

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

OAB Newsletter

February 2010

Happy New Year!

I hope that it's not too late to wish you a Happy New Year.

As I write it's 3rd January and I'm looking forward to a year of opportunities to develop our services and extend our joint working with all of our partners and supporters.

I'm also looking forward to continuing to witness the wonderful efforts and achievements of our many volunteers. Back in November last year, Ana, our Volunteer Coordinator held a get-together for our Oxford Home Visitors.

It was great to hear from the volunteers about the individual help that they are providing, on a regular basis, to blind and partially sighted people. The volunteers bring companionship and practical assistance which enables people to live their lives a little more easily and independently. For example, some help with reading newspapers or periodicals, whilst others assist the person to get out and about. In each case, the role is quite individual and Ana is available to advise and support the partnership which has been formed.

Up in Banbury, Janet, our Banbury Coordinator, has also set up a volunteer network, including volunteers who offer advice at the Horton hospital eye clinics and others who assist with events.

We are also indebted to many other people who volunteer their time and expertise for us. For example the several people who provide administrative support in our office, both on a regular and an occasional basis, and the people who represent us on local access groups. There are also people who use their DIY skills to help with maintenance jobs around the building; all tasks that we would otherwise have to pay for out of the generous donations which we so gratefully receive.

So far, I've not mentioned volunteers by name, as there are so many who are so helpful that this article would take up the whole newsletter! I hope I can be forgiven though, if I briefly mention, Irene Priestly, who has become our new Access Officer, and Red and Kath Lawson, who assist us in so many ways, including gathering up most

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First things First!

A gentle reminder!

With the New Year celebrations still fresh in my memory I am prompted to remind our supporters that the Annual Membership subscriptions are once again due! Your support is vital and gives us a stronger mandate to work for you and memberships gives you a vote at our AGM. For more information look at pages 17, 18 and 19. ■■■

Avoid disappointment Make an appointment!

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, we would be very grateful if you could please ring us on 01865 725595 and make an appointment! ■■■

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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Abingdon Road, Oxford, OX1 4XL.**

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Opening hours 9-4pm weekdays (24 hour message service)

Chairman **John Hewitt** Vice-chairman **Adrian Hill** Treasurer **David Warr**

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

Fund-raiser **Ben Allcock** Sight Advisory Desk **Judith Wood**

Volunteer Co-ordinator **Ana Novakovic** (*Wed and Friday.*)

Banbury Co-ordinator **Janet Payne**

Your Newsletter is written, compiled, edited by David Thompson

of our collecting boxes around the county and organising the distribution of this newsletter and other mailouts.

I'd also like to mention our Trustees, who as the Governing Body of the charity, all give their valuable time and expertise, free of charge, and have guided the organisation carefully forward to our present position as an important provider of support to visually impaired people in Oxfordshire.

There are also many other volunteers around the county, who are working for the benefit of blind and partially sighted people. I'm thinking, for example, of the organisers of the various clubs, societies and groups for blind and partially sighted people. Most of the major towns in Oxfordshire have such a group, providing a regular meeting place and a sharing of thoughts and ideas with likeminded people. There is a list of these on the back page of the newsletter. They are all very welcoming and would be pleased to hear from you if you'd like to join them.

May I also take this opportunity to invite you, if you have not already done so, to join or renew your membership of OAB, if you wish to do so? Just to clarify, all of our services are free of charge to all visually impaired people, whether members or not, but we do invite you to become a member or renew. That way, as a representative body with a

large membership, you strengthen our hand when we try to influence local policies and initiatives. You also have the right to vote on matters at our Annual General Meeting and have the satisfaction of knowing that you are a part of an organisation which is actively working to improve the lives of local blind and partially sighted people.

I do hope that 2010 is a good one for you. I'd like to sign off by thanking all of our volunteers, who make such a huge contribution to our work, and also, all of the generous folk, whose donations and help enables us to continue our much requested support to blind and partially sighted people.

