                  | <b>11</b> | Tennis for Visually Impaired<br>people by Alex Bagwell       |
| <b>4</b> | Award winning volunteer<br>Michelle Lawful                         | <b>12</b> | Dreaming Spires bowling<br>VIBNO                             |
| <b>5</b> | Michelle Lawful<br>Children, young people and<br>families article  | <b>13</b> | News from South Oxfordshire,<br>Cinema Card for blind people |
| <b>6</b> | Uncluttered reading on a<br>smartphone or tablet                   | <b>14</b> | Clubs and groups   |
| <b>7</b> | Uncluttered reading on a<br>smartphone or tablet,<br>Legacy giving | <b>15</b> | Sensory team and carers info                                 |
| <b>8</b> | Staying safe online  | <b>16</b> | Invitation to the AGM  |

## Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

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

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Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL.  
Telephone 01865 725595**

E-mail : [information@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:information@oxeyes.org.uk) • Web site : [www.oxeyes.org.uk](http://www.oxeyes.org.uk)

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

**Chair** : David Warr; **Vice-chair** : Guy Lawfull; **Treasurer** : George Little;  
**Director** : Colin Cure; **Client Services Manager** : Mark Upton;  
**Fundraising Manager** : Laura Howdill; **Administrator** : Gail Webb;  
**Accounts** : Michael Ling; **Group Welfare Officer** : Mary Gregory;  
**Information Worker** : David Thompson; **Senior Sight Advisor** : Judith Wood;  
**Community Connections Co-ordinator** : Ellie Pearce;

*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

**Introduction to smartphones and tablets:**  
We are delighted to be holding another 2 sessions exploring how visually impaired people can access smartphones and tablet computers. These sessions have been very successful and given many people the understanding and tools they need to use such a device. The next sessions are on Wednesday 18th October: 10.30am or 2pm.

**Making a Difference:**  
We will be holding part 2 of our Making a Difference workshop with RNIB on the art of effective campaigning. Don't worry if you missed the first session, there will be plenty of time to recap. The next session will be held on Wednesday 11th October at 2pm. ■■■

**Online Shopping & Banking:**  
Online shopping and banking can be very daunting, particularly when you have a visual impairment. This workshop seeks to look at some of the best methods to shop online, and it will include many tips and tricks and ways to stay safe. The workshop will be held on Wednesday 25th October 11am-1pm. If you are interested in attending any of these workshops please contact Mark Upton on 01865 725595. [markupton@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:markupton@oxeyes.org.uk) ■■■

## ORCAM

The Orcam is a revolutionary new camera that can aid visually impaired people with reading printed material and also recognising faces and household items. We will now be demonstrating the Orcam at OAB in our resource centre. If you'd like to try the glasses, please contact either Mark or David at OAB to book an appointment. ■■■

# OAB volunteer named as runner-up OCVA Oxfordshire Volunteer of the Year

We are delighted to announce that Michelle Lawfull was selected out of nominated volunteers from across the county as the runner-up Oxfordshire Volunteer of the Year 2017, as part of the OCVA Charity and Volunteer Awards. She received her award at a special ceremony at Oxford Town Hall on the 9th of May. Michelle became involved in OAB three years ago, through her husband Guy, who is visually impaired and is Vice-chairman of OAB's trustees. Since then Michelle has become an indispensable member of our team, filling a number of



**Michelle with her award (left)  
and Ellie**

different volunteering roles despite battling her own serious health issues. She is pivotal in running ActivEyes, supporting the group to take part in cycling, tennis, pub evenings, walks, and an ever-increasing range of other activities.



Many of these activities simply would not be possible without Michelle driving people to the various venues and her friendly and patient assistance during the events themselves.

Michelle also makes regular visits to two of our clients as a volunteer home visitor, involving sharing trips out for pub lunches and to garden centres together. As if that was not enough, Michelle helps with office administration too. You may have received a call from her as she goes through our database to ensure we have current contact details, that those who want it are receiving this newsletter, and to see if OAB can offer any further support. Michelle's invaluable contribution to allowing visually impaired people to enjoy activities with others is crucial not only to the work of OAB but to the well-being of the Oxfordshire community more widely. Her award is very well deserved and we are really pleased that Michelle's generosity

and hard work has been recognised as exemplary in a county-wide competition. ■■■

## Children, young people & families

Coordinating activities and services for young people, children and families has been taken over by Ellie, who will also continue to run the home visiting scheme alongside this. Ellie has been enjoying meeting and getting feedback from some of our teenage clients, as well as starting to plan future activities for different age groups. If you would like more information or to suggest some activities you would like to do, please contact Ellie on [elliepearce@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:elliepearce@oxeyes.org.uk) or 01865 725 595.

