



Newsletter March 2016

Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN	2
DWP Visiting Service	3
Exhibition in Kendal	3
Cumbria Societies for the Blind – Development Officer	3
Over There?	4
100 Club and Winners	7
January Winners	7
February Winners	7
March winners	7
RNIB Newspapers, magazines etc in your preferred reading formats	8
Newspapers and magazines	8
Formats available	8
Get started	9
Request a free sample	9
Dual Sensory Loss Group	10
Diary Dates	12
Summer Outing 5 th July More information to follow	12
Dual Sensory Loss Group	12
Kirkby Stephen Outreach	12
Appleby Outreach	12
Eden Sight Support Contact Details	12

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Members

As you are aware, I have been actively involved with Eden Sight Support for many years and for the past 6 years held the post of Chairman. During the last few months I have taken time to consider the future of Eden Sight Support and my role as Chairman. My health has become an issue since last September and as a consequence I had to rely heavily upon Liz and the committee during my absence for which I am most grateful. On a personal level my hearing loss is impacting upon my ability to act as Chairman and causing undue stress to myself. I am finding it increasingly difficult to conduct committee meetings and attend outside forums as a representative of ESS.

Reluctantly, I believe the time has now arrived for me to give notice of my intended resignation as Chairman at the AGM to be held in the summer 2016.

The purpose behind this letter is to allow plenty of time for the committee to identify a prospective new Chairman to be appointed at the AGM. Now that ESS has fully settled into new office premises I feel a fresh approach with new ideas from my successor will take Eden Sight Support forward over the next few years.

Finally, I can reassure the committee and members that I will continue to fulfil my role as Chairman to the best of my ability until the AGM. Following the AGM, I would respectfully request the committee to allow me to take a complete break from Eden Sight Support in order for me to recharge my batteries.

Thank you for your understanding regarding the above.

Yours very sincerely

Henry L Miller

DWP Visiting Service

The DWP are again highlighting the fact that their visiting service will accept referrals from local societies for home visits to people who cannot get in to their offices. They will assist with completion of claims for Attendance Allowance, DLA and will also undertake full benefits checks to make sure people are claiming everything to which they are entitled

Exhibition in Kendal

Just a reminder. Sight Advice South Lakes will be holding their annual Future Vision exhibition on Wednesday 6th April 2016.

It will be at Stricklandgate House in Kendal – open from 10:00 to 15:00.

Stricklandgate House
Kendal LA9 4PU.

Cumbria Societies for the Blind – Development Officer

The new Development Officer for Cumbria Societies for the Blind started on 14th December 2015 and is Amy Pearman. Amy's normal working days are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and she is based at Cumbria Societies for the Blind office, Sight Advice South Lakes, 92 Stricklandgate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PU – Telephone: 01539 742 635 or Mobile: 07810 158954
email: cumbriasocieties@gmail.com.

Amy received a warm welcome from all the staff, volunteers and service users she has met so far from across the consortium network and has lived Kendal for 6 years. She aims to continue Sheelagh's brilliant work and further develop opportunities, including continuing with the work funded by Comic Relief, supporting people to campaign on individual issues that affect them and other people with sight loss. It can be anything that you want to see improved or changed or feel passionate about.

Kirkby Stephen Crossing Campaign

Kirkby Stephen Outreach group members identified a safety issue in the town and have been campaigning to seek support for long term solution. The group identified that it is extremely difficult for anyone with poor sight (or mobility problems or both) to navigate across the street at the junctions of Silver Street, Faraday Road and Redmayne Road in Kirkby Stephen, an important part of the local community for access to the medical centre and other amenities including the school and local Co-op. Members of the group are campaigning with Amy Pearman, Development Officer at Cumbria Societies for the Blind, to campaign for a pedestrian crossing to be installed on Christian Head, to alleviate these issues and dangers. As a result, the group have secured support from Rory Stewart MP with other councillors positively responding to the campaign. The proposal is due to be assessed by the highways team in April, after which we hope to get some positive news on the development of this crossing.

If you have something that you would like support to campaign for or to change please do not hesitate to contact Amy on 01539 742 635.

Over There?

As my guide dog and I stood in line at the checkout of the River City Market at CSUS, I asked the cashier what I considered a simple question.

"Where are the napkins please?"

Her response was hurried, but sincere, "over there." Emerging from the light rail for the first time, I managed to catch the attention of a passer-by.

"Please sir, can you tell me where I might catch bus 63?"

A kind voice offered a pleasant response before disappearing into the cacophony of the early afternoon, 'You can catch it, 'Over there.'

So many things reside over there - napkins, bus stops, pencils, pens, clothing racks, department stores and even my shoes! A never ending supply of important and indispensable items and locales all reside in this place which is shrouded in mystery and intrigue. I stand in perplexed silence after learning that something is over there. It is a place I have never been and have no hope of finding on my own.

