

Isle of Wight Society for the Blind

Newsight

January 2007

From the Director's Chair

Hello to you all once again. I am pleased to announce that, following a comprehensive interview process, Anne Watts has been appointed to the position of the full time Director of the Society. She commenced her duties at the beginning of January, and I will be working with her during January to ensure a smooth transfer of responsibilities. I am sure you will all find Anne to be communicative, approachable and enthusiastic in the way in which she will undertake her role. Can I also take this opportunity to inform you how much I have enjoyed working for the Society, and in addition meeting so many of you at Millbrooke House. I am sure the Society is now in a position to move positively forward and I wish you all the compliments of the season and every good wish for the future.

***Peter Scott***

### **A Charity Dinner**

Will be held at the

**Riverside, Newport**

**on Saturday February 10<sup>th</sup> 2007** at 7pm for 7.30pm

To celebrate the appointment of our new Director, new Treasurer, new Trustees and to say to those who are leaving us a very big thank you for their past loyalty and hard work. The evening will proceed with a 3 course dinner and coffee, followed by introductions to the new members, raffle, small auction and entertainment until 1am.

Tickets are £20 per head.

Please ring the Centre to book a place. **Tel: 522205**

**Smart Dress Code will apply**

### **New Computer Suite Unveiled**

The IW Freemasons' representative, Peter Hewison, officially opened the Society's new computer suite at Millbrooke House on Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Nov.

The Society can now run a computer course for up to six people at a time, thanks to cash from the Freemasons, funding for a teacher from the IW College and the donation of computer chairs from IW Rotary clubs.

The 12 week qualification course held every Tuesday, includes modules in word processing, database, Excel and desktop publishing to provide people with basic computer skills.

Anyone wanting to enrol on the next course please call **522205**

From March we will be running sessions for anyone wishing to learn the Zoom text and Jaws talking computer packages.

**This is open to all, no special criteria required.**

### **Fujitsu-Siemens Scenic E300**

Mini Tower / desktop base unit

Intel Celeron 2.8 GHz processor

512MB RAM, 40 Gigabyte hard disk drive.

Built in sound, graphics, network interface 3.5" floppy drive, DVD drive, network card, PS2 keyboard & mouse. Windows XP Home operating system

3 year on site warranty.

Plus scanner and printer

with either Jaws or Zoom Text installed.

We have secured an all in price for the above package for our clients of

**Approx. £1100**

(depending on whether you require Zoom Text or Jaws)

Fully set up in your own home

Tel: 522205 for details

### **I T Exhibition 2007**

We are holding an I T Exhibition here at **Millbrooke House**  
**on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2007 10am to 3pm.**

Clare Carney from the Low Vision Aid Clinic at St Mary's Hospital has agreed to attend plus representatives from I T firms with a selection of their latest aids and equipment for the visually impaired.

### **Annual General Meeting 2006**

The A.G.M. of the Society was attended by 36 members on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November. After a brief silence for all to remember the late Ruth Daniell who was a trustee of the Society, the Chairman announced the appointment of four new trustees, Hilary Bolton, Steve Palmer, David Rogers and Roger Skidmore. This raises the number of trustees to 10.

The Annual Report was presented, followed by the Annual Accounts for 2005-6. The Treasurer said that the Society is in a better position than last year but must continue to attract more funding if the finances are to be assured for the future. A number of grants have been applied for and we are in discussions for a higher level of funding for the services which we provide on behalf of others.

A question was asked concerning the current level of rehabilitation work, and the meeting was informed that applications were in for higher funding, and if and when this is agreed, the current level can be increased.

The meeting lasted for approximately 35 minutes.

## **Free Bus & Rail Travel Concession**

Just a reminder that all Isle of Wight residents who are registered Blind or Partially Sighted qualify for a Disability Islander Card. This enables you to travel free on all Isle of Wight local bus services at any time and also free on Island Line train services.

If you need a travel companion to accompany you they also go free.

**Important – You will need a doctor's letter to confirm this fact.**

Application forms are available from the Centre – please contact Tony Wood on **522205** if you wish to apply for a card or have any other travel queries.