Best wishes, Colin Cure. ■■■

Large Print calendars and diaries

We have a large print calendar costing £3.70, a desk diary costing £7.50 and a pocket diary at £4.00. We still have a few of these invaluable "aides memoires" left, however they are very popular and going out of the door very quickly, so it might be advisable to get yours whilst stocks last. All are large or very large print with more than adequate space for entries to be written in such a way that it is possible to read them! For more information or to order yours call Sarah Milrose on 01865 725595.

Holidays update

Last year, we spent a lot of time looking into the possibility of re-starting OAB Group Holidays. We are aware that many people thoroughly enjoyed these trips and would like us to organise them again.

It is with much regret, then, that we have come to the conclusion that we will not be able to resume the holidays. The reason for this is that, with the changes in health and safety, and insurance policies, it would be far too expensive to meet all of the requirements, which we would be obliged to undertake.

On the Buses

We are pleased to report that the Access Team from the County Council have issued guidance notes to all local bus drivers to advise them on the needs of blind and partially sighted bus passengers.

It is hoped that this will encourage bus drivers to a better understanding of the problems faced by visually impaired people, including lack of understanding of the white cane, the role of the guide dog, and difficulties reading bus numbers.

OAB regularly work with the Access Team to try to improve access to things like services, public spaces and transport. ■■■

We are very sorry about this situation, as we would have liked, indeed enjoyed, organising such a pleasant event.

It is worth noting that there are organisations who do organise group holidays and if you would like to contact us, we can tell you about them. Additionally, if there are a small group of people who are thinking about organising their own holiday trip, we would be very pleased to help them with some of the organising, like making telephone calls or completing paperwork. ■■■

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Walking and Running for Fun

There are few places which are quite as enjoyable to walk or stroll through as Oxford's University Parks. Granted, it is true to say that it has been considered a little too "quaint" for some people but, all together, there is a certain pleasantness to the place which is hard to match. We are, therefore, very happy, and honoured, to be able to invite you to a sponsored walk or run (depending on which you would rather do), which will be based at the Park.

The event will be hosted by the Oxford Rotary Club, and will take place in the morning of Saturday May 8th. Last year, over three hundred people took part and raised £1000s for local charities and causes in the process.

Officially, the two routes that are available are 2.5KM or 5KM long, (Editors note: which in proper measurements are about 1 and a half and 3 miles respectively), however, in practice, the day is very informal, with most of those who have chosen to walk being allowed to simply enjoy the route as they please. We will be happy to provide guides and helpers for anyone who would like one, while there will also be a barbeque available for everyone who takes part.

Of course, besides enjoying a great day out, we also hope to raise lots of funds for the cause as we do so.

Though there is no minimum sponsorship amount to enter, we do ask that everyone who comes along tries to raise as much as they can. Every penny raised will help to ensure that we can continue to improve our services: day to day, year to year.

If you would like to take part, or know a relative or friend who would like to, we ask that you may please contact the OAB team on 01865 725595 and ask for "Ben". If you would prefer to email, the address is Fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk.

For those of you reading this outside of Oxford, please know that we are working on organising events like this outside of the City.

Thank you. We hope to see you on the day. Ben Allcock

Yoga for all



We are thinking of creating a class at The Space, in Thame for visually impaired people. If you are interested, please contact Ginny: The Space, Yoga & Healing Studio
Contact: 01844 202398 or 07791 165998



www.thespacethame.com



News from the North

Our OAB representative in Banbury is Janet Payne who also runs our information desk on a Wednesday afternoon (2pm to 5pm), at the Age Concern Centre, White Lion Walk.

Bowling takes off in Banbury

In the last issue I mentioned that a Ten Pin Bowling group might start up in Banbury. Well it did, and it's been a great success, with everyone having a lot of fun!

Marisol Clack, pictured opposite, whose brainchild it was, is now in the chair, very ably supported and abetted by Fran Hughes who is both the treasurer and the secretary.



