

OAB Newsletter

January 2009

Planning for the future

writes OAB Director Colin Cure

I hope that you had a nice Christmas and that the New Year has started well for you. A new year is a chance to think about the future, and that's very much in the OAB team's mind at the moment. We're working hard to put together a long term plan for the organisation. We've been consulting with as many individuals and groups as possible, and will continue to do so. The challenge, of course, is to take the very many excellent ideas, which we've been given, and decide which services should be prioritised. There is so much that we'd like to do, but we realise that we have to be realistic, particularly during these difficult economic times. If you have suggestions about what you feel that we could include in our plan, please do let us know.

A high priority, which is clear, is the building of OAB's new Resource Centre, as an attached annex to our existing building, Bradbury Lodge. The design, which has received planning permission, will give

more people access to a wider range of new services, including courses in kitchen skills, computer skills, IT awareness, and even seminars on visual impairment awareness for social and health care workers, local businesses, and schools. It would also mean improved facilities for counselling and low vision assessment and training. We think all of these changes will help to make a better community for local visually impaired people. Of course, the Resource Centre can only be built after a successful fundraising effort, so we'll be working hard on the campaign over the coming months.

Besides the annex, the team are still working hard to develop services throughout the whole of the county. That's why, I am particularly pleased that we have joined forces with Social and Community Services and RNIB to organise an activity day for visually impaired children and their families on 19th February. We hope to learn from the day and organise similar

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First things first

Please let us know when you want to visit!

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 to avoid disappointment please ring us on 01865 725595 and make an appointment! ■■■

Support OAB be, a member!

Show your support for Oxfordshire's best loved Visually Impaired charity by becoming a member. At just £5.00 a year it is great value for money and your membership gives us a greater voice in the county. Just fill in the form at the back of the newsletter or call us on 01865 725595 for more information. Thank you! ■■■

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)

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

events in the future and we think all the children, parents, and carers who take part will have a fantastic time.

A month later, in March, we will also be teaming up with Action for Blind People again to bring the Resource Bus, with all its specialist equipment, to some different locations around the county, something we know many people benefited from last year.

I'd like to thank, once again, the groups and clubs for visually impaired people around the county for making me so welcome on my visits. They each provide a friendly welcoming environment to blind and partially sighted people. If you feel that you might like to try visiting your local group, I'd definitely recommend it, and you can read more about them in this newsletter.

Now that the New Year has started, I'd like to invite you to renew your membership, or join the Association as a member, if you have not already done so. OAB's services are free of charge to all visually impaired people and their carers, but more members means more strength when advocating on behalf of local blind and partially sighted people; while the donations you make as part of membership are vital in enabling OAB to continue to provide the services that we do. It would also mean, as a member, you have the right to vote at OAB's Annual

General Meeting.

I'd like to thank all OAB's many supporters and volunteers, who help us in so many ways. It's not possible here to mention everyone who has helped us. We have received monthly donations, grants, legacies and donations in made in memory of someone, help with street collections, mailouts of the newsletter, collection of static collection boxes and many more acts of generosity. Thank you to everyone who has helped: OAB wouldn't be possible without you.

Finally, I would also like to mention the Optometry Team at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Not only do they link closely with us and our colleagues in Social and Community Services, some of them have undertaken inspiring fundraising events for us too. Jo, for instance, did a sponsored tandem parachute jump, and Tamsin and her Oxford Gospel Choir raised funds for us at their excellent Christmas concert. I'm grateful to them and everyone else who helps us continue to provide our services to local blind and partially sighted people.

Best wishes, Colin. ■■■

Date for your Diary

Our large print diaries and calendars are selling like hot-crossed buns, so get yours before they are all gone! Call Sarah on 01865 725595. ■■■

News from the North

by our OAB representative in Banbury Janet Payne

We are pleased to be able to say that our home visitor scheme is now up and running happily. Clients and volunteers are both enjoying the relationships and activities they are developing together. One partnership is having fun teaching each other sudoku and cribbage respectively; another enjoys chats and lunches out. Others focus on practical help in the house or on shopping trips. Next stop: the OAB dating agency!! Seriously, these are combinations of people where everyone benefits, and looks forward to their weekly meeting. Let me know if you need a visitor or know someone who might like one.

