

# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 36 DECEMBER 2011



Photo by David Garrad

## **EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**

Registered Charity No. 206886

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## **CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

It is a real pleasure to be able to reflect upon the last twelve months and conclude that despite all the problems being reported for public services and charities in general we at East Suffolk Blind have continued to provide essential and vital services that make a substantial difference to peoples' lives. These thoughts are reinforced by a range of comments received from members I've had contact with during the year. The efforts of our Community Workers, Hospital Liaison Officer and the district-organised social activities have all in turn attracted positive comment. This is a great accolade and indication that we continue to deliver valued services.

This year's AGM was again well attended and a considerable number of you took the opportunity to put forward your views on current activities and plans for the future. I welcome all such input and indeed would encourage every member to think about what East Suffolk Blind means to them, how our services may be improved and what, if any part they could play in making or supporting required changes.

As I have written in previous editions, the current financial position within the UK means that fundraising from traditional sources is becoming increasingly difficult and interest on our investments continues to be reduced when compared with previous years. In response to these circumstances we have stepped up our fundraising efforts and you will read later in this newsletter about several of the events and activities that have been held recently.

If you encounter anyone who may be able to assist either financially or by volunteering their time or expertise then please get them to contact the office and any help you can provide in publicising East Suffolk Blind's work would be very much appreciated.

I'd also like to take this opportunity on behalf of the membership and the Trustees to sincerely thank all the officers, staff and volunteers of the Association. Their individual and collective effort, commitment and dedication are paramount in making East Suffolk Blind the success it is.

In conclusion, as this year draws to a close, I wish you all the very best of seasonal greetings and happiness for the coming year.

Steve Hodgkiss

## THANK YOU

It is heartening to know that our Charity makes a positive difference to our members. Here is a letter to one of our Community Workers from a member on her patch.

“My dear Beverley

I cannot thank you enough for all the effort you put in to make things easier for H and myself. Family Carers telephoned me straight after your visit and were very helpful. Social Services are calling today and Age UK called yesterday to complete our forms for Attendance Allowance. I particularly look forward to the visually impaired/hearing loss group – I think it will be so very helpful.

I should have started this letter with “how good it was to see you”, but the old brain is not too spritely at times!! I will conclude with saying I think you are amazing – not only for our latest meeting – helpful though it was, but for your ability to remember so many of your clients and to greet each one with warm words. I will return to the social meetings when things get slightly easier. Once again, thank you so much for all your help and support.”



Another member from Aldeburgh has shown his appreciation with a generous donation –

“Dear Sirs, I enclose a cheque for £150 as Gift Aid for your Association. I am sure you will make good use of this. For tax purposes can you please let me have confirmation of receipt and that it has been Gift Aided. With thanks ....”



## BENEFITS OF REGISTRATION

Losing your sight does not mean losing your independence. We recommend that all blind and partially sighted people who meet relevant clinical criteria should register their sight loss. Assessment by a Consultant Ophthalmologist at your local hospital will determine whether you may be registered as sight impaired (partially sighted) or severely sight impaired (blind). If you meet the criteria and are registered, you will receive a Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) – a copy will also be sent to your local Social Services Sensory Team, now known as “Sensing Change”. Being registered will entitle you to a number of important

concessions. Benefits could include Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Blind Person's Tax Allowance, a Blue Badge, a 50 percent reduction on your TV licence fee, free prescriptions, loans of radio cassettes, a disabled person's railcard and other travel concessions.

Recent changes to DLA also mean that some people registered blind may be entitled to claim extra money every week. To be considered for this higher rate mobility component, you must be under 65 and registered or certified as severely sight impaired (blind), although not everyone who is registered blind will qualify. Your Community Worker can help put you in touch with people who can help you follow up any benefits you may be entitled to.

By registering your sight loss, you will also help local and central government build up statistics on the number of blind and partially sighted people. The bigger the number, the greater the case for increasing services, support and resources to benefit anyone who is visually impaired.



## **EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION CENTRES**

As I am sure most of you will know, due to the cut-backs by Local Government, the equipment and information centres run by the Social Services Sensory team (now known as “Sensing Change”) in Ipswich and Lowestoft were closed down earlier this year. This is a serious loss for visually impaired people who wish to explore what daily living aids are available to help with independent living.