Marisol Clack

'We all really enjoy it,' says Marisol. 'We meet on Thursdays at 1pm and have a couple of games each. The Banbury Lakeside Superbowl has given us a good deal and we now have a group of regular players.'

If you want to know more, contact Marisol on 01295 269206. Sighted players are welcome too, not least

because they can help to orientated VI players and keep the scores.

The group, thanks to Kevin Pamphilon of VIBNO, have already joined the British Blind Sport league and have benefited from two coaching visits: maybe the next stop will be the Paralympics??

Support for Carers

Quite often carers come to Age Concern to ask me about aids for the visually impaired people that they are looking after. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind them that as well as having introductory Carers packs at Age Concern there is excellent support for carers at the Carers' Centre on Horsefair in Banbury, ranging from advice to advocacy and practical support.

Health Walks

The first walk of the season will be on April 22nd at 11am with walkers meeting outside the Mill in Banbury. If you are a new walker you will need to come 15 minutes early to register with the walk leaders. This walk will go along the reservoir as usual, weather permitting, and be about two miles in length. Further walks will be listed in the next issue.

Gaydon Trip

A small group of VIPs is going to visit the Motor Heritage Centre at Gaydon in January. It is hoped that this will be the first of other meetings with VI car enthusiasts in mind.

Benefits Advice

Fran Hughes used to work at the Job Centre and is willing to help VI people lost in the "Benefits Maze". Contact me on 07528688619 and I will pass your number on to her.

Macular Group in Banbury

By Tom McNulty

Macular Disease Society Group Support & Development Manager

The Macular Disease Society supports local self-help groups all over the country.

They meet regularly to share experiences, pass on hints and tips and invite guest speakers to talk on a variety of subjects concerned with MD and its impact on our daily lives.

The meetings are also social occasions where we can chat together over a cup of coffee!

We would like to invite you to our first meeting in Banbury. It will be held on Thursday 11 March 2010 from 2 to 4pm, at the Banbury Methodist Church, Marlborough Road, Banbury, OX16 5BZ. As from then on we shall meet on the second Thursday of the month.

We are sure you will find it really worthwhile and enjoyable. We look forward to welcoming you with a cup of tea and a biscuit.

If you need any more information, please contact me Tom McNulty on Telephone Number 01264 321963.

A friendly smile and a listening ear, when needed most

As many of you reading or listening to this article will know through your own personal experience, there are few things, more difficult to accept and understand than to be told that your sight is deteriorating, or that you have a severe visual impairment problem, which is sadly, untreatable.

Many years ago, thirty five to be exact, I also became a patient at the Old Radcliffe Eye Infirmary, following a car accident. During the following years, I spent many months as both an outpatient and inpatient. I noticed from my own personal experience that many patients, having been given distressing news or told details about their sight problem that they did not fully understand, were “falling through the net.”

Consequently, when patients left the hospital, some felt extremely anxious, upset and often angry and confused, not knowing where or who to turn to.

I must quickly add that all the Doctors, Nursing and care staff, did a marvellous job and did all in their power to assist the patients in their care, but as the clinics were so busy, the time spent with patients was minimal.

As I had to give up my profession as a Nursing Officer, due to my sight problems, I began to think of ways that might help the patients who were suffering in this way. As I am

also a qualified Counsellor, I felt sure that additional help would benefit both staff and patients.

During the 1990's I heard about the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind. I went along to visit them and during our initial chat, I asked if it would be at all possible to set up a “Help and Advice” desk, in the waiting room at the Eye Outpatients Clinic and the rest, as they say, is history!

Thanks to the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind, without whom none of this would have been possible and also the huge support from the Radcliffe Infirmary, “The O.A.B. Sight Advisory Desk” was born and we spent many wonderfully productive and busy years at the Old Radcliffe Infirmary.

Now we are based at Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital, in the West Wing, still in the waiting area of the Eye Hospital Outpatients and still as busy as ever.

