

OAB Newsletter

April 2007

Hello from the new Director Colin Cure

“Allow me to treat you to lunch!” That was the generous reception I received on my first day as the new Director of OAB, from my predecessor, Tim Streatfeild, who has been inducting me. What with that and the warm welcome from the team, it got me off to a flying start.

Of course, it was a working lunch and we were joined by our Chairman, Adrian Hill, for a briefing about progress. And what progress there has been. I’ve been immediately impressed by the dedication and commitment of the trustees, staff and volunteers of the Association. I can see that it’s not been an easy road to where we are now, but everyone has retained their enthusiasm and I’m sure that we have the firm foundations to build upon the excellent work that has been done previously. I would also like to thank all of you whose generous donations have helped the Association to achieve so much.

So where have you come from, Colin?, I hear you ask. My previous role was as Community Access Service Manager with the Surrey Association for Visual Impairment. I was responsible for a range of services to visually impaired

people in Surrey, and I hope to bring my experience here to enhance our development. I originally trained as a Rehabilitation Worker for People with Visual Impairment and have worked in the public and charitable sectors, and in residential and community services. I also have a Certificate in Education from Brookes University, here in Oxford. I find that quite amusing as I have actually never been to Brookes! In fact, they accredited the course that I did over at Croydon College in London.

I’m hoping to get out and meet as many groups, members and supporters as I can over the next few months. I know how important it is to listen to people’s ideas for how we can move forward. In fact, we’re already discussing plans for a survey of the circumstances, needs and interests of visually impaired people in Oxfordshire.

For the present, I’d just like to thank all of you who have already made me so welcome here at OAB. I’m looking forward to working with you for the benefit of visually impaired people in Oxfordshire.

With good wishes, Colin Cure.



Some useful information

VIBNO

**By special
appointment..
.....its you!**

In order to give you the best possible service, we need to know you are coming to see us! Then we can ensure that the right person is here to give you the best possible help. So please ring us on 01865 725595 and make an appointment!

This social group for young, visually impaired people meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Contact Nicola and Kevin Pamphilon 01869 331778. ■■■

Every Thursday

“Oxpots” Pottery Class for Visually Impaired People meets during school term time, at Woodstock between 1.30 pm and 4.00pm. Contact Margaret Dawes on 01865 558131. ■■■

Keeping it short and sharp

TWO abbreviations appear in every newsletter. OAB is our pet name for The Oxfordshire Association for the Blind and VIP stands for visually impaired person and its other meaning is just as relevant. ■■■

The Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

Registered Charity 273559

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Opening hours 9-5pm weekdays (24 hour message service)

Chairman **Adrian Hill** Vice-chairman **Nigel Parsons** Treasurer **Chris Brand**

Director **Colin Cure** Administrator **Teresa Bennett**

Accounts **Michael Ling** Senior Fundraiser, **Libby Smith**

Home support officer **Marian Small** Community Fundraiser **Andrew Morley**

Welfare Group Officer **Mary Gregory** Information worker **David Thompson**

Volunteer Manager **Liz Hunter** (*Tuesday and Thursday*)

Your Newsletter is written, compiled and edited by David Thompson

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A vast improvement in treatment for Wet Macular Disease denied to poor

A personal observation by David Thompson

You may well have heard lately about new drugs that are revolutionizing the treatment of vision loss. Now brace yourself as this story has more twists than the maze at Hampton Court!

Avastin is a drug manufactured by a company called Genutech, and distributed in the UK by Roche. I think it was originally developed to treat cancer of the bowel, however Ophthalmologists have discovered that it is very effective in treating “Wet” Macular Degeneration, (M.D.) Genutech, seeing that there was potential in this market, “developed a new drug” called Lucentis specifically to treat “Wet Macular Degeneration”. Now, before I carry on I must emphasise that both Avastin and Lucentis are only really effective in the early stages of the condition.