For those who are able to get to them, the following equipment and information centres run by local associations for the blind are still available:

1. Margery Girling House in Felixstowe run by East Suffolk Blind
2. 19 Tower St in Ipswich, run by the Ipswich Blind Society.
3. Bunting Road, Moreton Hall Estate, Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 7BX run by West Suffolk Voluntary Association for the Blind.
4. Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind run a large centre at Magpie Road in Norwich but also have centres that are open part time in Kings Lynn, Cromer, Gt Yarmouth and Diss.

For those who would wish to visit the one run by volunteers for East Suffolk Blind in Felixstowe, appointments can be made by phoning 01394 285871. Visually impaired visitors will have the opportunity to talk with a visually impaired volunteer who will be able to demonstrate the following by way of some examples:

- Daily living aids such as talking watches and clocks and a large range of kitchen aids
- Electronic document magnifiers
- Printed text readers
- A computer with specialist software that enables visually impaired people to have easy access to writing and reading printed letters and documents, emails, web browsing, Skype calls and internet radio.



## **YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN TO USE THE COMPUTER!**

As we grow older we become subject to sight and hearing loss, and other bodily disabilities. Thus our jaunts to the shops, the theatre and cinema plus holiday breaks become less frequent, forcing us to spend more time at home.

This happened to me, and I found myself sitting for long periods just thinking; thinking about my past life, and the path it had taken. I had travelled a long way and seen many changes from 1912 to 2009.

The idea that persisted in my mind was to put my memories on paper, but how? Writing was impossible but with thoughts flooding into my mind, I found the word computer forcing its way forward. This latest toy seemed to have a place in most homes, as TV had in my earlier years.

Contacting Beverley the Community Worker of the local charity ESAB, regarding a machine designed to suit people with sight and hearing problems, I was given an affirmative answer. Beverley said she could arrange for a demonstration in my house, under no obligation. This was arranged on a day towards the end of July 2009. My son came and then Paul Nugent arrived accompanied by his lovely guide dog and of course his driver. Paul seemed satisfied that I was sincere in my reason for trying it. After showing me a few basic things it could do he offered to arrange some typing lessons with a teacher at the office of a similar charity in Ipswich, if I agreed.

I decided to go ahead, having earlier that year entered the world of the mobile phone with success! The weekly one hour lessons started in early September. This was absolutely new territory to me, but enjoyable. During the week I practiced on a typing keyboard, trying to use my fingers as taught. Weather permitting I was able to go most weeks, and early in December, I became the proud owner of a computer. Paul Nugent came and set it up for me, and as it was identical to that used for my lessons, it was easier to start using.

For the rest of the month I kept a daily diary and found the special Guide programme extremely helpful. This is designed especially for sight and hearing problems, with screen and print in colours to suit one's vision. A voice of one's choosing - male or female - guides through all you want or need to do. The voice can speak faster or slower, and the screen print can be larger or smaller.

So using the Guide programme on the computer can bring many interests back into your life. It has a memory which will retain written items easily forgotten or mislaid. Contact with family and friends by email is made simple.

On the first day of January 2010, I began to recall my memoirs, each day spending an hour or so and really enjoying this journey through the years once more. During the first week of 2011 it was completed. With my daughter-in-law's help they are almost ready to be printed and so leave a family history book for future generations.

So you see there are still ways and means of keeping one afloat on the stormy seas of old age.

*This article was written by ESAB member, Marjorie McCarthy – thank you Marjorie, we hope other members will be inspired to give computing a try.*



## FUNDRAISING

### **Big Band Charity Dinner Dance and Raffle**

The dinner dance held on 17<sup>th</sup> September in Felixstowe was a huge success with all the tickets being sold. The band was superb, the food good, the ambience excellent and a great time was had by all. One regular dance-goer said on the night “This is the best dinner dance I have been to in years, and I go to a lot of dances. The band is the best I have ever seen. Please let me know when your next dinner dance will be – we will definitely attend”. Plans are afoot for a repeat next year – watch this space!

The draw of our very first Grand Raffle was held during the evening with Jo Reeder of the Suffolk Magazine doing the honours and Charlotte Beaumont of Barclays Bank checking the winning ticket numbers. We were delighted that many East Suffolk Blind members and volunteers won prizes. Two prizes were kindly donated back to us on the night which were then auctioned – raising another £65!

The dinner dance and raffle raised the fantastic sum of £5,130 and we would like to thank everyone who supported this fundraising initiative. Special thanks go to Christchurch Property Co Ltd, Barclays Bank and Archant who provided sponsorship and to all those who kindly donated prizes for the raffle.

The photo on the front cover shows members, volunteers and staff in the Orwell Hotel on the night of the dinner dance.