Alongside the usual help desk on Wednesday afternoons at Age Concern in Banbury and the Horton OAB alerting service, I have worked hard to set up some social activities and events in Banbury this year. The first of these will include:

- A visit to the Banbury Society for the Blind's lunch group by Cherwell College's trainee beauticians, with possible further events at Age Concern.
- A programme of walks with the backing of Cherwell Council's Health Walk scheme, to get VIPs who are stuck at home out and about. The walks will take about an hour and finish at a café for a drink and a chat.



Janet Payne

They will start in the spring when sighted volunteers have been trained as walk leaders and drivers and the weather is better.

We'll publish the dates in the next newsletter and circulate them to anyone who registers an interest with me.

If you are interested in any of the above contact me on 07528688619 you can also e-mail me on banburycoordinator@oxeyes.org.uk or leave a message at OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

Would you like some extra help?

Are you visually-impaired and living on your own in Oxford or Banbury? Does your eyesight make it difficult for you to deal with the post? Could you do with some extra help sorting out things like bills and appointments? Would you like someone to go out with you occasionally – perhaps to the local shops, or for a stroll in the park? Or maybe you'd just appreciate a bit more company – someone to pop in for a chat from time to time?

If you've said 'yes' to any of these, our Volunteer Home Visiting Scheme might be just what you're looking for. Our volunteers visit people at home, usually once a week for about an hour. They're all trained by OAB and the scheme is run by our Volunteer Coordinators, Ana Novakovic and Janet Payne.

If you're interested, please phone us on 725595 and speak to Ana if you live in Oxford, or Janet if you're in Banbury. Ana or Janet will arrange to come and see you; this is an opportunity to find out more about the Home Visiting Scheme and to decide whether you're definitely interested. We can't always guarantee to find you a visitor immediately, but we train new volunteers several times a year and we'll keep in touch.

If you would like more information about becoming a Volunteer Home Visitor, please do get in touch and we'll send you an information pack. ■■■ 5

Have you seen OAB at the Eye Hospital?

If you attend a clinic at the Eye Hospital in the John Radcliffe, you may already be familiar with OAB's Sight Advisory Desk in the main waiting room of the Eye Hospital. You can pick up information about OAB and there's a selection of equipment to look at – talking clocks and watches, specialist lighting, kitchen utensils, and much more.

Specialist counselling is also available. Judith, the OAB counsellor who is herself visually-impaired, is at the hospital on Tuesdays. You can arrange to see her at our offices at other times, or to speak by phone.

At the moment, due to ill health, the desk is only staffed on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but you can always pick up a leaflet with information about how to contact us at other times, and an information booklet with details of services for visually-impaired people in Oxfordshire.

And if anyone is interested in volunteering to help out by staffing the desk for a few hours a week, please get in touch with us on telephone number 01865 725595. We'd be delighted to hear from you! ■■■

The National Key Scheme (NKS)

Independent access for disabled people to public toilets. We supply these keys at only £2.00 each! To order just call Sarah or David on 01865 725595. ■■■

**We want to tell people about local, social groups in their area. So, if you organise or attend one, please tell us about it and we can let others know, Call Colin or David on 01865 725595
Meanwhile, here are some to start the ball rolling**

Chipping Norton Friends of the Blind

This group has been going so long that its origins are, not quite lost in the mists of time, but are to be found somewhere in the pre-smokeless zone of the late 1950s. It began as an informal "get together" in a house in or around Chipping Norton. The Saintly, Mary Gregory of Charlbury, (can you tell we are fond of her!) who runs the group now, put me in touch with Sue Brown, MBE, who actually started the group off in the middle of the last century and was able to tell me about the early days, luckily she was able to consult with Edith Wheeler, who began attending the group in around 1965, she remembers the goings on and was able to fill in some of the gaps. By 1960 the group was meeting regularly in a room The Chestnuts, which was a Nurses Home for Chipping Norton Hospital, it was not ideal because the crockery and cutlery were all kept upstairs, so a fair bit of shifting and shuffling went on. In those days the group was a quite a

handicraft session, making baskets, trays, stools, mats and netting. It was a basic affair as people had to provide their own sandwiches and make their own way there, if they weren't lucky enough to have a volunteer! (As with all of our local groups today, Chipping Norton was, and is, heavily reliant on the goodwill of volunteer helpers.) The present day group meets at the Memorial Hall in Chadlington, on alternate Thursdays from 11.30am to 2.30pm. On arrival attendees are greeted with tea or coffee and biscuits. Then there is time for a relaxing chat. After sherry or fruit juice, a lovely 2 course lunch is served. Then follows dominos and bingo, with prizes, before departing for home. There is a Summer Outing and a special Christmas Lunch. This is a very friendly, informal group that loves to welcome new members so if you would more information or would like to come along please call 01608 810899 and speak to Mary Gregory.

For Sale

**Magnilink Colour
Autofocus CCTV**

3.5 – 45x magnification

Cost £2,400 Sale Price £950

**Tagarno Mini Black and White
Manual Focus CCTV**

14" Screen 3 – 30x magnification

Cost £1,300 new Sale Price £300

Telephone 01865 246344 ■■■

The Banbury Society for the Visually Impaired

Meet every other Tuesday at the People's Church, Horsefair. Please contact Enid Smith, Group Organiser on 01295 269568. ■■■

Didcot and Wallingford VIP Group

Just yesterday I had the good fortune to speak to Mrs Pam Organ who is presently co-organiser of The Didcot and Wallingford VIP Group and I asked her about how the group originated. She was very helpful and put me in touch with a lovely lady called Anthea Roley who started the group off in about September 1983. She was approached by an alliance of Didcot Adult Education, Oxfordshire Association for the Blind and Oxfordshire Social Services to start a Handicraft Group for Visually Impaired People in and around Didcot. Originally the meetings were held in Didcot Girls School, and Anthea told me about the gymnastics that they had to get up to in order to do handicrafts whilst perched on high stools balancing at high benches in a classroom!

After a number of relocations through the intervening years, the present day Didcot and Wallingford VIP group meet fortnightly on a Thursday from 10.30am to 2.00pm at Manor Farm, Foxhall Road, Didcot and the emphasis and tone of the meeting has shifted from handicrafts to a very relaxed social event. On arrival the members have a cup of tea or coffee, with a chat. A popular activity is the quiz run by Anthea, this is then followed by lunch. There are 2 outings a year, the summer visit to a garden centre and in December, a Christmas Lunch! At the moment there are 12 regular attendees making up this nice, lively, convivial group. For more information please contact Pam Organ on 01235 813391 or Dorothy Drummond on 01235 812614.



The Thame and District Society for the Visually Handicapped

Recently I spoke to Mr Norman Lilley who is the Secretary and co-organiser of this group. He tells me it was formed in 1978 by a small committee of people which included Miss Laura Howrigan and Miss Tess Johnson, since when the group has continued to progress successfully due to the support of loyal volunteers, the generosity of donors, and the enthusiasm of the participants.

These days the group meets fortnightly during school terms times on a Wednesday, between 10am and 1pm, at Lord William's Lower School, Towersey Road, Thame.

Members are greeted with Tea or coffee and biscuits. Then time is spent chatting, playing games and other activities such as participating in handicrafts. After lunch is served there are more refreshments to fortify members for the journey home. Usually transport to and from the venue can be arranged for attendees and no-one is refused a place. The present group has about 15 members and more people are always welcome. If you would like to find out more about The Thame and District Society call Norman Lilley on 01844 261041 or Jean Mander on 01844 212983.



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.

OXVIC Programme 2009

Feb 10th, John Paine
talks about African Safari

Mar 10th, Jude Barratt from the
Ashmolean Museum
for touch and talk session

April 14th Stan Hastings talks
about the Bodleian
Library and Sheldonian
Theatre

May 12th Helen Webber, talk on
being a local Police
Community Support
Officer

June 9th Outing, venue to be
arranged

July 14th Bring and Buy Sale

August No meeting this month

Sept 8th Ralph Wilkins talks
about life as a College
Porter

Oct 13th To be announced

Nov 10th To be announced

Dec 8th Christmas Lunch

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

Telephones to try before you buy

Here at Bradbury Lodge we have been working with the British Telecom Inclusion Team and are participating in their "Try before you buy" scheme. To enable us to do so they have very kindly provided a us with some demonstration telephones and a "virtual telephone exchange". This means that clients can come to us and actually try out telephones to see if they might be useful to them. So it is possible to hear the loudness, pitch and tone of them without having to

buy one! If you would like to try them out please call David on 01865 725595 to make an appointment. We look forward to hearing from you. ■■■

Are you thinking about work?

Emma Griffiths works with us at Bradbury Lodge as an Employment Advisor on behalf of RNIB. She is keen to help those who wish to seek employment and would like to hear from you. To get in touch with her call us at OAB on 01865 725595. ■■■

Magnificent magnification!

writes
David Thompson

As most VIPs are aware, there is no visual aid that is a panacea, the magic bullet to solve all our reading or seeing problems. However there are many devices now available that can help people with varying levels of residual vision to remain independent. Here at Bradbury Lodge we have an expanding range of magnifiers that can help with reading and looking at pictures and photographs.

We have a few different handheld optical magnifiers, ranging from 1.7 to 6 times magnification. Once you get above about 2.5 times magnification it is useful to have a clear light, if not daylight, then one of our daylight lamps can prove beneficial. Of course when out and about it is not really practical to carry an angle poise lamp around with one, so fortunately, it is possible to get magnifiers with their own light source. These can magnify from 2.5 to 14.7 times. We have a small demonstration selection which clients can try out and, if suitable purchase.

Due to the generosity of suppliers and donors our range of portable electronic magnifiers has been greatly expanded over the past months and we are able to show both their benefits, for example, portability, high contrast and false colours and their drawbacks, such as relative fragility, a small screen if compared to an electronic magnifier used at home and of course cost when compared to an

optical magnifier.

One of our latest acquisitions is the Smartview Pocket from Humanware, one of my favourite suppliers of accessibility equipment. This device is very small, about 3" by 4" inches, gives magnification from 3 to 9 times of a black on white picture, can invert to white on black and freeze frame the picture, ideal for telephone numbers, passwords or PIN numbers.

Another similar device is the Compact from Optelec, this is very good at doing the same job however it is a bit heavier and chunkier, both in dimension and on the wallet.

The Pico has a slightly larger screen but is an older device, so again, it is a bit more chunky and heavier, on the plus side it is a little simpler to use and cheaper on the wallet.

The Amigo from Enhanced Vision is slightly larger; however it comes with a screen about 3 by 7 inches, several levels of magnification, full colour, false colours and freeze frame.

The Traveller, from Optelec, has a slightly larger screen and large, easy to see control buttons, however it is showing its age a little when compared to other products in that the zoom is a bit slow.

The Stryx from Professional Vision Services is one of the larger animals of this particular breed of magnifier, the screen is larger and the automatic focus and wide focal length means

that you can use it to zoom in on points of interest that are out of reach, across the room or even at the bottom of the garden! It also has an “arm” which you clamp onto a table so that you can write under it and use it more as a conventional CCTV, electronic magnifier.

By the time this reaches you we should be in possession of a new, semi-portable, electronic magnifier from Sight and Sound Technology. Called the Onyx it can be used as a regular CCTV, for reading close up documents in front of you, it can be also used to look at objects further away, across the room or even down the garden! A feature which sets this apart from our other magnifiers is that you can use it to provide a mirror image, ideal for shaving or putting on make-up, my mascara need never be a mess again!

The My Reader is a semi-portable device, however it weighs over 8 kilograms, therefore not recommended for carrying around the supermarket to look at prices! That said, it is an excellent device for those who wish to continue reading large amounts of text, it is really “A flagship device” that can be used to read over ten pages of text at a time without having to move or turn the page once the text is “inside the machine” and, for those able to carry an object like a typewriter it can be shifted from room to room if required.

As well as our portable magnifiers we have an expanding range of CCTV Static Electronic Magnifiers. Many of

you will already have seen our Humanware Extend, which is the follow up to the Smartview series of magnifiers and Smartview 7000, which is tried and trusted technology that is a simple, flexible and relatively cost effective magnifying solution for many VIPs consisting of a magnifying unit to which you can add as big a screen as you need.

One of the newer breed of CCTV is the Clearview plus from Optelec a very simple to use machine. One of our newest acquisitions is the Mira from Professional Vision Services. This has a clear image, magnification from 3.5 to 40 times, full colour, black and white, negative image and auto focus. The buttons are contained on a small control box that can be held in your hand or placed on the table, (similar to the Smartview 7000).

If you would like further information or would like to book an appointment please call David on 01865 725595 and he will be pleased to help. ■■■

Help us with your old mobile phones

The kindness and consideration of our supporters is always appreciated. One way that you can help us is by donating old, -`- broken or simply disused mobile phones to us. We can recycle them and raise essential funds that mean we can carry on our good works. For further information call David on 01865 725595. ■■■

OXTALK

Oxford and District Talking Newspaper

Writes Colin Cure

On 16th October, I had the pleasure of speaking at the Oxtalk AGM. For those of you who are not familiar with Oxtalk, they provide an excellent digest of selected articles from the local newspapers on cassette tape for Oxford people who are unable to read newsprint.

It was nice for me to return, in a sense, to my first experiences of working with visually impaired people. Way back in 1982 I volunteered to help on my local talking newspaper in London. I could tell though, that the Oxtalk operation is far more professional than my early fumbling attempts to produce a listenable tape. The whole production is very well organised and Oxtalk are clearly thinking ahead to the needs of future listeners. They, like us, are ably assisted by the generous services of Radio Cherwell, who have excellent studios at the Churchill Hospital. If you, or someone that you know, in the Oxford area, would benefit from the weekly talking news service do get in touch with them. Either call Carol Aistrop on 01865 766442 or e-mail her on mail@oxtalk.org.uk For further information about local talking newspaper services in your area call us on 01865 725595.



Your unused equipment can help others

It happens to everyone at sometime, equipment that was integral to everyday life, for example CCTV electronic magnifiers, now stand unused and gathering dust, either due to advances in technology or a change in our requirements. Provided it is in working order, we can make use of such equipment, call David at OAB on 01865 725595.



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DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Special day for VI children

OAB are pleased to announce that, in partnership with Social and Education Services, and RNIB, we are running a Visually Impaired Children's Activity Day on Thursday 19th February from 10.30am to 3.30pm at Thomley Hall, in Worminghall in Buckinghamshire.

The activity centre at Thomley is very well equipped, with all sorts of facilities for different activities, including soft play, a music workshop and a sensory room.

This is an opportunity for families facing similar challenges to meet, have a chat, compare notes and, most importantly, have a lot of fun!

All visually impaired children in Oxfordshire up to the age of 16 are welcome, with their families.

Bringing the Theatre to you

Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company visits a variety of community venues including village halls, community centres, small-scale theatres and schools. This year's Winter show is Hansel & Gretel, perfect for a great family night out. The show is suitable for an audience aged six and over. There is an audio-described performance on Tuesday, 3rd February at Lains Barn, Ardington, Nr Wantage, 7pm. For more information about this performance, please telephone 01865 249444 or for following venues visit www.ottc.org.uk or call David on 01865 725595. ■■■

The entrance fee is £5.00 per child. If you would like to participate then please contact Lauren Kelly for an application form on telephone number 0207 3912278 or e-mail her at lauren.kelly@rnib.org.uk. For more information, please contact us on 01865 725595. ■■■

Coming to a town near you? OAB bussing about the county in March

In March this year, OAB will again be teaming up with Action to bring their mobile resource unit, packed full of useful equipment and visual aids, to three towns around Oxfordshire.

We think this offers an excellent opportunity for people outside of Oxford and Banbury to have a look at some of the equipment available to help, such as talking watches, powerful electronic magnifiers and computer accessibility software. It also offers a chance for you to meet some of the OAB team and have a chat about any particular concerns or issues you may have. The bus will be touring in March on Tuesday 24th Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th and the three towns we will be visiting are Chipping Norton, Wallingford, and Faringdon. Unfortunately, we cannot yet confirm on which day we will visit each town.

If you live near Faringdon, Chipping Norton, or Wallingford, and would like to know which day you should come along to see the equipment, please call OAB on 01865 725595. We would also welcome any suggestions for towns you would like the bus to visit in the future. Thank you. ■■■

Exciting news for Theatre goers!

We have just had wonderful news about Theatre trips to audio-described performances of musicals. These are a fantastic opportunity for VIPs to experience the beauty and glamour of a big musical production and get the maximum “value for money”.

All tickets are about half price, including sighted companions, seats are front row or thereabouts, and many trips include touch tours, this means that you get up close to the scenery and costumes and can feel textures and materials to get a better picture of the performance.

Then, the VIPs are equipped with headphones just before the show starts and receive a “descriptive narrative” or “running commentary”

on what is going on, (when there is no dialogue). To the uninitiated this may sound a bit intrusive, as a bit of an “Audio-description Veteran” I can assure you that in my experience it is a wonderful enhancement of a show and recommend it.

The shows are all in London, however transport to and from is organised and really cheap!

Up and coming productions include Wicked on 14th Feb, Disney’s The Lion King on 25th Feb and Dirty Dancing, an evening performance on 25th April.

For more information please call Mrs Cruden on 01865 373378, or call David on 01865 725595. ■■■

Make every day a VIP day at the cinema

Going to the cinema can be a bit of a trial if you have severe visual impairment. Taking someone with you can be a solution, but this can work out expensive if you are a regular cinema goer.

The Cinema Exhibitors’ Association Card is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema.

To apply for the card, you will need to either: Be in receipt of disability living or attendance allowance: or be a registered blind person.

Application forms are available from 13

cinemas across the UK supporting this card.

A processing fee of £5.50 is chargeable per card. This is to be sent along with the completed application.

If you have any difficulty, please contact: The Card Network,
Tel: 0845 123 1292
Fax: 0845 123 1296
Email info@ceacard.co.uk

For information regarding audio description in cinemas and theatres contact David on 01865 725595. ■■■

VIBNO

Visually Impaired But Not Old

Meets on the first Tuesday of the month alternating between a meeting at a pub and another activity. If you are a VIP aged between 18 and 50 and want to socialise and have fun come and join us. Partners, family and friends are very welcome.

Last year we have enjoyed meeting up for a drink and a chat at various pubs. We visited a pub in Alvescot where we played skittles.

We won and lost at the dogs when we went greyhound racing. In the summer we played Aunt Sally, an Oxfordshire pub game and we were joined by staff of OAB. Our Christmas event was playing skittles at a pub in Tackley, where we were joined friends and family and had a great night.

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

Dreaming Spires Ten pin bowling club

At the end of the Summer league in October, all the teams were in the top four in their divisions, qualifying for the summer finals in Swindon in November. It was a long competition with each player playing 11 games throughout the day. It was an enjoyable event though we did not do as well as we expected, better luck next time! We began the winter league in December, our three teams are all in tricky divisions, competing against many other good sides. I will let you know how they get on in the next bulletin. The British blind sports tenpin section are looking to see how much interest there would be for a junior league, comprising of bowlers from the age of 7 to 16 years old, playing at the Bowlplex in Oxford. For more information about playing ten pin bowling, please can you contact Kevin Pamphilon club captain Phone 01869 331778. ■■■

Taking OAB tins to town

Last year, over £6,000 was donated to OAB by the people of Oxfordshire through collection tins we have placed in shops and businesses across the county. That's £6,000 which can now go towards recruiting more home visiting volunteers; sourcing equipment for demonstration; or any of the many other ways OAB help to support local visually impaired people. Over the next few months, we'll be working hard to raise more money by getting more tins out there into local shops, newsagents,

petrol stations and pubs. In fact, we'll put them just about anywhere (provided it's a place where people would like to see them, and are likely to have a penny or two to spare to put in). If you want to help with this great, community fundraising method, or would simply like to suggest a shop or venue near you that would like to have a collection tin, please let us know by calling Ben on 01865 725595, or by sending an email to Fundraising@oxeyes.org.uk. Thank you. ■■■

The changes your support helped to make

OAB is a great local charity, and I'd like to thank everyone in the local community who supported OAB last year to help them make all the fantastic changes to people's lives that they do.

In the run up to Christmas, two different groups raised money for OAB by way of singing songs. One was the local favourites, Oxford Gospel choir, who offered to contribute the proceeds of their concert in December to the charity (with help from OAB volunteers Ron and Margaret Sears). The other, embodied by a small set of fun, hardy carol singers, took a few collection tins around town during their performances, backed up by Ben as they did so. When you also consider the kindness of people like Mr and Mrs Morris, who asked for donations to OAB in lieu of presents for their recent Ruby Wedding celebrations, I'm happy to say that well over £1,000 was raised for OAB by gestures in the community during December. That's £1,000 which can now help to ensure OAB can continue to offer the same personal, friendly support they always aim to.

Of course, people have helped in a variety of ways. The fact that OAB will soon be able to announce a new audio book service, or will be able to print and publish a large print guide on equipment, for example, is only possible because of the time and effort of Sue, one of OAB's local volunteers; while the work that began in Banbury this year (like Brian and Marisol's new

volunteer listening service) was put together because of a successful funding application to a local trust. Indeed, though OAB may currently be working to improve their current resource centre, making it possible to offer new services, like computer training, children's activities, or better, face to face counselling, the team were only able to make it to Bradbury Lodge in the first place due to the generosity of a local supporter, a trust, and because dozens of people made the wonderful decision to leave money to OAB in their Will.

What I'm trying to say is that, however you or your friends and family choose to support OAB (volunteering or donating money), and whichever way you choose to do that (leaving a legacy, making a one off donation, or giving your time to become part of our home visiting service, for example) it will all be appreciated, and it will all make a positive impact on people's lives.

Just earlier today, for example, David was able to help a lady from Bampton with concerns she'd had for months with regards to lamps and lighting; help which meant she walked out of OAB happier, and more confident. This kind of service, this type of friendly, understanding, local approach, is only possible because of your support. This is your charity, and thank you for helping to make it the way it is, and for making it the way it will be. Thank you very much. ■■■

Giving more effectively and more easily!

by Michael Ling, *OAB Accounting Officer and Guru*

Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a scheme to enable tax-effective giving by individuals to charities in the United Kingdom. It was originally introduced in 1990, and substantially revised in April 2000.

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.

If you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax, then by signing a gift-aid form we can claim money from the Revenue and Customs based on any donations or membership fees that you send to us – so long as the amount you pay in tax is at least equal to the amount we claim.

The Government has also protected us from losing out by the reduction in the standard rate of income tax. 16

This means that for every £ that you give us, we can currently claim an extra 28p. Your membership of £5 will therefore be worth £6.40 to us.

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.



Membership and donation

Important

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

Member

(£5.00 annually)

Friend

(£20.00 annually)

Life Member

(£250.00)

Donation

£..... please show 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**

1877-2007

*Helping blind people
for 130 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



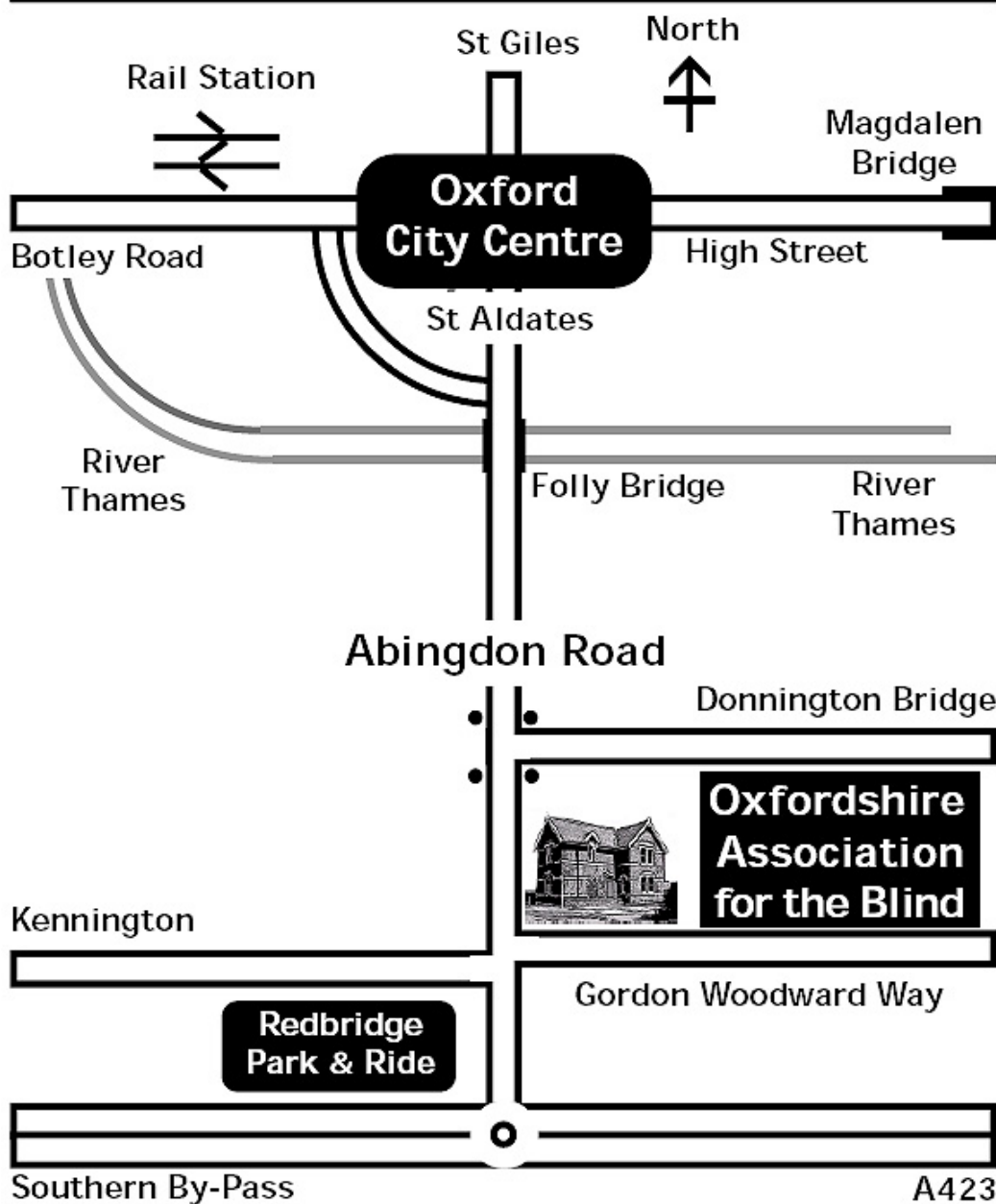
How to find us

Oxfordshire Association for the Blind

Bradbury Lodge, Gordon Woodward Way, Abingdon Road,
Oxford, OX1 4XL. Telephone 01865 725595

Buses from St Aldates to OAB

Although we are located on the junction of Gordon Woodward Way and Abingdon Road, some of you may remember it as the entrance to the Old Rivermead Rehabilitation Centre, now sadly departed. The bus stop nearest to us is called Canning Crescent and is served by bus from stops H2 and H3 in St Aldates' near Christchurch College in Oxford, these buses are the X3, X13, 35 and 35a. There will be more information in the next edition.



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

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 01993 771078

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

VI Team

Beverley Downs
Kate Laybourne
Nigel Lewis
Elizabeth Jones
Meg Jones
Dorothy Hazell
Helen Fallaize
Serena Glistler
Sue Miles

Manager

John Fearn-Webster

Out of hours social services, emergency freephone 0800 833408.