Although theoretically more suited to work in the environment of the eye than Avastin. In practise there is no appreciable difference in effect between Avastin and its “refined” relative Lucentis. However there is a marked difference in the cost to patients, with Lucentis costing over a thousand pounds per dose and Avastin in the region of £300 per

dose. (Prices vary according to where you are treated and what dosage is required.) Now here is the critical factor, although Lucentis is being appraised by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, NICE, the cheaper alternative, Avastin will not be, as the manufacturer is not seeking a licence for it as a treatment for Wet MD in the UK saying that it has not been developed and tested for such usage. Some Primary Care Trusts across the country are funding Lucentis but at the moment it is a bit of a postal lottery. If a patient has the funds both Lucentis and Avastin are available privately, however many patients who could benefit are unable to do so because of the cost. At the end of the day the cost of provision on the NHS is a very large factor in the decision of NICE and it is very unfortunate that Genutech feel unable to test and licence Avastin in the UK, (as requested by the Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt) which would make it much more likely to be used by the NHS. We will let you know as soon as we have more information. Meanwhile if you would like to talk to someone about this, or any other matter call David on 01865 725595.



OAB Information Technology Demonstration Day

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind members are invited to attend a free exhibition on May 3rd 2007 from 10.00am to 3.30pm at the Oxford Centre, 333 Banbury Road, Oxford, demonstrating what equipment and technology has to offer visually impaired people irrespective of age or previous experience.

Here the exhibiting firms describe their services:

Professional Vision Services

Professional Vision Services is located in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. They sell & manufacture low vision aids. On the demonstration day they will have on display, black & white, colour and split screen electronic magnifiers. (Which are commonly referred to as CCTV's). They have a wide range in manual and autofocus models. They have a new range of portables, which go through a laptop and stand-alone models. They also have a portable CCTV with a 7" screen, allowing you to look at a bus timetable and also read a book as it has a distance and close up lens. It will magnify from 2 to 25 times and take a picture, comes in colour and black and white. This machine really is breakthrough technology. Their latest addition is Flat Screen CCTV portable and light with Autofocus as standard.



Dolphin Computer Access

Dolphin develop software which enables people with a visual impairment to use computers easily. This software is ideal for the home or office and popular with libraries, schools and universities. Whatever your level of sight, spending budget or computer interest our screen enlargers, screen readers and Braille translators will help you get the most from your PC. Dolphin Software can be installed on desktops, laptops and networks. Easy to use, with free technical support and needing no special equipment it can work with industry standard Windows software and hardware. You can choose from a combination of magnification, speech & Braille: see the screen in large print, listen to computer speech and touch Braille at your fingertips.



Queen Alexandra College

Queen Alexandra College, QAC, is located in a quiet suburb of Birmingham, where students have the opportunity to gain the skills and experience that will enable them to fulfil their individual potential.

Students aged 16 to 63 can join the College for a short period of work preparation, social rehabilitation and vocational tasters. Alternatively, they can take a longer, individualised programme of training, leading to a vocational qualification. A wide range of NVQs are available in service and technical skill areas with a particular focus on Information and Communication Technology.

QAC is the UK agent for Revolution Carbon Fibre Canes. These white canes are made in California and sold throughout the UK. Advantage Graphite canes are designed to achieve optimum balance for ease of use and comfort. They are highly reflective, light and flexible but rigid at the same time to last longer than aluminium canes.

QAC is a national supplier of the award winning UltraCane, an electronic mobility aid, which is used in place of other mobility aids. The UltraCane uses ultrasonic sound to find out where obstacles are ahead and at head height. It converts this information into vibrating buttons in the handle which indicate where an object may be and how far away the obstacle lies. ■■■

Techno-vision

We supply and support Index Braille printers and Duxbury Braille Translation software enabling you to produce and correct, high quality Braille.

We supply and support Index Braille printers and Duxbury Braille Translation software enabling you to produce, correct, high quality Braille. We also supply Jaws Screen Reader and ZoomText screen enlargement, both leading software in their field.

If you want to read print documents without needing to use a PC, we have the Portset Reader, a stand-alone scanner that will read your printed information back to you.

Computer Room Services

Computer Room Services supply a wide range of equipment, software and services, including Computer Games, Hardware Peripherals, mobile phones, note takers/PDAs Braille displays, Organiser software, Computer tutorials, General computer software, Audio Software, Audio hardware (accessible Radios etc), and Computer Screen reading software.