### **Aldeburgh Fishing Match 2011**

This year saw the occasion of the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Aldeburgh Sea Fishing Match. East Suffolk Blind has been the beneficiary of this event every year since its inception and the total funds raised to date exceed £36,000. We are extremely grateful to organisers Gail and Paul Harrison along with members of the Aldeburgh Fishing Club and the various sponsors of the event for this most generous ongoing support. The picture on the back cover shows the Mayor of Aldeburgh presenting the 2011 winner with his award.



## **Sponsored Bike Rides**

East Suffolk Blind has been fortunate to be chosen as the beneficiary of two sponsored bike rides:-

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2011 two businessmen from Beccles did a 100km sponsored bike ride from Beccles to Framlingham and back. Jason Ballard and John Carter very kindly offered to do this bike ride to raise funds for East Suffolk Blind and we are very grateful to them both. Although the final amount is not known yet, we are extremely pleased to advise that they have raised between £500 and £600. The photo on the back cover shows Jason and John on a training session prior to the big day.

In June next year Vince Sheppard will be doing a sponsored bike ride to Paris on behalf of East Suffolk Blind. If anyone would like to sponsor him please ring the office on 01473 611011 or alternatively go to [www.virginmoneygiving.com](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com).

Without the efforts of people like Jason, John and Vince in raising money for our Charity we would struggle to continue providing the level of services we currently do. If a member of your family or someone you know might be able to help us in our fundraising activities, then please ask them to call the office on 01473 611011.



## **Easyfundraising**

Just a reminder that when shopping online you, your family and friends can help to raise money for East Suffolk Blind by logging onto [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and choosing East Suffolk Association for the Blind as your charity. Then any purchases you make from the wide range of retailers, insurance companies, travel agencies etc etc will generate a donation for us. It won't cost you any extra to purchase online in this way.



## **Legacies**

Charities all rely greatly on the generosity of the public to fund their charitable activities and East Suffolk Blind is no different. All our money has to be raised through donations, fundraising activities etc. One way to help East Suffolk Blind continue its work for the visually impaired in the east of Suffolk is to remember us in your will. Making a will gives

peace of mind as you can rest assured that your estate will benefit the individuals or causes of your choice. Please help us secure the future of East Suffolk Blind. If you require help in finding a solicitor about making a will, call the office on 01473 611011.



## **2012 Large Print Stationery Products**

Inside this Newsletter there is a leaflet displaying large print diaries, calendars, address books etc. The charity selling these products will make a donation to East Suffolk Blind for each product purchased by our members, so please consider buying your stationery requirements from them.



## **SCOOTER SAFETY LEAFLET NOW AVAILABLE**

Optua have recently published a new guide to using mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs safely in Suffolk. The guide is the result of a partnership between Optua and Suffolk Constabulary. The new guide gives advice and information about the types of mobility vehicle available, where they can be used and how to use them safely and legally whilst out and about. The guide is available from Optua on 01473 836777 and has been distributed to shop-mobility centres and mobility vehicle retailers throughout Suffolk. It is also available to download from [www.optua.org.uk](http://www.optua.org.uk)



## **LOWESTOFT NAVIGATOR**

A new service at Lowestoft Library could be particularly useful to local people with disabilities as well as family carers. The Navigator, based within Lowestoft Library provides a new way of engaging with local people. The Navigator is available for anyone to drop in and meet friends for a chat as well as find out about different organisations and clubs.

There is comfortable seating, a Nintendo Wii game linked to a large projector screen, DVD player, TV, internet access, photocopier and laminating service and information available about services in the area.

Staff are on hand to offer support and guidance. For more information call the library on 01502 405451.



## **SUFFOLK LINK**

A **Local Involvement Network** has been set up in every area of England to help local people influence or change the way their local NHS and social care services are planned and delivered. The Suffolk LINK wants to empower users of services and promote effective public involvement that will lead to a real change in health and social care services in Suffolk. A LINK is made up of individuals and community groups who work together to improve local health and social care services. Its job is to find out what people like and dislike about local services, and to work with the people who plan and run them to help make them better. This may involve talking directly to health and social care professionals about a service that is not being offered, or suggesting ways that an existing service could be made better. LINKs also have powers to help them do their job and to make sure that changes happen.

A LINK can:

- ask local people what they think of local health and social care services
- give people a chance to suggest ideas to care professionals that may help improve services
- look into specific issues of concern to the community (like a dirty hospital), make recommendations to the people who plan and run services, and expect a response
- ask for information about services and get answers within a specified amount of time
- carry out spot checks, when necessary, to see if services are working well
- refer issues to the local council overview and scrutiny committees if it seems that action is not being taken.