Our objective from the start has been to offer information and advice and for many people, the emotional support required at a time of extreme anxiety and confusion.

As many of you will know, we also have a small supply of useful items on display. These are designed to assist clients to do some of the basic things that they thought they would never manage again.

As we start a brand new year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my wonderful volunteers, Grace, Robert and Elaine. Sadly, due to sight and mobility problems, I am only able to be at the Desk on a Tuesday, so I am grateful and very proud to have my volunteers. Thanks to their unwavering support, I am now able to keep the Desk open for most of the week.

Quite recently, new volunteers have kindly offered their services, so hopefully it will not be too long before we open every day, as we were originally.

We also provide a support service, one day a week, at Banbury's Horton Hospital, with the help of two volunteers, Brian and Lorna. We are very happy to be able to do so.

If you would like to know more about the Sight Advisory Service, or would like to share your own story about the desk, please feel free to call me on 01865 725595 or e mail me on; sightadviser@oxeyes.org.uk

I am very fortunate to have made so many friends since starting this venture. Some are regular clients who I have known for many years and who have taken this long journey with me. Others are the new clients who pop in to see us every day. EVERYONE is welcome.

May I end by wishing everyone a VERY HAPPY and HEALTHY New Year.
Judith Wood.

Eye test may detect Alzheimer's

A simple eye test might be able to detect Alzheimer's and other diseases before symptoms develop, according to UK scientists.

The technique uses fluorescent markers which attach to affected cells which can be seen in the retina and give an early indication of any disease. This works because the retina is a direct, albeit thin, extension of the brain. So it is possible that in the future a visit to a high-street optician to check on your eyesight will also be a check on the state of your brain!

The research has so far been carried out on mice, but it is hoped that the technique can be translated to humans. The first patient trials to assess the technique will begin later this year.

Pen to paper

If you have enough residual vision, one of the simplest ways to take quick notes, telephone numbers or make shopping lists is still with a pen and paper. We now have very wide, bold lined paper unbound, but on a clipboard, consisting of 75 A4 sheets with a fine or broad pen for £5.00. For more information call Sarah on 01865 725595

VIBNO

VIBNO is a group for the 18 –50 age group in Oxfordshire to meet socially and have fun.

We meet once a month on the first Tuesday of the month. We alternate between a meeting at a pub and then on the other month we do something completely different.

So if you are a VIP aged between 18 and 50 and want to socialise and have fun with people alike come and join us. Partners, friends and family are welcome to all events.

Since the last newsletter we have enjoyed a drink and a catch up at the pub in Kidlington and played skittles at Tackley which was great fun!

For more information and details of our programme please contact Nicola Pamphilon 01869 331778 or e-mail flashnp@aol.com ■■■

Wantage Blind Club

A social club for partially sighted and blind people living locally. Meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month from February to December at the Wantage Day Centre from 3-5pm where members can socialise over afternoon tea. A raffle is held and there is often entertainment. There is also an annual outing. Transport is available by Special Transport Ambulance or in volunteer's cars. For more information call Hazel Aldred on 01235 765849 or Joy Ripley on 01235 763112. ■■■

Dreaming Spires Tenpin Bowling

from Club Captain Kevin Pamphilon

We are in the process of playing in the winter league and have just had a Christmas break. All the teams are ready to go again and try to qualify for the final in Sheffield in May.

We play at the Bowl Plex in Oxford near the Kassam Stadium. For more information about playing ten pin bowling, please contact Kevin Pamphilon club captain on telephone number 01869 331778. ■■■

Jonathan Mitchell

We recently received the sad news that Jonathan Mitchell passed away early in December, aged 28. Jonathan was one of the founder members of VIBNO and the Dreaming Spires Bowling Team. He was a much loved member of both and will be missed at all our meetings and bowling nights.

We would like to pass our thoughts to his family at this time. Kevin and Nicola Pamphilon ■■■

Banbury Blind Club

Meets alternate Tuesdays 10.30am - 2.00pm at the WRVS Centre. Helpers are always welcome. For more information call Enid Smith on 01295 269568. ■■■

Abingdon Information Fair

Age Concern put on a good show at the Information Fair which they held in the Guild Hall in Abingdon on Friday 22 January from 9.30 am to 1pm.

There were a number of stalls at the Fair, while OAB valiantly held their own with a stall providing samples of equipment such as liquid level indicators; talking tin labels; talking watches and clocks; magnifiers and other useful gadgets to assist visually impaired people.

The Information Fair was very well attended and the variety of stalls provided interest for all. These included such stalls as Trading Standards, providing advice and

information to protect individuals from bogus tradesmen and other issues; Green Gym, a body promoting health related activities for all ages in the natural world, like working on clearing coppice areas and marsh conservation; a farm shop selling fresh produce; and a massage equipment company to help with those aches and pains! There was also Homeshare, who organise the exchange of housing in return for help in the home which would appeal to many who find it difficult to live alone and would benefit from having companionship during the day.

It was a very enjoyable, bustling day and I met lots of lovely people who came to the OAB stall to look at our wares. We plan to attend further such functions in the future.



Carers groups in Oxfordshire

Carers, of any age, living or working in Oxfordshire, can find support, advice and information from their local carers group

North and West Carers Centre

27 Horse Fair
Banbury
OX16 0AE
01295 264545
cc.nwoxon@dsl.pipex.com

Oxford Carers Centre

174a Cowley Road,
Oxford, OX4 1UE
01865 205192
info@carerscentre.co.uk
Website:
www.carerscentre.co.uk

South and Vale Carers' Centre

5 Lydalls Road,
Didcot, OX11 7HX
01235 510212
carers@svcarers.org.uk
Website:
www.svcarers.org.uk

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Vision Impaired Visually Active

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

Diamond Place, Summertown, Oxford. We have an interesting and varied programme for the months ahead. Please note that there is no VIVA meeting in August.

VIVA Programme 2010

Feb 9th, Neil Stockton
Chairman of Radio Cherwell

Mar 9th, John Paine
Spanish Fiestas

April 12th Talk on the Calibre
Audio Book Library Service

May 11th Jude Barrett with items
from the Ashmolean Museum

June 8th Outing, to be arranged

July 13th Ann Spokes Symonds,
Lessons from Life

August No meeting this month

Sept 14th Queenie Hamilton talks
about Wolvercote

Oct 12th Ralph Wilkins

Nov 9th Quiz and Bring and
Buy Sale

Dec To be arranged

**For further details
ring Ron Sears on
01865 553063. ■■■**

Let's talk Theatre!

Oxford Playhouse has a fine selection of audio described performances on offer in their winter 2010 season.

An exciting first-time adaptation of Graham Greene's intriguing spy thriller and unlikely love story set during the Blitz – *The Ministry of Fear*. a taut espionage thriller and unnerving portrait of a mind in freefall. Not to be missed at Oxford Playhouse an audio described performance will be on Saturday 20 March at 2.30pm.

An audio described performance of Tennessee Williams' autobiographical play; *The Glass*

Menagerie will be available on Saturday 24 April at 2.30pm. This autobiographical play is a brilliant and compelling portrait of a family in crisis, and a classic of twentieth century American theatre.

Please let the Ticket Office know that you would like the audio described facility when booking your tickets. To book call the Ticket Office on 01865 305305.

To request an audio brochure with full details of events at Oxford Playhouse contact Lisa Wood on 01865 305399. or email lisa.wood@oxfordplayhouse.com. ■■■

If eye trouble means trouble reading have a look at Eye Pal

As some of you will know, for a number of years we have had a selection of different scanning and reading devices on display here at OAB, writes David Thompson. These are extremely useful for people who do not have sufficient vision to read print, because they do not require that you use sight, they scan the document to be read and using Optical Character Recognition, OCR, to interpret the text, they then read out the document using Speech Synthesis, in reality, a human sounding reading voice. The most recent of these being the excellent Scannar from Humanware. Actually, the sad news is that we no longer have this piece of equipment. The good news is that Humanware have replaced it with something far more compact, easier and quicker to use, a machine called The Eyepal Solo!

It is called Solo because it will read for you on it's own - no other equipment or additional lights are needed, no buttons to push, no manuals to read, just turn it on and enjoy!

It comes ready to use right out of the box. It is a self-contained motion activated reading device that instantly reads from any book or



printed material. Just plug it in, place down a book or newspaper and it reads to you! If it is not the page you wanted to read, remove it. Reading will stop immediately. If you need to pause reading, for example if the phone or doorbell rings, wave your hand over the reading material and it will pause, pass your hand again and it resumes.

I was a little sceptical when I heard about the Eyepal Solo, however, having seen it and demonstrated it on a number of occasions, I am impressed at how quick and easy to use it is and how readily those I have shown it to get the hang of using it. I would heartily recommend that anyone who is having serious difficulty reading print come to see us at Bradbury Lodge.

For more information on the Eyepal Solo, or to book an appointment,
please call OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

We have the Synergy! If you have the time

For a number of years due to the generosity of donors, manufacturers and suppliers we have been lucky enough to be able to show the visually impaired people of Oxfordshire an expanding range of CCTV Electronic Magnifiers. These are a cunning combination of a camera and a screen with some rather cute electronic jiggery pokery, which allows you to change magnification levels, choose the colours of text, background and images, and all of this with automatic focussing. Well I am pleased to be able to let you know that our range just expanded a bit more with the very welcome addition of a device called the Smartview Synergy, a high quality desktop video magnifier at a lower price than similar models currently on the market. The SmartView Synergy magnifies text, objects and images which could help restore and maintain independence for people with low vision eye conditions.

It has large, simple controls which enable quick and easy adaptation to different print sizes and print qualities, and a large magnification range. The 19 inch version, costing only £1,200, provides from 2.6 to 57 times magnification and the 22 inch widescreen 3.1 to 69 times magnification

It has multiple display modes. The full colour mode is best suited to looking at photographs and images. When reading, increasing the contrast

makes the text easier to read. The SmartView Synergy has a number of high contrast modes which remove shades to leave just crisp, clear text. View pure black text on a white background or white text on a black background and 16 other colour combinations. It has an easy-glide reading table which can also be fixed in position at a touch of a button.

To find out more or book an appointment contact OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

Pause for reflection

Just a few words to let you know that we now have a small range of magnifying mirrors of varying strengths here at OAB that may help people who have sufficient residual vision with what I have been told is called "everyday grooming". Things such as eyebrow tweezing, applying make-up, skincare, shaving and putting in contact lenses, though presumably not all at the same time! I have had a look at a couple of these magnifying mirrors and as one who hasn't really been able to see myself close up for 30 years, was suitably impressed, or should that be depressed?

If you would like more information or to book an appointment to come in and have a close up look, just call Sarah or David here at Oxfordshire Association for the Blind on 01865 725595. ■■■

Sarah sells sun-shields

The recent snowy conditions and the fact that the sun is so low at this time of year have reminded me of the need for some sort of anti-glare protection when I am out and about. For example I heard of a local lady who recently suffered from snow blindness, caused by excessive glare!

When picking out a pair of sunglasses or sunshields, it's best to avoid blue-tinted lenses and instead to choose yellow or amber tinted lenses because these filter out blue light, preventing it getting to your eye.

Research into blue light exposure from sunlight has highlighted it as one of the contributory factors in developing age-related macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness.

We see light as white, but contained in that white light are actually different colors of light, the rainbow is the perfect example! The wavelengths in the blue portion of the spectrum are able to excite certain compounds in the eye which may aggravate processes that can damage retinal cells, so until proved otherwise, it is thought best to try and exclude the blue light from the eye.

Therefore, most people, regardless of age, should avoid blue-tinted sunglasses. A blue lens actually lets predominantly blue light into the eye,

which could be harmful. On the other hand, yellow/amber coloured lens actually filter out the blue light.

And if that is not enough, blue light is actually not visually very good as it is a large contributory factor in the problem of glare. For example the sky looks blue because the blue light of the spectrum is very easily diffused by the atmosphere and it is this tendency that leads to cause glare. Our vision actually works better with light of the warmer, yellow, amber, orange and brown tints.

Dark-tinted lenses are seen by many a good choice in sunglasses, because they decrease exposure to all colors of light. However, it is very important to remember that, by reducing the total amount of light going into the eye you are actually cutting out "useful" light, after all we do require some light in order to see!

Also it is important to remember that not all sunglasses block Ultra Violet, (U.V.) light which is not good for eyes, so buy sunglasses that have been tested for UV blocking capability and they really should block all UV light.

At Bradbury Lodge we have a small selection of Yellow, Amber, Orange and Brown UV Shields and can source Blue Block Filters that are all designed especially to help protect your vision from further damage. We are also always willing to help and advise you on anti-glare and unwanted sunlight solutions. Just call Sarah on 01865

15 725595. ■■■

Bogus callers

**A very interesting article from
South Oxfordshire District Council**

What do you do when you hear a knock at your door and you're not expecting anybody?

The chances are the caller will be genuine, but we should be on our guard against the unscrupulous few who are unwanted callers, be they door to door salesmen, conmen or something more sinister.

Before answering the door to anyone look out your window and if you don't know the person, put the chain on the door before you open it and then ask for some identification - genuine callers will not mind you asking. If you're not sure then don't let them in.

Official callers, Council officers and people working on their behalf, call at residents' houses for many reasons including noise complaints and council tax inspections. But most of these visits are pre-arranged and expected.

If you are in any doubt about the authenticity of the caller, put your mind at rest by checking their credentials. Council staff will identify themselves using their council ID card and they will clearly explain the reason for their visit. They will generally only visit between 8:30 - 17:30 on weekdays.

If you suspect someone is a bogus caller let the police know by calling 0845 8 505 505. Call 999 in an emergency. ■■■

Taking Books on Cassette Tape

Over the years Oxfordshire Association for the Blind has accumulated a considerable number of talking books on cassette tape, kindly donated by clients, visitors and the Oxfordshire County Libraries Service.

Although cassette tapes are being phased out we decided to store our collection until we moved and we have subsequently found space for them here at Bradbury Lodge.

A very valued volunteer, has spent many hours of her own spare time checking and sorting them and we now have a long list of titles split into several categories including autobiographies, poetry, religion, TV and radio recordings and children's talking books. There is a section of music tapes, including musicals and operas. We also have some talking books on CD and a number of audio-described films on video.

If you would like to borrow any of our films or talking books please ring OAB on the usual number 01865 725595 and we will see if we can help. It would be best to ring on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon and ask to speak to Sue Baker. She will be delighted to help. We can post the tapes to you and we will enclose a label so that you can return them to us free of charge.

Marian Small ■■■

Giving more easily and effectively

by Michael Ling, *OAB Accounting Officer*

Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a scheme to enable tax-effective giving by individuals to charities in the United Kingdom.

Gift Aid allows individuals who are subject to UK income tax to complete a simple, short declaration that they are a UK taxpayer.

Any cash donations that the taxpayer makes to their favourite charity, (OAB of course), after making a declaration, are treated as being made after deduction of income tax at the basic rate, and the charity can reclaim the basic rate income tax paid on the gift from Revenue and Customs.

So if you are a taxpayer please complete the gift aid form on the next page and let us claim a further 28% on top of each contribution we receive.

Standing Order

If you want to make regular payments to us, why not take advantage of a standing order with your bank?

This can be used to make regular payments whether weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually.

Not only does it save you having to remember when you last sent anything to us, it also saves you the hassle and cost of writing cheques and posting them to us.

If you do wish to pay by standing order, please complete the standing order on the following page, but please remember to send this to OAB and *NOT* to your bank.

Support OAB become a member!

You can show your support for Oxfordshire's best loved Visually Impaired charity by becoming a member. Your membership gives you mandate to vote at our Annual

General Meeting and give us a greater voice in the county. Just fill in the form on the next page and help us to help you! Or telephone 01865 725595 for more information. ■■■

We are very grateful for donations received in memory of

Edith Morris
John Adsett
Mollie Crane
Helen Collins

S DeLastic
Brian Dodds
Douglas Branch
William Webster

Brenda Roome
Doris Louisa Brown
Clifford Vine Chatterton
June Alice Franklin

Our sincere thanks to all donors ■■■

Membership and donation

If you are **eligible**, please Gift Aid your payment by signing the declaration below. In **all cases**, please complete your name and address details. If you wish to pay by standing order, please also complete the separate form overleaf and return to us at:

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

Membership

Please tick the appropriate box/es

Member

(£5.00 annually)

Friend

(£20.00 annually)

Life Member

(£250.00)

Donation

£5

£10

£20

£50

£100

Other amount **£**.....

Gift Aid

Please tick the appropriate box

Please treat this payment as a Gift Aid donation

Please treat all membership/donations that I make from the date of this declaration, until otherwise notified, as Gift Aid donations

I pay Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax at least equal to the tax that the OAB reclaims on membership/donations in the appropriate tax year. I will inform the OAB when this is no longer the case.

Signed

Date.....

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____

OAB **Oxfordshire Association
for the Blind**

1877-2010

*Helping blind people
for 133 years*

Registered Charity 273559

Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Abingdon Road,
Oxford, OX1 4XL.

Phone : 01865 725595 Fax : 01865 725596

Standing order instruction

To the Manager:.....Bank plc

at:

.....

.....Post Code

Please pay to **CAF Bank plc, 25 Kings Hill Avenue,
Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ**
Sort Code 40-52-40

For the credit of **Oxfordshire Association for the Blind**

Account number is **00015471**

The sum of £..... (in words).....

on theday of200.....

and the same sum on the same day in each succeeding
month / quarter / year (*delete as appropriate*) until further
notice and debit my account number

Signed **Date**

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone ■■■

Have you remembered GiftAid?

Clubs and groups for VIPs in Oxfordshire

Abingdon & District Macular Group

Daphne Baker 01491 835157

Banbury Society for the Visually Impaired

Enid Smith 01295 269568

Bicester Friends of the Visually Impaired

Mrs Peggy Clarke 01869 242290

Carterton Social Club

Rosemary Gibbens 01993 846825

Chipping Norton Friends of the Blind

Mary Gregory 01608 810899

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

Kidlington Macular Group

Tom Wright 01865 376482

Marita Ferrett 01865 373104

Oxford Macular Group

Daphne Dorman 01993 811084

Oxford Visually Impaired Club

Mary Gregory 01608 810899

'Oxpots' Pottery Class

Christopher Barry 01608 730407

Thame and District Society for the Visually Handicapped

Norman Lilley 01844 261041

Visually Impaired But Not Old!

Nicola & Kevin Pamphilon 01869 331778

VIVA, North Oxford

Liaison Officer, Ron Sears 01865 553063

Wantage Blind Social Club

Mrs Joy Ripley 01235 763112

Secretary Hazel Aldred 01235 765849

Witney Area Visually Impaired Group

Mandy Bishop 01993 706824

Oxfordshire Social Services Sensory Impairment Team

A county-wide 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.

VI Team

Beverley Downs
Kate Laybourne
Elizabeth Jones
Meg Jones
Serena Glister
Sue Miles

Manager

John Fearn-Webster