If you require further information please call OAB on 01865 725595 and we will be glad to help. ■■■

Andrew Morley's column

OAB's very own Nelson with one eye on the future

Greetings to all clients, members and friends. It only seems like 5 minutes since our last newsletter. Indeed, April's newsletter follows hot on the heels of January's. That issue was mainly focussed on the opening of our new premises – truly a cause to celebrate. However, we also have another cause of celebration in 2007.

Happy Birthday! OAB is 130

This year marks an unbelievable 130 years of service from OAB to blind and visually impaired people in the county. Put into context it makes other established international charities such as Oxfam look like mere spring chickens – Oxfam is not yet 65 years old! So – to celebrate this milestone in our history, I am arranging some events to celebrate our 130th birthday.

A circular cycle

The main event we have coming up is a bike ride that will take place in early September. The ride starts from Bradbury Lodge and the route will be around 50 miles of pleasant scenery stopping at Benson for some refreshment.

The ride is being calculated to suit as many ages and abilities as possible and promises to be a lot of fun. The formidable Mary Gregory has even pledged to cook up a bit of breakfast for participants prior to the start so what more incentive could one possibly need? Watch this space and check the website for news....

Helping OAB can be a walk in the park

The Rotary Club of Windrush Valley has organised a sponsored walk that will take place on Sunday May 13. Called 'Bluebell Walk', the 8-mile route is on the picturesque Cornbury Park Estate.

Funds raised by people taking part in the event are divided up; OAB receives 75% of whatever participants raise and the remaining 25% goes to the Rotary Club of Windrush Valley's chosen charities. All are good causes; previous recipients have been The Stroke Association, Witney Community Hospital and Helen House Hospice.

Anyone who is interested can contact Andy on 01865 725595; fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk.

Banbury Cross runs London Marathon

Wendy Cross, from Banbury will be taking part in the London Marathon and hopes to raise lots of funds for OAB. She is 47 years old and lives with her partner Martyn, who is her biggest supporter and attends all her races. Wendy started running regularly around 5 years ago to get fit for a skiing holiday and has not stopped since.

A member of the Cherwell Runners Club, Wendy has made many friends and runs with the club every week. She ran her first marathon last year – The New Forest. For the London Marathon Wendy has her own dedicated website: <http://www.justgiving.com/wendycross>; please visit her site and you can sponsor her online. Justgiving is a secure way to donate on the internet. Alternatively you can send donations to OAB marked as sponsorship for Wendy's marathon effort.

On the trot

I am once again looking for runners to participate in the British 10K London run which this year takes place on Sunday July 1 2007. I can hardly believe it's been a year since the previous run. If you are interested in taking part please call me, ASAP!

Down on the street

Collection dates for your diary

I would also, if I may, like to 'flag up' a few Flag Days we have confirmed. As I write I am still awaiting confirmation on some dates for street collections which I have applied to run. By the time you have this newsletter in your hands or cassette player we will already have held flag days at Bicester town centre and Templars Square shopping centre in Cowley. Confirmed dates I'd like you to make a note of are:

Abingdon Centre

Saturday April 28

Chipping Norton

Saturday May 5

Witney

Saturday May 12

Oxford City

Wednesday July 18

As ever I appeal for more intrepid souls to come and join our small band of committed regular volunteers – we are a friendly bunch so pop down to a collection day and meet us!

Take care, and until next time,
Goodbye



Our star trekker hopes to spot the Incas

A partially sighted OAB client has taken up the challenge of trekking through 'deepest darkest' Peru to raise money for OAB! From April 21st to May 1st this year, 71-year old Irene Priestly will embark on an expedition in Peru and the Land of the Incas. Irene will visit the ancient Inca capital of Cuzco on her trek, and she will explore the lost city of Machu Picchu among other amazing places.

Irene says: "I read about Laila Allen the 78-year old lady who did the parachute jump for OAB last year and it really inspired me to do something extraordinary. I retired from being a counsellor for Relate after 32 years of service at Christmas, and I was ready for a new challenge!"

Irene was registered partially sighted with Macular Dystrophy in the 1970s, and first became aware of OAB when she was referred to us from the Eye Hospital. She has been a client for nearly thirty years now.