The Suffolk LINK is all about your voice. They want to know what you think about the Health and Social Care services that you use so that they can work with the people that run them to make them better. When you submit a comment to them they log it anonymously onto their LINK comments database. They do not keep records of who has submitted the comment.

Please contact them at the following address to tell them what you think about the health and social care services (doctors, hospital, Customer First, care homes etc) that you use. Tell them your story:-

Freepost RSEB-XLCK-YXSS, Suffolk LINK, Red Gables, Ipswich Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1BE. Telephone: 01449 771246, or email: [info@suffolklink.org](mailto:info@suffolklink.org)



## HOW TO DEAL WITH BOGUS CALLERS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Here is an example of how some cheap technology can help you deal with doorstep sellers:

Mrs Nettles has recently been the victim of a doorstep con man (bogus caller) who stole some of her money and she is now frightened to open the door in case it happens again.

**The Solution:** Mrs Nettles and her daughter installed a **Telecare alarm unit** with a “**bogus caller alert**” button. If Mrs Nettles becomes concerned about a caller or intruder she can press the button and this transmits a signal to the 24/7 monitoring centre. They can communicate with Mrs Nettles and also listen to the conversation between her and the visitor and intervene, perhaps calling the police, if necessary. Such incidents will also be automatically recorded and may be used in evidence. Just knowing that someone has been alerted can act as a deterrent to bogus callers.

**The outcome:** Mrs Nettles feels a lot safer answering her door and no longer feels obliged to buy from doorstep sellers.

These bogus caller alarm systems can either be purchased or rented from a number of suppliers or distributors. Renting will cost around £3.50 per week plus a one-off installation charge. To arrange a visit and a no-obligation chat, call any one of the five providers in the following table.

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Contact Care</b><br><b>0800 917 4680</b>  | <b>Flagship Telecare</b><br><b>01362 696 175</b> | <b>Waveney Home Alarm</b><br><b>01502 513 222</b> |
| <b>Ipswich HEARS</b><br><b>01473 433 236</b> | <b>Mid Suffolk DC</b><br><b>01449 724 752</b>    |   |

## **BIBLES IN ACCESSIBLE MEDIA FROM TORCH TRUST**

### **Reading preferences**

Blind and partially sighted people who cannot read standard print may use one or more accessible formats to read the Bible. Their choice may depend on their degree of sight loss, whether they are at home or in public, the amount of storage space available, how much they have to read and whether they are comfortable operating modern electronic equipment.

### **Bible translations**

People may also have a preference for a particular Bible version. Most Bible versions are translations from the original languages, although a few are paraphrases which can be described as a retelling of the text in the author's own words.

### **Accessible formats**

#### **Audio**

Audio recordings are available on physical media such as Audio CD, DAISY CD (Digital Accessible Information System), MP3 CD and cassette. The Bible is also available to listen to on a variety of portable handheld units and, increasingly, online.

#### **Braille**

Braille versions are available in both printed/embossed paper copy or on electronic Braille machines.

#### **e-Reader**

There is a growing range of equipment (such as the *Kindle*) that can be accessed by people with sight loss and on which the Bible is available, in addition to a wide range of freely available eBooks in ePub format.

#### **Online**

There are an increasing number of websites containing the Bible in different translations. Some of these sites are accessible to blind and partially sighted people.

### **Bible Catalogue**

The Torch Trust provides a comprehensive online listing of Bibles in accessible media available from a range of organisations – either to borrow or to purchase. **To access this resource, go to their website - [www.torchtrust.org/bibles](http://www.torchtrust.org/bibles). Alternatively, to talk through some of the options available or to ask for a particular section of the listing to be printed and sent to you, please call Torch Trust on 01858 438260.**

## **FELIXSTOWE MACULAR SOCIETY MEETINGS**

Members in the Felixstowe area are reminded of the monthly Macular Disease Support Group meetings which are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at the Salvation Army Hall, Cobbold Road, Felixstowe – 10.30am to 12.30pm. More information from Sheila Pritchard 01473 655197.



## **OFF-ROAD DRIVING FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED – A WHOLE NEW WAY TO TEST YOUR SENSES!**

Explore 4x4 is an off-road driver training company based in East Anglia, who began instructing the visually impaired after being contacted by Paul in early 2010. Looking for new ways to raise money for his Association, he had hit upon off-road driving! Quite a thought for someone who couldn't drive and couldn't see! Having experienced the difficulty of trying to raise money for charity themselves, and impressed by Paul's courage and determination, they felt that if he was mad enough to try, then they certainly would rise to the challenge of helping him!