## Dates for your diary

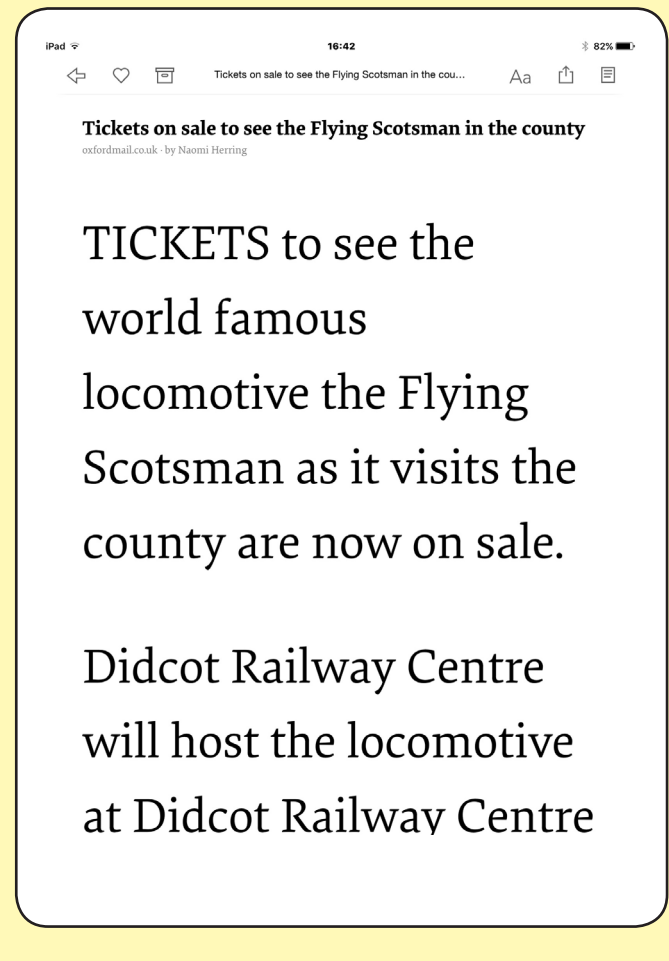
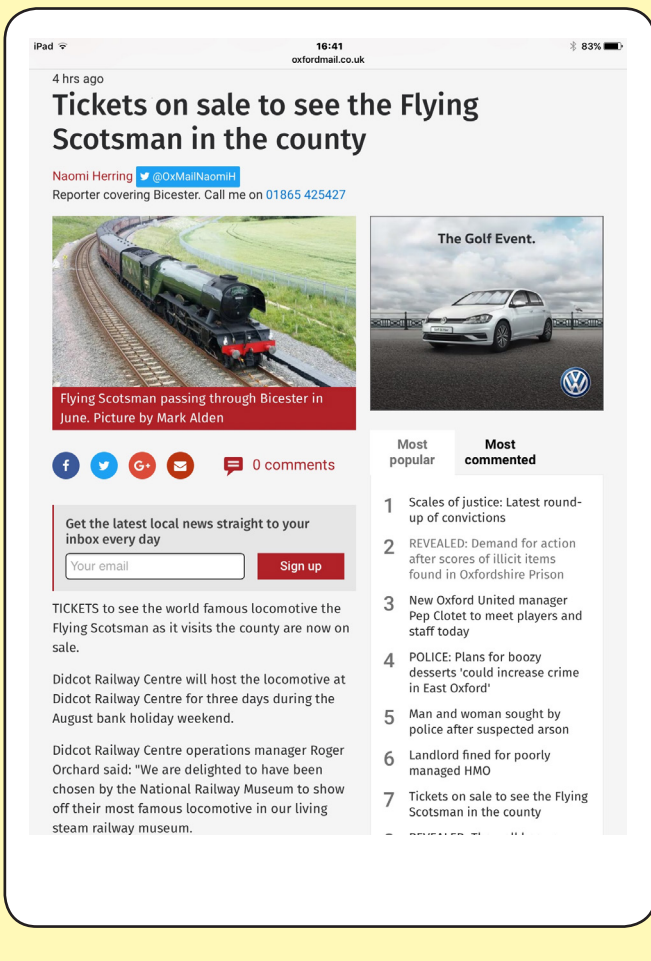
- Thursday 26th October 10-12am – Activity session at the Natural History Museum, themed on Halloween and nocturnal animals.
- Saturday 30th December – Pantomime & touch tour. Contact Ellie for details. ■■■

# Uncluttered reading on a smartphone or tablet

If you are like me and come across articles you want to read online but don't have the time to read them there and then, or you find a good recipe and want to save it for another day, then this app is for you.