It is the first time that Irene has done anything like this, and she hopes her adventure will inspire other people with poor vision to have a go!

You can sponsor Irene's epic trip and donate to OAB; Irene has set up a special account. Cheques can be made payable to: 'I Priestly Peru Trek'.



Irene Priestly

If you, or someone you know would like to take part in an overseas event, Such as a Peru trek similar to Irene's, (there are still spaces available on a Peru Trek that takes place from the 14th to the 23rd of September 2007).

Call Andy on 01865 725595 or visit the OAB website: www.oxeyes.org.uk go to the 'fundraising' section. There you will find a link to 'Skyline Challenges', a list of the events on offer and all the information you need to get going on a range of exciting experiences of a lifetime to enjoy while raising money for your own local association.

The next newsletter will have news on Irene's trip and we will be hearing all about it from the lady herself!



OAB is going green! We can re-cycle so read on

Our mobile phone appeal has started well but we are still on the lookout for more. So please ask friends and family for any unwanted mobile phones, send them to us and we will be able get them recycled and raise, much needed funds! We are also now collecting used toner cartridges for printers. We are looking for as many as we can get – they will be recycled instead of going into landfill and could potentially generate as much as £4 per cartridge for OAB. So please ask friends, family and work associates to give us their old mobile phones and printer cartridges. ■■■

Pharma-super-cool

J.R. Hospital Pharmacist, Diane Evans, has just the prescription for OAB: She has kindly offered to run in the “Town and Gown”, 10 Kilometre race, on Sunday 20 May, in aid of our funds. That’s just the sort of medicine that we need! If anyone would like to sponsor Diane, please contact our Community Fundraiser, Andrew Morley on 01865 725575. For anyone watching the race, Diane will be wearing one of our special OAB T-shirts. Alternatively, if you want to race against Diane, we suggest that you get into training right away. We’re sure that we couldn’t catch her! She is certainly one chemist that could dispense with speed! ■■■

Vision Impaired Visually Active

VIVA is a group for visually impaired people with active minds. It meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 2.00pm in the North Oxford Association, Community Centre, Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford.

Here is what we have lined up for the next few months

April 17 Visit to the Lord Mayors Parlour.

May 8 Talk by Jean Collard. Names

June 12 Outing and tea at the Sisters of the Assumption Convent in Headington

July 10 Talk by Daphne Dorman. Visit to New Zealand.

August No meeting this month.

**You will get a friendly welcome at VIVA and keep your mind active!
For further details ring Ron Sears on 01865 553063. ■■■**

Traffic light controlled crossings in Oxfordshire.

This very interesting article comes from Tim Atkinson and Deborah Whelan at Oxfordshire County Council

As you may know, blister tactile paving at pedestrian crossing points identifies safe road crossing locations. The buff coloured blister paving crossings indicates 'this is the safest place to cross locally'. I expect you know many of these on your local routes.

Traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings are indicated by red blister paving. Their message to the pedestrian is 'This is the safest place to cross locally, please push the on the button box and and wait for a pedestrian crossing phase'.

Where two or more controlled pedestrian crossings are close to each other, highways engineers are unable to use audible bleeper signals in support of the visual 'green man' signal, (which indicates when it is safe to cross the road). However, all crossings in Oxfordshire where a bleeper cannot be used have a tactile (rotating) cone fitted. These are about the size and shape of a thimble and located on the underside of controlled crossing (push button) boxes. Once you have pressed the button to call the pedestrian phase, just slide your hand to the underneath of the push button box where you will find the

cone. Hold it lightly. When the traffic has stopped, and the pedestrian crossing phase has begun, the cone will rotate gently for the same period that a bleeper would have operated and whilst the green man phase lasts. Every crossing installed since April 2001 has tactile cones fitted even where beepers are in use. Older sites generally have tactile cones fitted as part of the County Council's rolling programme of refurbishment.

It will be some years before all sites offer all features, due primarily the cost of refurbishment and the number of updates necessary. There is however some flexibility in provision. Any individual who has difficulty making regular use of a particular controlled crossing which has beepers but no tactile device is invited to contact engineers and ask for their crossing to be improved. We will do our best to have these sites updated quickly.