With many years of off-road training behind them, from military personnel preparing for Afghanistan, to private motorists keen to learn more about their 4x4s, although the team at Explore 4x4 instruct physically disabled people in off-road driving, they had never considered the challenge of drivers without sight before.

The experience was and is phenomenal, both for the drivers themselves and the Explore 4x4 instructors alike. Driving manual Land Rover Discoveries without dual control off-road and having to put your absolute trust in someone they had never met before was quite daunting to say the least. It is both intense and challenging, but the courage on display by the visually impaired drivers is extraordinary.

Helping the visually impaired and blind to experience something many of us take for granted is incredibly rewarding. The team at Explore 4x4 are as exhilarated by the experience as the visually impaired drivers are, and they hope to continue providing this service for years to come.

**For further information, please look at their website at [www.explore-4x4.co.uk](http://www.explore-4x4.co.uk) or call Malcolm Swan on 07766223884.**

## **NEW PRODUCTS**

### **Nail Clippers**

This handy nail clipper magnifies and illuminates finger and toe nails as they are cut with the built-in clippers. A useful nail file is also mounted on the base of the clippers. Available from the RNIB on 0303 123 9999 at a cost of £7.99 inc VAT.

### **Tweezers with magnifier and light**

Black compact, foldaway tweezers with 6 times magnifier. Small LED light adds extra illumination where it is needed. Great for close up tasks. Available from the RNIB shop on 0303 123 9999 at a cost of £5.99 inc VAT.

### **Ultra-cane**

You may already be aware of the UltraCane, an advanced electronic primary mobility aid previously marketed between 2002 and 2008 for blind and visually impaired people. There is now an upgraded version of the UltraCane on the market following a year of redevelopment and redesigning of the electronics and software. It is a revolutionary mobility aid incorporating ultrasound technology that has been inspired by the navigational process of bats (echolocation).

The UltraCane is modelled on the traditional long white cane, but the difference is in the electronic handle, which works by emitting ultrasonic waves to locate obstacles in the user's vicinity. This includes objects at shoulder/head height, for example wing mirrors on vans and lorries, overhanging tree branches etc. It gives tactile feedback to the user through two vibrating buttons, which have been ergonomically positioned on the handle. The two buttons, when vibrating, indicate the direction of the obstacle; the frequency of the vibration lets the user know the proximity of the obstacle. This type of feedback stimulates a spatial 'mind map' in the brain, enabling the user to obtain information about the layout of their immediate environment and surroundings. Essentially using the UltraCane offers a protective hazard 'envelope' around the user.

The UltraCane now features over 50 enhancements including a more sensitive tactile vibration feedback to the user over the full life of the batteries, more accurate detection of obstacles at the specified ranges,

improved low battery audible warning system and a new safety cut-off for low power batteries.

For more information please look at their web site at [www.ultracane.com](http://www.ultracane.com) or contact Julie Davies at Sound Foresight Technology Ltd, Unit 21L Evans Business Centre, Marston Business Park, Tockwith, York YO26 7QF. Tel: 0044 (0)1423 359711, Mob: 07740 632726, Email: [info@ultracane.com](mailto:info@ultracane.com), Web: [www.ultracane.com](http://www.ultracane.com)

### **Find your way with the Trekker Breeze**

This is a simple and affordable GPS for people who are visually impaired. It is as simple as a TV remote and can be controlled by one hand. It verbally announces names of streets, intersections and landmarks as you walk; simply press a button and Breeze tells your location, where you are going and what is around, such as stores and public services. Other things it lets you do are:-



- As you walk it tells you what is coming up, when to turn, and distance to the next intersection.
- Easily retrace your steps if you get lost – simply push a button.
- Record the routes when you learn them with sighted people so that you can use them later without assistance.
- Record landmarks along your route, for example to get to your favourite restaurant or a friend's house.
- Get step-by-step instructions from start to end.

If you would like to find out more, please call Humanware Europe on 01933 415800.



### **ROUND UP OF THE DISTRICT NEWS**

**Beccles and Bungay Branch** – Jennifer Langeskov, Chairman

Once again our Branch has enjoyed a successful year, with new entertainers being introduced and two extra outings arranged. As always, our members enjoy the activities and there is no shortage of laughter, chatter and real fellowship.