You may realise that on your device you can bookmark web pages and save them to your reading list, but the problem with this is you bookmark the exact page

with all the adverts pictures and clutter that comes with a normal web page. Instapaper will save just the text for you. Simply share the webpage with the app using the share button on your web browser, then go to the Instapaper app on your device and select the article you saved. With Instapaper you can adjust the text size, brightness, background



## Legacy giving

Not long ago we received a very kind legacy to support our work with sight impaired people. We are very sorry for the passing of this generous supporter and grateful to him that he was minded to leave a gift to our charity in his Will. We have also had two people inform us that they have left legacies to us in their Wills. We are most grateful to all those people who decide to help us and our clients in this way. This support enables us to run confidence building services like our activity group for sight impaired people, ActivEyes, who at this moment are preparing for their next indoor tennis coaching session. Can you hear Roger Federer getting nervous?!

If anyone is interested in leaving a gift to OAB in their Will and would like to talk to us about the benefits that this can bring, please do give Colin a call on 01865 725595.

7 Thank you. ■■■

also have the text read aloud using the built in function or by using your devices screen reader. It is a very simple and effective way to read long documents and articles from the internet without fuss.

The pictures opposite show two tablet screens, the one on the left shows an article with all the pictures, adverts, links and clutter and the tablet on the right shows the Instapaper app with just the text of the article in large clear font on a white background.

This app is available on Apple, Android and Windows devices, plus as a webpage online.

If you'd like any more information on this app, or on using a smartphone or tablet don't hesitate to contact Mark Upton on 01865 725595 or email [markupton@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:markupton@oxeyes.org.uk) .



# Staying safe online

We had a very interesting workshop here at OAB run by Barclays Bank, keeping us up to date on staying safe online. Below is small excerpt from the session on the Do's and Don'ts of choosing a password:

## Do's

- Choose a password with at least eight characters (more if you can, as longer passwords are harder for criminals to guess or break), a combination of upper and lower case letters, numbers and keyboard symbols such as @ # \$ ^ & \* ) - +. (for example - lqfik&£@240bvurp) also remember that changing letters to numbers (for example e to 3 and i to 1) are techniques well-known to criminals.
- A line of a song that other people would not associate with you.
- Someone else's mother's maiden name (not your own

mother's maiden name).

- Pick a phrase known to you, for example 'tramps like us, baby we were born to run' and take the first character from each word to get 'tlu,bwwbtr'

## Don'ts

Don't use the following as passwords:

- Your username, actual name or business name.
- Family members' or pets' names.
- Your or family birthdays.
- Favourite football or f1 team or other words easy to work out with a little background knowledge.
- Numerical sequences.
- When choosing numerical passcodes or pins, do not use ascending or descending numbers (for example 4321 or 12345), duplicated numbers (such as 1111) or easily recognisable keypad patterns (such as 14789 or 2580). ■■■■



# Cookery Corner!



I wonder if there is anyone who isn't partial to a homemade chocolate brownie? I first came across this recipe many years ago in a children's cookery book and have been using it ever since, as it's both incredibly easy and delicious. You could always have a few strawberries on the side and call it healthy!

1) Melt 125g dark chocolate with the same quantity of butter. I do this in the microwave. Be careful not to overheat – take it out a bit before all the chocolate has melted and stir till it's finished melting.

2) Stir in 225g castor sugar, two beaten eggs, 125g plain

flour and half a teaspoon of baking powder.

3) You can add nuts at this stage – about 125g. Chopped walnuts are good.

4) Spread the mixture into a baking tin and cook for 30 minutes at 180 degrees.

5) Allow to cool for ten minutes (don't worry if it sinks a bit). Then cut into square and cool on a wire rack. They should be crisp on top and gooey in the middle. Enjoy!

## Cooking tip

I use a slightly larger baking tin than I need for the brownies. Just line the bottom with baking paper then, when you add the mixture, keep it well away from the sides, allowing room for it to spread a bit. This saves greasing the tin - and trying to identify the bits you've missed

Ana Novakovic



## Calling all theatre goers

There are several audio described shows coming up at Oxford's theatres. Some of you may have been to *Things I Know To Be True* when it toured so successfully last year. This funny and intense play returns to the Oxford Playhouse with an audio described performance on 30th September, while on Saturday 18th November you can enjoy Shakespeare's wonderful comedy *As You Like It*. For both shows, the audio described performance is the Saturday 2.30pm matinee and you can 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, and perhaps meet some of the cast. Phone the Oxford Playhouse box office on

01865 305305.

The popular musical *Mama Mia* is coming to Oxford, with performances from 14th to 25th November 2017 at the New Theatre. This story is told through the songs of ABBA.

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.

Then in December, at the New Theatre, there's an audio described performance of the National Theatre's acclaimed production, *War Horse*, with its fabulous life-sized horses.

This is on 20th December at 7.30pm and you can get a ticket for the amazing price of just £9.

Phone the box office on 0844 871 3020. Enjoy! ■■■

## **VI Tennis an article by Alex Bagwell**

**I'm Alex Bagwell, a student of Sports Journalism at Southampton Solent University. I live in Oxfordshire and am visually impaired.**

**Last Thursday I went with the ActivEyes group to the White Horse Leisure and Tennis Centre in Abingdon and tried a sport that I'd never played before, VI (visually impaired) tennis. I'd played tennis a few years ago on holiday in Florida, but this was very different. The centre has four indoor tennis courts and a couple of coaches who give players advice on how to improve their game.**

**For a start the ball was softer than a normal tennis ball, and it had ball-bearings in it so that visually impaired people could hear the ball coming towards them. Also in VI tennis you serve under-arm so that your opponent has a better chance of hearing the ball, and you call the name of the person you're serving to, so that**

**they know that the ball is coming to them. The nets are lower than usual tennis nets and the rackets are slightly longer so that players can reach the ball.**

**On the day, it was decided that I should play a doubles match. So my friend Simon and I were paired against David and Alison, who had played VI tennis before, as had Simon. David, Alison and Simon are all blind, so when serving they said the name of the person they were serving to, so that they were ready for the ball. I found VI tennis enjoyable and would recommend it to anyone who's interested as it's a different way of playing tennis that most people probably don't know much about. Also for me it was fun and enjoyable and I will play it again if I have the chance. OAB's ActivEyes group meets regularly for VI tennis. To find out more, phone OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■**

## **Dreaming Spires tenpin bowling**

**We started bowling in the BBS trios finals in May and started with some good scores. We played teams from all over Great Britain and after playing 6 games we all returned back to the hotel for the awards dinner later that evening. It was exciting as one by one the teams were named and after getting down to the last two, last years' winners and us, we were named the British Blind Sports trios champions - what a feeling as this was the first time our club has won a big tournament after 13 years. Kevin, Danny, Paul and Laura all played well and we would like to thank Ken and Angie for their help over the weekend.**

**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. ■■■**

## **VIBNO**

**VIBNO is a social group for visually impaired adults aged 18 – 50 to meet socially and have fun in Oxfordshire! We meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the Month and alternate between a drink and chat at a pub and meals out, Aunt Sally and skittles evenings as well as trips such as boat trips and visits to places of interest with touch tours or description. If you would like to join us, partners, family and friends are welcome to all events. Recently we have met up for a chat and a drink at the Black Horse Pub in Kidlington, enjoyed meals at The Six Bells Pub, Kidlington and Cosmo in Oxford. Also by the time you are reading this we will have hopefully avoided the rain at our picnic at Alex's, one of our members, and enjoyed our horse drawn boat trip on the Kennet and Avon Canal. Attended by 30 people this trip was funded by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. For more information or details of our programme please contact Nicola Pamphilon on 01869 331778 or email [flashnp@aol.com](mailto:flashnp@aol.com) ■■■**

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

## **Providing a “safe place” in our towns**

**It’s important that people feel safe while visiting our town centres. That’s why, from September, we are supporting a new scheme that is being piloted in Didcot and Wallingford to give vulnerable individuals a ‘safe place’ to go if they are in need of assistance, for instance if they are being abused or feeling harassed.**

**How does the ‘safe place’ scheme work?**

**Vulnerable residents can pick up a ‘safe place’ card from a number of locations which they can write their name and emergency contact details**

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



**on. Then, if they need assistance while out and about, all they need to do is to visit a ‘safe place’ location and a trained member of staff will contact a designated helper, medical expert or the police to come and provide assistance. Participating locations will all display a ‘safeplace’ notice in their window. ‘Safe place’ cards are available from Adult Social Care, Style Acre, Oxfordshire Family Support Network, Age Concern and South Oxfordshire District Council.**

## **Cinema card**

**If you are in receipt of DLA, PIP, Attendance Allowance, armed forces independence payment or if you are registered severely sight impaired, you are entitled to a cinema card. This allows a person accompanying you to the cinema to get in free. It’s issued by the UK Cinema Association, costs £6 a year, and is accepted by 90% of cinemas. For more information, phone them on 01244 526 016 or make contact via the website [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk)**



# 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**

Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENSS)

email : [senss.vi.team@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:senss.vi.team@oxfordshire.gov.uk)



## 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)



The Chair and Executive Committee invite you to the  
**Annual General Meeting**  
of the



**Oxfordshire**  
**Association for the Blind**



at 2.00pm on

**Wednesday 6th September 2017**

at the

North Oxford Association Community Centre,  
Diamond Place, Summertown,  
Oxford, OX2 7DP.

Please note that nominations for office and resolutions must be  
made to us by Friday 25th August 2017

Car parking available, call 01865 725595 for more details

**RSVP**

Please write your name on the dotted line and return to:

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

Or

**Telephone : 01865 725595**

Or

**e-mail : [admin@oxeyes.org.uk](mailto:admin@oxeyes.org.uk)**

**Thank you**

I

**will attend the A.G.M.**