To discuss this or to make other enquiries about using traffic light controlled crossings, please contact Tim Atkinson, 01865 815096 email: tim.atkinson@oxfordshire.gov.uk or Deborah Whelan 01865 815591, email: deborah.whelan@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Dreaming Spires Ten-pin bowling

Team news from Kevin Pamphilon

Are you interested in joining visually impaired people from the Oxfordshire area to play Ten-pin bowling? We meet at the Bowl Plex in Oxford and play other visually impaired teams from around Britain.

We are currently playing in the winter league and we have two games left and each one is a big one for the team as we are currently in 3rd place and the top 3 teams go to Sheffield in May, which means an exciting finale to the winter season!

After all this fun we will be starting the Summer league in June!

Why not come along and try out the sport? It is not very strenuous and there is no need for any training or to buy any equipment to play. We are a friendly group of people and a warm welcome will be given to you from the team.

For more information about playing Ten-pin bowling and to receive a fixture list for the club please can you contact Kevin Pamphilon club captain, E-mail: kp16302@aol.com Phone 01869331778. ■■■

Visually Impaired But Not Old

VIBNO is a social group for people 18–50 in Oxfordshire

writes Nicola Pamphilon

We meet once a month on the first Tuesday of the month alternating between meeting at a pub and then something completely different We are always looking for new members so if you are a VIP aged between 18 and 50 and want to have fun with people like you, come and join us. Partners, friends and family are welcome to all events.

Since the last newsletter we have enjoyed meeting up for a chat and a drink at the Fox and Hounds Pub and we enjoyed a Chinese buffet at

the Dancing Dragon. We have been to see The Phantom of the Opera, which was excellent. It was an audio described performance and included a touch tour before the show on the stage where we got to feel props and costumes.

Future meetings are

Wed 2nd May: Skittles at Alvescot

4th June: Fox and Hounds Pub

3rd July: Aunt Sally

7th August: Fox and Hounds Pub

For more information contact Nicola Pamphilon 01869 331778 or e-mail flashnp@aol.com ■■■

Win an OAB sight seeing “flight of fancy”

Fantastic prize raffle to be drawn 21st July 2007

Tickets £1 each, Call OAB on 01865 725595 or visit Bradbury Lodge to get yours before they are all gone!

A dream flight over Oxford City and Blenheim Palace is just one of a host of other wonderful prizes

OAB has been busy beavering away collecting prizes for our best-ever raffle! The winning ticket is to be drawn on July 21 2007 at the Benjafield's Race Day taking place at Cornbury Park.

The Race Day is a spectacular event run by Benjafield's Racing Club, and the cars involved are many and varied. They range from a 24 litre “W” twelve cylinder Napier Bentley through to cars dating from the mid 1970s. Other makes entering include Bugatti, Vauxhall, Lagonda, Riley, Aston Martin, Healey and Lotus among others, so even the most experienced car spotter should be catered for!

The raffle will be drawn during the day and the fabulous first prize is a flight over Oxford City and Blenheim Palace, courtesy of Air Med, the aviation company based at Kidlington Airport, for the winner and three friends.

You don't have to attend the Race Day as winners who are not there on the day will be notified by telephone!

Another top prize on offer is an exclusive dinner for four including two bottles of wine at the Tite Inn Chadlington and other prizes include:

- A reclining chair for the garden and £10 voucher for Burford Garden Centre
- An Aromatherapy Deep Tissue Massage
- A luxury food hamper
- A collection of wine and spirits
- An item up to the value of £50 from the exclusive Porcupine outlet in Chipping Norton

For more information please contact Andy on 01865 725595 or email: fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk.



Do you know your Handel from your Shostakovich?

Well as long as you enjoy good music, it doesn't matter!

As you may know Oxford's famous Radcliffe Infirmary, where penicillin was discovered and formerly home of one of the leading Eye Hospitals in the country, was closed down just before Christmas 2006 and the services that this important hospital provided were transferred to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Headington, Oxford.

To celebrate the significance of both the history and the 237 years service to city and county by the Radcliffe Infirmary a concert will be held on the 21st April 2007 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Oxford.