The year started in a gentle fashion with readings by our faithful friends Brian and Biddy Patrick, who always seem to find something new and stimulating to offer our audience. Stories that reflect the local area are always popular and there never fails to be a good measure of humour to keep us amused. Once again Gwen Harris's son John entertained us on the piano, with his unique mixture of songs and banter which never fails to entertain. In March we enjoyed a fascinating talk by Deborah Preston who had worked for many years in top London hotels. She was able to regale us with stories of her experiences, both good and bad! Our November Social will be enhanced by the rich voice of our Bungay driver, Jethro Free, who together with his accompanist, Mary, offers a wonderful afternoon of musical entertainment and in December our Christmas lunch will once again be at St Luke's Church Hall.

Apart from our annual outings in April and October to Highway Nurseries we introduced a completely new experience, namely a fish and chip lunch at the Flora Tearooms at Dunwich. This was greatly enjoyed by us all and the efficiency with which the staff dealt with our large group ensured that it was a stress-free occasion. Everyone had a great time. In September we once again enjoyed a river trip on the Waveney Stardust with lunch at Burgh St Peter and were blessed with lovely weather.

Our enthusiastic committee continue to do a marvellous job, not just on the practical issues but in giving affectionate and caring support to our members, some of whom are very frail but would not wish to miss a single occasion. I am particularly grateful to them as they ensure that it is 'business as usual' when I happen to be absent on one of my business trips. They are a great bunch!

### **Felixstowe Branch** – Norman Thompson, Chairman

Another successful year for the branch. Our monthly socials have gone from strength to strength with a varied programme of events and entertainment. With increasing numbers we changed venues in September and we now enjoy excellent accommodation and service in the Felixstowe Trades & Labour Club. Our summer event in July was again at the HUT on the Felixstowe prom with a fish and chip lunch and we were blessed again with nice weather. We finish our year in December with Christmas lunch and entertainment at the Orwell Hotel.

The branch continues to give full support to our “Sound Shooters”, our team of some 25 visually impaired members who shoot with special rifles at the Felixstowe Rifle Club with regular bi-monthly sessions. Our club remains the biggest blind rifle shooting club in the UK. We also provide a separate Christmas party at the Orwell Hotel for our blind shooters and their rifle club hosts.

Our Community Worker, Bev Alderton, continues her sterling work in visiting members in their homes and providing help to those most in need. Bev also takes an active part in our social activities and gives great support to the work of our branch committee.

Our eldest visually impaired member in Felixstowe, Claire Lasker, who never misses our socials, recently celebrated her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday and at our October social we presented her with flowers and got her to tell the attending media how she manages so well with her daily chores and still shops regularly in Felixstowe town.

Two fundraising events have already been held: a rock and roll night and a skiffle evening, both at the Labour Club. A further event involving the Orwell Connection Singers is arranged for late November. We are also a significant participant in the Salvation Army Christmas Tree Festival in December.

The Suffolk Foundation, through its local providers, have also been very sympathetic to our work in the Felixstowe area with supporting funding for both our social activities and for the provision of aids for those of our members most in need; the effect of the latter has been highly significant in increasing our status in the Felixstowe community.

The above amounts to a heavy workload undertaken by many pairs of hands and I would thank all our committee members, helpers and volunteer drivers for their staunch support over the year and for the sterling efforts of our Community Worker, Bev Alderton, for helping all our members in need of help achieve the best possible lifestyle.

### **Halesworth** – Will Pye, Chairman

The Halesworth branch was re-established last February. With the help of Roger Andrew, Gordon Whybird, Geoff Cackett and Averil Pye we now have a fairly active organisation. We meet every third Thursday of the month at the Halesworth Day Centre. Refreshments are supplied by

Averil Pye and entertainment is laid on in the form of singers and quizzes. One of the acts we enjoyed was one of our members, Vernon, who delivered monologues and Old Time Musical style singing. Earlier in the year we had lunch out which was very kindly sponsored by Hazel Collett, another of our members. For the future we are planning a Christmas lunch in the town and various entertainers will be booked for the coming year.

Special thanks should be given to all our helpers for their time and effort, and also to our Community Worker Jenny Harmer for her help and guidance throughout the year.

**Lowestoft** – Kathryn Outterside, Secretary

Another year just seems to have flown past, once again jam packed full of a variety of activities.

The ESAB Social takes place on the last Tuesday of every month at the Lowestoft 60+ Club. Members enjoy an afternoon of entertainment, with refreshments and a raffle. In October some of our members enjoyed an evening of Old Time Music Hall entertainment thanks to the Lowestoft Lions Club and volunteer driver Ray Minister. 2011 comes to an end with our last social of the year on 29<sup>th</sup> November and we return to our meetings as usual on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2011.