My guide dog is quite skilled in finding chairs, stairs, elevators, escalators, helping me cross streets, and can even find me the Diet Pepsi display at Food Town; however, when I tell her to find "over there" her little bottom hits the floor and a small whimper tells me that she is as confused as I. We will not be going "over there" today.

Over there has caused me a bit of vexation, a lot of confusion and, on occasion, made my heart race. I have

discovered that "over there" can be a dangerous place. One day, while crossing a street, I heard a driver's irritated voice shout out a warning of a truck bearing down on me from over there. Shadow artfully dodged the oncoming vehicle and pulled me to the safety of the curb. Our hearts were both racing as we took a few moments to compose ourselves. Close encounters with over there can be frightening experiences.

Although many blind people have wondered as to the exact location of, "over there," few have dared to venture forth in an actual exploration of the mysterious place. One day, while standing in line at the supermarket, I asked the clerk where I might find the aspirin. With a cheery smile in her voice, she informed me that the aspirin was located, "over there." With a weary sigh, I decided that I would take the extra step that would unravel the mystery, which had vexed my compatriots since the beginning of time. Taking a deep breath, and attempting to look nonchalant, I smiled at the clerk, "Where," I asked, "is over there?" I imagined the girl's shocked expression. I felt her sharing condescending and concerned looks with her fellows in the store. The silence grew palpable as they mulled the possibility of allowing a blind person access to the forbidden land. She had no choice; she would have to tell me how to find "over there!" I had won! Exhilaration swept through me as I waited in breathless anticipation. A victorious smile crept to my lips, my hand tightened on the handle of Shadow's harness, we would soon be going over there! The clerk's voice reeked with resignation as the decision was made.

"That way," she said.

Author: CathyAnne Murtha.

Read: <https://www.nfbcal.org/pipermail/brl-monitor/2014/000033.html> for the full story.

100 Club and Winners

This is a great way for you to support Eden Sight Support whilst having a bit of a flutter. We now have over 80 members.

It costs £1.00 per month and there are two monthly prizes of £15 and £10. You will need to complete a membership form (which you can get from the Resource Centre). You must be over 18 to join.

The draw will take place on the 1st Tuesday of each month. If you win, a cheque will be posted out to your home address.

January Winners

1: Mr M Baty £15

2: Mr D Hirst £10

February Winners

1: Mrs M Duxfield £15

2: Mr S Duxfield £10

March winners

1: Ms M Thornton £15

2: Mr J Weaver £10

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Dual Sensory Loss Group

Fiona Blake gave an informative talk to our members and has kindly sent the following report.

At Penrith Library, we have a range of different materials for people with a visual or hearing impairment, recently I came to talk to the Dual Sensory Loss group about them.

We have a wide range of books in large print, both fiction and non-fiction. Unfortunately, not all published books are available to us in large print, but we do have a lot of bestsellers and classics.

At the group meeting, I brought with me some talking books on different formats. One format is CD, which play on an ordinary CD player and have more than one disc telling the story. We also have MP3 CDs, which play on newer models of CD players, through a DVD player or in a computer. They are usually a single disc with the whole book on them. I also brought some Playaways, which are small MP3 players holding just one book. They are very compact and just need a battery and a pair of headphones plugged in to make them work. They can be quite fiddly to work at first, but with practice they are really good.

This led to a lively discussion about ipads, tablets and technology in general, which I'm not an expert in, so hopefully I didn't confuse anyone too much!

If anyone would like to know more about what we offer, visit the library in St Andrew's Churchyard or call us on 01768 812100.

Fiona Blake, Senior Library Assistant

Tel: 01768 812100

Sue Capel from AGE UK Carlisle & Eden gave us a talk at the February meeting on a new project, REACH, which aims to support older people in rural Carlisle and Eden with Finance, Fitness and Friendship.

For more information contact Liz at the Resource Centre
01768 891724

Telephone Survey

We would like to know if the services we provide adequately meet your needs or if there is more that we could do. To this end we are currently phoning our members to ask them some questions, and you may receive a call from Liz, Margaret or Sue. Your help in answering these questions would be much appreciated and should only take 5 or 10 minutes of your time.

Diary Dates

Summer Outing 5th July

Dual Sensory Loss Group

Wednesday 6th April. Margaret Weaver will talk about her career as an illuminator.

Wednesday 4th May. Guest speaker to be confirmed.

Wednesday 1st June. Guest speaker to be confirmed.

10 am till 12 pm. ESS Resource Centre, Sandgate, Penrith.

Kirkby Stephen Outreach

Thursday 26th May 10 am till 12 pm.

Friends Meeting House, 48A High Street.

Appleby Outreach

Wednesday 13th April. 2 pm till 4 pm. Bolton Room.

The Riverside Building, Chapel Street.

Eden Sight Support Contact Details

Telephone: 01768 891724

Email: info@edensightsupport.org.uk

Address: Eden Sight Support, The Resource Centre, Penrith, Cumbria. CA11 7TP