## **Niton Post Office Coffee & Chat**

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Feb

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Mar

10 to 12.30

## **West Wight Coffee & Chat**

End of the Line Café Freshwater

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> Jan

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Feb

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Mar

10.30 to 12noon

## **Bembridge Coffee & Chat**

The Cloisters

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Jan

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Feb

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Mar

10.15 to 11.15

## **Strollers**

Wed 17<sup>th</sup> January Quarr Abbey to Fishbourne

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> February Brighstone – Walk around lanes - Lunch at the Three Bishops

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> March Botanical Gardens Ventnor - Lunch at the Cafe

## **Striders**

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January Bembridge to Culver - Lunch at The Culver Haven

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February Yarmouth to Causeway (circular walk) - Lunch at The Bugle

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March Newport to the Folly - Lunch at the Folly Inn

## **Volunteers Lunches**

January 10<sup>th</sup> Quay Art Centre 12.30pm

March 22<sup>nd</sup> Venue to be decided

### **Gadabouts**

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January Chichester

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb Rosemary Vineyard, Ryde

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March Lymington

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March Destination to be decided

### **Group Activities Dates for the New Year**

#### **The Reminiscence Group**

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month

Jan 23<sup>rd</sup>

Feb 27<sup>th</sup>

Mar 27<sup>th</sup>

#### **Art and Craft Group**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month

Jan 9th

Feb 13th

Mar 13th

#### **Games Club**

1st Tuesday of the month

not in Jan

Feb 6<sup>th</sup>

Mar 6<sup>th</sup>

#### **MD Group**

1st Monday of the Month

except Jan which will be on

Jan 8<sup>th</sup>

Feb 5<sup>th</sup>

Mar 5<sup>th</sup>

#### **RP Group**

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month except January

Jan 15<sup>th</sup>

Feb 12<sup>th</sup>

Mar 12th

### **Glaucoma**

We are hoping to set up a Glaucoma Support Group soon, if your eye condition is due to glaucoma and you are interested in coming along will you kindly ring the centre to let us know.

### **Activities Group**

Jan 10<sup>th</sup> Capricorn Party at Don Havers

Jan 24<sup>th</sup> Bowling

### **Night Owls**

17th Jan talk Journey Across America

### **Swimming at the Medina Pool.**

The swimming pool is available for the use of visually impaired people every Tuesday evening from 8 to 9 pm, anyone wishing to join the Dolphins Swimming Club may do so. Please ring the centre on **522205**. We would also welcome some volunteers especially ladies to assist any clients who need a helping hand.

### **CDs of ghost books presented to the Society**

Island author Gay Baldwin has donated free copies of her ghost books to the Society. The CDs were launched at the IW County Press shop on 28<sup>th</sup> October. The two 78 minute books feature stories from her best selling Ghost Island series. They are a collection of 29 true tales and supernatural happenings and include eerie accounts about Osborne House, Arreton Manor, Knighton Gorges and Carisbrooke Castle.

Gay said: "After being approached by a number of visually impaired people who wanted a recording of my books, I decided to make them available to everyone on audio CDs, so I have made compilations of ghost stories from some of the Island's best-known haunted places".

These CDs can also be purchased through the Society at a reduced price. For more information please **Tel: 522205**

### **Warning**

The Trading Standards Office are making people aware of the following scam:- A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) suggesting that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0306 6611911 (a premium rate number). **DO NOT** call this number, as this is a mail scam originating from Belize. If you call this number and you start to hear a recorded message, you will already have been billed £15.

If you receive a card with these details then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 02072396655 or ICSTIS (The premium rate service regulator) at:- [www.icstis.org.uk](http://www.icstis.org.uk) <<http://www.icstis.org.uk>

### **Cinema**

The cinema is free to anyone who is registered as Blind or Partially Sighted if you have your registration card with you. Please ask if the film is audio described.

### **Fundraising Events**

**The Variety Show** held at the Medina Theatre on Sunday November 12<sup>th</sup> raised approx **£1200** .

**A Quiz** organised by Viv Booth was held on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November at Salvatore's Restaurant – Ryde. A grand total of **£238** was raised. A very enjoyable evening was had by all – special thanks to Salvi for his hospitality and also to Question-master Geoff Uncle who once again performed in his own inimitable way!

**The Xmas Fayre** held here at the centre on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> December raised over **£640**.

**A Bag packing day at Sainsbury's** on Saturday December 16<sup>th</sup> also made **£752**

A very big **Thank you** to all who helped and supported these events.

### **Wanted**

Any good bric-a-brac or unwanted presents that we can use in our sales would be appreciated.

### **Talking Book Library**

As the RNIB are discontinuing the sale of audio described videos we are trying to gauge the likely demand for DVDs and CDs, so perhaps you would kindly fill in the section for this on the enclosed questionnaire.

Also if you have any that you have finished with we would very much appreciate them for the library.

### **The Talking Newspaper**

If you receive the talking newspaper can we please remind you to return your tapes and wallets as they are costly to keep replacing them.

### **Newsight**

This newsletter is produced in large print, tape or Braille if you would like to change the format that you receive it in please ring the centre to let us know.

**Tel: 522205**

### **Information Fair**

**On Friday 26th January**

at  
**Bembridge Village Hall**  
**10 – 12noon**  
**Isle of Wight Society for the Blind**  
**St John Ambulance Brigade**  
**Learning Links**  
**Age Concern**  
**Pensions**  
**Housing Benefit**  
**Trading Standards**  
**Fire Brigade**

**There will be Representatives or Information packages available for each of the above agencies at the fair**

### **Christmas Raffle Draw**

#### **Prize Winners**

£75 - Mrs Abraham  
£25 - Mrs Holdsworth  
Heated Mattress Cover - Mr Price  
Liz Earle Pamper Kit - Mrs Daish  
Radio - Mrs Cole  
Chocolates - Mrs Porter  
Gardening Book - Mrs Ross  
Cuddly Dog - Wendy Newman  
Wine - Mr Elgar  
Wine - Mr Westbrooke  
Wine - Anne Zorab  
Wine -Mr & Mrs Pragnell  
Wine -Mr & Mrs Flowers  
Perno -Mabel Cant  
Sherry - Mr Price

### **Blind People March on Parliament**

On Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006, eleven members representing The Isle of Wight Society for the Blind, along with over 800 visually impaired people from across the UK, went to Westminster where they met with their MPs to lobby for support to claim the same level of mobility benefits as physically disabled people. This was the biggest ever lobby of Parliament by Blind people.

The campaign led by organisations including the Royal National Institute of the Blind are calling for people with serious sight loss to be eligible to claim the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living allowance – a benefit for disabled people that helps with the extra transport costs. This component is worth £43.45 per week.

Campaigners say that the higher rate of the benefit should be available to blind people who, despite experiencing major barriers in getting out and about, are only eligible to claim the lower rate of just £16.50 per week.

Andrew Turner MP said “I have listened to the island blind people today, talking about the huge difference that this extra money would make to them in terms of being able to get out and about by taxi to meet friends and family, go shopping and enjoy leisure time“.

Steve Winyard, RNIB’s Head of Campaigns, said: “It’s not surprising that blind people who can’t drive and often find public transport impossible to navigate feel cheated by not being allowed to claim the same level of benefit as other disabled people. Many have become virtual prisoners in their own homes because the low level of benefit as they receive doesn’t cover the cost of taxis”.

He continued saying “RNIB is delighted that over 140 MPs of all parties have expressed their support for the campaign in Parliament by signing a Commons motion calling on the government to review blind people’s benefit entitlements”.

Andrew Turner MP said that he was investigating the criteria for claiming the higher rate mobility allowance.

RNIB’s ‘Taken for a Ride’ report estimates the cost of giving blind people access to the extra mobility money would be just £61 million per year, or less than 0.05% of the Government’s social service budget.

**If having read the report overleaf you agree with the issues raised, we would appreciate your help by signing this petition asking family and friends to support us in working to obtain a fair deal for all the visually impaired.**

**Petition in Support of the Higher rate of Disability Living Allowance or the visually Impaired**

Name	Address	Signature
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