**Lowestoft Visually Impaired Activities Group (LVIAG)**

Another busy year for our members with events throughout the year including monthly target shooting, darts nights, tenpin bowling along with trips to the Greyhound Races and our newest activity, New Age Kurling which has been very popular. The summer months brought two rambles at Dunwich Forest, a Beach Walk to Kessingland, canoeing with the Bungay Canoe Club, and a camping weekend to Heacham (near Kings Lynn) which included trips to the Wells & Walsingham Light Railway and Houghton Hall (the photo is of members at Houghton Hall). Another popular event is



car driving with the instructors from 'GO Driving Tuition'. Everyone has enjoyed the last year thoroughly with many more activities planned for 2012.

The Members of LVIAG would like say a special thank you to all their volunteers especially the drivers without whom none of our activities could take place. Thank you also to all the members who took part in this year's street collection.

### **Lowestoft Blind Bowls Club (LBBC)**

As well as their usual meetings every Wednesday members have enjoyed playing several matches, during the summer months, against sighted clubs. The outdoor season started in May with an in club competition running every week. The members have had a good year, even though the weather through the summer was not very good for bowling, culminating in great success at the Lowestoft Tournament in September. The year comes full circle with the outdoor season beginning in October.

### **Lowestoft Live Arts**

Members continue their crafts with the majority of people continuing to make rugs, knitting, decorating recycled shopping bags or re-seating stools. Other crafts offered include drawing and painting, macramé and basket work. The club runs from September to the end of May allowing a break in the summer for other activities. Our members are now looking forward to a productive year ahead.

If you would like to come to the ESAB Social or require any information about the other activities available in Lowestoft please contact Kathryn on 01502 585329 between 9am and 4.30pm, Monday – Friday.

I would like to finish this section by saying a very big thank you to all the volunteers of the various clubs who help our members to enjoy so many varied activities, without your support we would not be able to take part in them. Thank you.

### **Shotley Peninsular – Bryan Le Gryns, Chairman**

It is a long time ago now when as a child, I was made to sit down and write 'thank you letters' to all of those people who had kindly given me a gift at Christmas - via the white bearded, red cloaked man that we all

loved, of course! It is good to recall those days and to consider the value in that training, which enables me to say thank you to all of those people and organisations who have supported our branch through 2011.

We must not lose sight of our purpose which is to provide services to blind and visually impaired people. In keeping with all charities, there is considerable pressure to continue providing services for our members and we are extremely grateful for the help we receive. To list all donors would take too much space in this newsletter but we do thank particularly, Enid and Ray Funnell, in again providing a coffee morning in their home and garden. For a second year we have received a donation for 12 months hall rental from a club member who wishes to remain nameless, coupled with various contributions from other members towards refreshments at meetings. We acknowledge donations from the Chelmondiston Methodist Church Saturday coffee group, St Andrews Church coffee and chat group, Bentley Carpet Bowls Club, Bentley Church PCC and legacies from departed members whom we were very sad to lose. A public fundraising event of Music and Comedy was organised by member Roger Ratcliffe in conjunction with Beverley. This event was very successful for us and by public request, they are 'doing it again' in March 2012. We have not forgotten you, our members who continue to support the club with your home collecting boxes, donations and raffles at meetings.

In this year we have had a change in committee members. Marie Piper and Peggy Kite have retired and we thank them both for their most valuable work over the past few years. We were very sorry and miss you both at our committee meetings. Earlier in the year we persuaded Teresa McLellan to join the committee and she has proven to be a great asset to the branch. In replacing two members with one has only one advantage – we all fit round our dining table better! We thank all members of the committee for their unstinting work in the smooth running of our club.

We at the Shotley Peninsula branch send our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to all in East Suffolk Blind in general and to our members and sponsors in particular.

**Southwold** – Susan Holmes, Chairman

There are now ten members on our committee. We were lucky to co-opt two volunteers – Gordon Whybird who recently moved from Woodbridge

where he served on their committee, and Sheila Grimes. Years ago Sheila was Rehab Officer for Social Services in Beccles. Sadly Sheila has nearly lost her sight and is now registered.

Due to atrocious weather, our Christmas lunch was put off til February. I highly recommend Westleton House amongst the best cooks in Suffolk. We have had six social events and two big fundraisers – the street collection raised £539 and an excellent bridge drive raised £730.