This is an occasion not to be missed by music lovers as the performances by Radcliffe Orchestra, Headington singers and Oxford Collutorium Choir will include an exciting programme of orchestral and choral works. The audience will enjoy the

majesty of Handel's Coronation Anthems, and the energy Shostakovich's Festive Overture, there will also be a special commission, "The Serpent God" by Oxford composer Roger Teichmann.

Tickets cost £14 (including wine or soft drink) and are available from Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, the John Radcliffe Hospital, League of Friends, located in the new West Wing, Churchill Hospital League of Friends, the Oxford Playhouse Box Office, Beaumont Street, Oxford, in person, (Monday-Saturday 10 am – 6 pm), by phone 01865 305305 or online at the website: www.oxfordplayhouse.com/TicketsOxford/Booking.asp and from Blackwell's Medical Bookshop in the John Radcliffe Hospital.

The funds raised will go to help support local medical charities and Oxfordshire Association for the Blind. ■■■

Since the last newsletter Oxfordshire Association for the Blind has received donations in memory of

Mrs Christine Johnson,
Mr C. W. Mannerings,
Mr Robert Young,
Doris Kershaw,
Helen West,
Mrs S. Castle,

Mr James Blundell,
C. R. Miles,
I. Redman,
P. D. Jones,
Ivy Barnes,



Shop online and support OAB

Here at OAB we try to keep up with all the latest trends. This includes boosting our fundraising potential via the internet.

If anyone you know has a birthday coming up, or you simply want to treat yourself, you can support OAB while you buy. Simply make your purchases through the www.buy.at/OAB website and Oxfordshire Association for the Blind will receive a donation at no extra cost to you.

The website www.buy.at/OAB is a gateway to an online shopping centre. Most of the high Street stores and some specialist stores can be found there. There are over 80 retailers involved, including many well-known brands such as: Amazon, Virgin, Hertz, Comet, Teleflorist, John Lewis, DVD.co.uk, Marks & Spencer and other big names. All you have to do is put www.buy.at/OAB into your web browser and you can start shopping right away.

Every time you make a purchase the online stores donate a percentage of their marketing budget to us so you don't have to pay anything extra and they do all the hard work for you.

It is a painless new way to support your favourite local charity. Please tell your friends about it and happy shopping! ■■■

A moving piece from Judith Wood

On 18 December 2006 the OAB Sight Advisory Desk at the Radcliffe Infirmary was temporarily closed, writes Judith Wood (OAB Sight Advisor and Counsellor).

And the temporary closing has been a bit more permanent than I would have liked! Unfortunately, The Sight Advisory Desk area is as yet incomplete as we are still awaiting proper storage facilities for our goods and chattels. However fear not, there is light at the end of the tunnel. The powers that be are on the case and it will not be very long before I am suitably ensconced. Meanwhile, I will be based at Bradbury Lodge, OAB's Main Headquarters, phone number 01865 725595. I will continue assisting the staff and I will be available also in my counselling role. So please feel free to contact me at any time even if it's just for a chat, a cup of tea and maybe a biscuit, but don't expect a chocolate one as David usually scoffs them all!

Tomo's top tip

If you find spooning sugar in your tea or coffee difficult, why not try using sugar cubes? ■■■

Do you want to learn how to teach others the basics of Eccentric Reading?

Although not run by OAB I felt that this item from the Macular Disease Society, MDS, may be of interest to many of our clients. These course are for MDS members and have been developed in order to train individuals to subsequently teach the basics of Eccentric Viewing skills to others

The courses for people who have macular disease themselves, who are good at supporting and encouraging others to learn, possibly from an educational background - but this is not essential.

Participants of this course must be willing to pass their newly acquired knowledge on to others.

Don't worry if you know little or nothing about Eccentric Viewing, Our team will ensure that you are making the best use of your vision as well as teaching the skills that you

will need to work with others.

The four dates and locations for this year are:

- 24th to 26th July in Birmingham
- 4th to 6th September in Gateshead
- 16th to 18th October in Warrington
- 13th to 15th November in Maidstone

The course takes place over two and a half days. Places are limited so please let Amanda Reeves know if you are interested as soon as possible. Telephone her on 01264 350551.

Your stamps helping us

You may think that common or garden stamps are valueless and while most of them are not worth very much on their own when added up, they add up! For example, just one black, bin liner bag full is worth about £30 to us! Whether they are used stamps on a section of envelope; an

unwanted collection of mint first day covers or vintage stamps in albums (or even all three), we can put them to good use. So send us your unwanted stamps, go green and get into philatelic recycling!. ■■■

Help adapting your home

Residents of Oxford who have a disability or live with a person who has a disability could qualify for a “disabled facilities grant” towards the cost of making their home more accessible. This means making it easier to move around your home, putting in new, or improving existing facilities. For example, widening doors and installing ramps and or support railings, providing or improving access to rooms and facilities, such as installing a stairlift or a downstairs bathroom, improving or installing a heating system that is suitable to your needs, adapting the lighting system to make it easier to use and get around and to make it easier for a carer to look after the person who lives there. For more information contact John Exley on 01865 252281. ■■■

We care about carers

If you are a carer living or working in Oxford the Oxford Carers centre is here to help our contact details are

Oxford Carers Centre,
174a Cowley Road,
Oxford, OX4 1UE.
01865 205192
Fax 01865 242569

email info@carerscentre.co.uk



Love music? Got e-mail? Get TunA

TunA the Day is a new online community for people who are passionate about music.

TunA the Day is about allowing people access to fresh sounds, whether they were created yesterday or in 1973, and about encouraging them to express their passion and knowledge for music with other people.

The music could be rock, pop, soul, jazz, folk, world, country virtually anything goes. It may be new to your ears or it could be an old favourite.

The site is fully accessible, it's FREE to join and we promise no spam and no pop ups. Go to www.tunatheday.com to register



Are you an OAB member?

A great way to show your support for us is to join our membership scheme. The more members we have, stronger our voice in the county and being a member means that you have a vote at the Annual General Meeting! On page 19 you will find a membership form or call us on 01865 725595 for more information. ■■■

Bionic eye on the future

There are technological and medical advances just about every week as we push back the boundaries of what is possible, *writes David Thompson*. This also applies when treating blindness as demonstrated by so-called bionic eye implants. Potentially such devices could help restore the sight of millions of blind people. For example, the Argus II system uses a spectacle-mounted camera to feed visual information, in the form of tiny pulses to electrodes that “jump-start” the eye. Patients who tested early versions of the retinal implant were able to see light, shapes and movement. Without wishing to put too much of a dampener on people’s hopes I must emphasise that these implants are, as they stand at the time of writing, not appropriate for the majority of blind and visually impaired people. However, if such devices are developed to provide higher resolution and a wider field of view, they may, potentially provide a solution for greater numbers of blind people in years to come.



The work of the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind is assisted by funds from the Vale of the White Horse and South Oxfordshire District councils.



Man’s joy at new appearance

Just as there are improvements in treatments for medical conditions, there are also constantly developments in prosthetics.

A 77-year-old man who lost his eye after developing a rare cancer has been given an acrylic replica which fits onto his glasses. Eric Saffin was not able to have a glass eye fitted because surgeons had to rebuild his face.

“It was so realistic that when I saw it on the doctor’s bench I picked it out straight away and said ‘that’s my eye’”, the grandfather-of-three said.

It was created by prosthetics experts at London’s Moorfields Eye Hospital.

“When I had it fitted last month I noticed the effect it had straightaway,” Mr Saffin said. “People on the train home were not looking at me anymore. They stare when you have a disfigurement, but now I’ve got two eyes again and don’t stand out.”

His wife, Sonja, 77, and grandchildren have been delighted to see him looking like his old self again and Mr Saffin has already started using his eye as a new party trick. “When someone’s been talking to me for about 10 minutes I suddenly take my glasses off - and it stops them dead,” he said.



OAB is here for you

We have a lot of equipment on display at Bradbury Lodge that could really make daily living easier. For example, liquid level indicators that you put on the rim of your cup or mug and it will beep when you have nearly filled them. Incidentally there is a new version out designed for people who have dual sensory impairment (which is vision and hearing loss), this sensor is coloured red to differentiate it from other versions for those with residual vision. Anyway, as well as making a noise when the cup is nearly full it vibrates to give a tactile signal to you.

We have talking kitchen scales, very handy when preparing that special birthday cake. Then when you have eaten the cake there are also talking bathroom scales, that can give you your weight in pounds, stones or newfangled kilograms. You can change the volume of the voice on these so that the rest of the household cannot monitor those personal, little fluctuations in weight associated with cake disposal. We also have a demonstration talking microwave that has to be seen to be believed.

We also have a couple of very good daylight lamps on display which can help with task lighting, at mealtimes, with reading, or serve as bedside lamps.

As well as the daily living equipment we also have some electronic magnifiers commonly known as CCTVs that you could come and have a look at. These devices use a little camera to project an image onto a screen. This image can be magnified making it much easier to read text, fill forms in and even complete crosswords and draw pictures! The Clearview Plus has proved very popular since we have had it, with many clients being so impressed that they have brought one of their own.

For those of you who are interested in computers (PCs) we have a number of solutions, we can show you how to make your PC easier to use. We can demonstrate Computer Programs that can magnify the screen, that can make the computer talk, even programs that can do both! For the complete novice there is a program that does most of the hard work for you.

Please don't hesitate to give us a call to arrange an appointment to come and have a look at what we have. If travel is difficult and you wish to purchase daily living equipment we can send it out to you.

Don't forget that we are your association, if you have a problem let us know, call us on 01865 725595 we will be glad to help and if we haven't got the answer we will find someone who has.





Oxfordshire
Association for the Blind
Registered charity 273559

Membership Scheme

To join our membership scheme just fill in the form below and send it, with a cheque or postal order made out to OAB, to:

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

I should like to become a member of the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind
(Please tick relevant box)

I enclose five pounds for membership.....

I enclose twenty pounds to become a friend.....

I enclose two hundred and fifty pounds
to become a life member.....

I enclose a donation.....

£10 £25 £50 Other

Please treat all of my donations from 6 April 2000 and until further notice as gift aid. My annual tax/or capital gains tax is more than OAB will reclaim.

or

Please tick : I am/we are not currently a taxpayer

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone number _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Clubs and groups for VIPs in Oxfordshire

**Abingdon & District
Macular Group**
Daphne Baker 01491 835157

**Banbury Society for the
Visually Impaired**
Call OAB 01865 725595

**Bicester Friends of the
Visually Impaired**
Mrs Peggy Clarke 01869 242290

Carterton Social Club
Rosemary Gibbens 01993 773502

**Chipping Norton
Friends of the Blind**
Mary Gregory 01865 725595

Didcot/Wallingford OAB affiliated
Pam Organ 01235 813391 &
Dorothy Drummond 01235 812614

Faringdon representative
Jean Young 01367 241467

Henley VIP Group
Mike Pooley 01491 628284

**Look Oxfordshire
Support for families of VI children**
Alison Baker 01235 868262

Oxford Visually Impaired Club
O A B
01865 725595

'Oxpots' Pottery Class
Margaret Dawes 01865 558131

**Thame and District Society for
the Visually Handicapped**
Norman Lilley 01844 261041

Visually Impaired But Not Old!
Nicola and Kevin Pamphilon
01869 331778
e-mail flashnp@aol.com

VIVA, North Oxford
Liaison Officer
Ron Sears 01865 553063

Wantage Blind Social Club
Secretary
Hazel Aldred 01235 765849

**Visually Impaired Group
Witney Area**
Mary Sitch 01993 811687

Oxfordshire Social Services Sensory Impairment Team

A countywide team of specially trained staff who can assess, advise, support, teach and inform people of all ages with sight problems:

Sensory Impairment Teams,

**Oxfordshire Social
& Community Services,
Foxcombe Court,
Wyndyke Furlong,
Abingdon Business Park,
Abingdon,
OX14 1DZ**

Telephone 01235 549395

Out of hours social services, emergency freephone 0800 833408.

Specialist workers

John Fearn-Webster
Paul Richardson
Beverley Downs
Kate Laybourne
Nigel Lewis
Elizabeth Jones,
Meg Jones

Manager

Hilary Grime