Thanks to all volunteers who freely give their time and petrol. They mostly have grandchildren as well, so it's a case of the old looking after the mostly older! They do a grand job. I wish them and all listeners and reader a Happy Christmas and 2012.

**Stowmarket** - Shirley Bonner, Chairman

Another year has passed with our usual monthly social activities. The highlight was our summer outing for a cream tea at Alder Carr Farm, both delicious and hilarious trying to put butter, jam and cream on a scone with impaired vision! All was well with lots of laughter.

An Awareness Day was held at the Salvation Army Hall in March organised by Peter Ambrose, this was well attended. A useful street collection and a donation from Jean Gant from sales of her greetings cards have boosted our finances for which we are very grateful.

Sadly we have lost a loyal volunteer, Terry Honeyball who died this October. He helped with transport to socials and was always very supportive. Terry and his family also collected aluminium cans and foil for recycling in return for cash to boost East Suffolk Blind funds, his goal was to top the £200 mark this year so we aim to reach this target in his memory.

With many thanks to our Community Worker and a dedicated group of loyal helpers we move towards 2012, an Olympian Year!

**Woodbridge** – Val Murray, Chairman

Whilst we look forward to our Christmas lunch in December at Seckford Hall (and not postponed til February this year because of snow!) we look back over the year with some sadness as committee member Beth Pollock died in April and a former committee member, Barbara Hobson

died in March. Both gave years of dedication to East Suffolk Blind and they are missed very much.

On a happier note in July we were invited by the Woodbridge branch of Specsavers to help them celebrate their first anniversary in the Thoroughfare which was great fun talking to the public about East Suffolk Blind and receiving a donation from their manager, John James. The street collection in July raised £344.34 – many thanks to all concerned. Every year it seems to get harder to get the public to even look at you, let alone part with their money!

In July Woodbridge School invited 6 members and their helpers to participate in the Elizabeth Frink Sculpture Exhibition in the grounds and everyone enjoyed the afternoon very much.



We had good entertainment throughout the year, from quizzes, games, poetry reading to a talk on the digital TV switchover, and the usual singing and talks on travels in Afghanistan, not to mention our much loved bring and buy sale. Our lunch at Seckford Hall was as usual very good and we have already booked for 2012.

It only remains for me to thank all the committee members, our Community Worker Lesley and helpers for all their invaluable help and support throughout the year and to wish everyone at East Suffolk Blind a Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2012.



An elderly gentleman had serious hearing problems for a number of years. He went to the doctor who was able to have him fitted for a set of hearing aids that allowed the gentleman to hear perfectly again. The gentleman went back to the doctor after a month and the doctor said “Your hearing is perfect. Your family must be really pleased that you can hear again.” The gentleman replied “Oh, I haven’t told my family yet. I just sit around and listen to the conversations. I’ve changed my will three times already!”

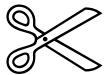




# CONTACT NUMBERS

**DON'T FORGET OUR 6 HELPLINES WHERE YOU CAN CONTACT US OR LEAVE A MESSAGE:-**

|                              |          |              |
|------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| Lowestoft NR32               | Melissa  | 01502 580533 |
| Lowestoft NR33               | Jenny    | 01502 717159 |
| Beccles/Halesworth/Southwold | Jenny    | 01502 717159 |
| Eye/Framlingham/Stowmarket   | Peter    | 01449 616162 |
| Leiston/Woodbridge           | Lesley   | 01473 611650 |
| Felixstowe/Shotley Peninsula | Beverley | 01473 278047 |
| Head Office                  | Elly     | 01473 611011 |



## RETURNS SLIP

Winter 2011

**Please tick relevant boxes, fill in your name and postcode below and return to ESAB, The Old Station, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6LT if you require any of the following:-**

I would like to change the format in which I receive the ESAB Newsletter. In future I would like to receive the Newsletter:

In large print

On CD

By email at: .....

(Insert your email address)

I no longer want to receive the Newsletter

I am interested in a demonstration of computers configured specially for the visually impaired

**YOUR NAME:**

**POSTCODE:**

Jason Ballard and John Carter raise money for East Suffolk Blind with a 100km bike ride – more on page 8



Aldeburgh Fishing Match Winner

A member from Woodbridge appreciating one of the sculptures at Woodbridge School



Commander Tom Horton from Woodbridge cuts his 96<sup>th</sup> birthday cake with his naval officer's sword

Why not follow us on Facebook?



Every effort is made to ensure that the content of this newsletter is correct. However, the East Suffolk Association for the Blind cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions