

Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

April 2019

ISSUE 89

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Please send your articles for inclusion in Spotlight to:

The Editor

Essex Sight
40 Osborne Street
Colchester
CO2 7DB
01206 548196
Email: services@essexsight.org.uk

Items for the next issue should reach the Editor by 17th May



The Editor writes:

Welcome to the spring edition of Spotlight. Hopefully, this edition finds you well and enjoying the milder weather, the longer days and the scent of spring blooms and freshly cut grass.

This month we have another new feature, the Book Review. The first book to be reviewed is *The Flood* by Ian Rankin and reviewed by Pat, a member of the Braintree Audio Book Club. I would like to thank Pat for writing such a good review. If you have a book that you have enjoyed and would like to share, please get in touch. Don't worry, you don't have to be a book club member or a literary genius! Just send us details of the book, author and a short piece on what the book is about and how it made you feel and who you think it may appeal to.

We hope you will find the articles informative and of interest. Please feel free to share Spotlight with other visually impaired people and their carers. Everyone who is newly registered in Essex will receive a copy of Spotlight and they can request their own copy in large print format, on tape or memory stick or by email. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide Braille copies.

I hope you will all continue to send your contributions, as your stories and experiences make Spotlight of interest to everyone. You can email articles to services@essexsight.org.uk

Editor

Community Support Team by Jonathan Dixon

The big news from the Community Support team is that the lease on the Colchester Sight Centre has been renewed for another 5 years. As our main sight centre, this is great news as it gives us security and allows us to plan for the future. Having been in the centre for five years, we need to make some much needed improvements.

The first will be a fresh coat of paint to preserve and brighten up the external woodwork, which is looking a little tired. The second, thanks to the generosity of the Screwfix Foundation following a successful grant bid, is the replacement of all the old fluorescent lighting inside the centre. We will have new LED lighting, which will be bright and environmentally friendly. The only downside is that while the work is being carried out, we will have a temporary closure, but that should only be for a few days at the most. We will update our social media and try and give you as much notice as we can.

By the time you read this, our new website should be up and running. It has been a long time coming, but hopefully you will find it much easier to use and informative. The new website will also be linked to our social media accounts and is much more user friendly from an editing perspective, so it will be much easier for the team to update and add new content.

The Colchester Eye Clinic has been in operation for 4 months and things appear to have settled down as they work through their backlog of operations. However, it is still very busy so if you need to speak to someone, be patient and keep trying as sadly there are no shortcuts. Their numbers are 01206 286871 or 286872.

Tom Good who works for our managing agents, Fenn Wright <https://www.fennwright.co.uk/about-us/our-people/tom-good-2/> is running the London Marathon and raising money on our behalf. Having just completed the Weymouth half marathon, he is training hard for the big race on the 29th April. If you would like to sponsor Tom, here's the link. It would be great to be able to hit the £1000 target!

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=TomGood&pageUrl=1>

Colchester Sight Centre by Carol Massey



So April is upon us and I hope the weather is better than it was in March.

Our Tuesday coffee morning is getting more popular than ever. Most people feel that the £1 donation introduced last year is excellent value for two cups of tea or coffee and biscuits, not to mention a couple of hours of friendly chat and socialising.

Thanks to Dolphin Computers, we now have GuideConnect available for demonstration in the Sight Centre. This new, low vision software is available on a tablet, PC or can be used with your TV. It's simple to use and allows you to email, surf the net, share photos online and much more.

To find out more, or for a demonstration of this, or any other equipment, please contact the Sight Centre.

Carol
carol@essexsight.org.uk

Colchester Sight Centre Activities

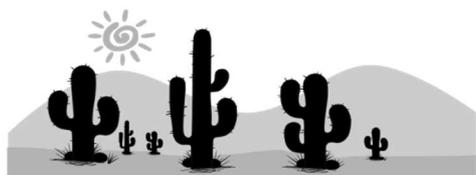
Weekly

Tuesdays	10am-12	Coffee Morning iPad/iPhone sessions (appointment only)
Wednesdays	10am-12	Correspondence Reading (home visiting service also available).

Monthly

1 st Thursday	10am-12n	Knitting Group
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News from the Midwest by Carol Massey



Braintree **Brentwood**
Chelmsford **Maldon**

So, the clocks have gone forward, and Spring should be well on its way now. As the days get brighter, don't forget to protect your eyes. We have a wide range of fitovers at all our sight centres should you need them.

Many of you will have now seen In Your Pocket, the new talking mobile phone from RNIB which I have taken around to the various sight centres for demonstration in March. Please let me know you would like a demonstration and I can bring it along with me next time I am in the area.

Professional Vision will be alongside us at the Chelmsford Sight Centre on 17th May demonstrating their latest technology.

Upcoming dates for the sight centres are:

Braintree: 17th April, 15th May, 19th June

Brentwood: 8th April, 13th May, 10th June

Chelmsford: Every Friday (not 19th April due to Bank Holiday)

Maldon: 1st April, 7th May, 4th June

Spotlight On -

Seable Holidays

Seable is an award-winning tour operator based in London that organises tailored holidays abroad for the blind and partially sighted travellers. Here's a summary of what they can offer from Emma at Seable:-

Our mission is to improve the accessible holidays for the VI community. Holidays that can improve well-being by providing trained assistance and tailored activities that stimulate independence, self-esteem, and confidence.

Established in 2012 with only 1 destination to offer, we now have over 300 returning customers every year and 7 exciting destinations to offer. Our destinations are: Sicily, Lanzarote, Cyprus, Rome, Slovenia, Amsterdam and from this year Thailand. We organise relaxing holidays, sport activities, food and wine tasting sessions and much more.

At Seable, your visual impairment no longer means you have to depend upon your family members or carers to go on holiday. As a blind traveller you can simply choose a date, destination and activity and we will take care of the rest. When you travel with us you will receive assistance from the time you reach the destination, to the time you depart.

All of our activities are tailored for you, your friends and family. Our guides are local to the destinations you visit and they will look after you as a friend, not as a tourist.

Graham, who is a regular visitor to the Colchester Sight Centre has travelled with Seable to Rome and most recently to Amsterdam in February. His holiday was crammed with great experiences including cheese making, clog decoration and a visit to the Heineken museum. There is much more on Graham's blog at www.blog.impairmentinfo.co.uk

Seable brochures are available in print, braille, audio, online pdf or word. You can download or request one from the website: www.seable.co.uk
Email us at: emma@seable.co.uk Or call us on 0203 3756947

Tendring Talks by Denise Sanders



Sadly, Mary Crown, one of our long-term attendees passed away. She will be missed by all at Cadows and we send our best wishes to her family and friends.

It is great to see some new faces at our sight centre on a Thursday afternoon. Please spread the word if you know of anyone with a visual impairment and who would like to join us for a chat, drink and cake!

Just a reminder that everyone is most welcome at Clacton Macular Society; those living with macular disease or indeed living with a different eye condition. The group leader is Peter Bareham, tel: 01255 430386. The group meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month (excluding December) in Sam's Hall, Community Voluntary Services Tendring, Rosemary Road, Clacton, CO15 1NX

Upcoming dates for Harwich

April 9th

June 11th

August 13th

Read House, Frinton on Sea by Janet Plant



Read House is the residential care home run by Essex Blind Charity in Frinton on Sea. The home specialises in the care of elderly people with sight problems. We offer permanent and respite care (short breaks) by staff who have all been trained in visual awareness. The Home is situated on the seafront at Frinton on Sea, a short distance from the town centre with its friendly local shops.

If you would like to find out more about Read House or to receive our Information Pack, please contact me or Sandra on 01255 673654. We are more than happy to show you round at any time to suit you.

Our residents have enjoyed a variety of entertainers over recent weeks – from various choirs and individual singers to regular performances by local classical pianist Keith Ashworth and talks by local wildlife expert Liz Huxley. We have even had someone bringing in her owls for the residents to meet!

Our Activities Co-ordinator Tina goes to great lengths to find a wide variety of performers to keep our residents interested, while bearing in mind their likes and dislikes. We always ask for feedback when we bring in someone new. All this is in addition to our regular weekly programme of events.

This month we are particularly looking forward to welcoming Samuel Bolton again. Samuel is a very talented young, blind pianist who comes to see us in his school holidays. Our residents really look forward to his visits. And in May we have our annual visit from Gemma's Farm and wonder which animals she will bring with her this time – there is always something new.

Quiz (by Darren)

A word to the wise, this quiz consists of two different rounds in which you need to find the missing words.

Round 1: What word can go in the middle of the following two words to form two new word pairs e.g. bowling and fingers; the missing word here is green which forms bowling green and green fingers.

1. French, Shopping
2. Sun, Cake
3. Credit, Trick
4. Traffic, Jar
5. Kate, baby
6. Rat, Horse
7. Blood, Hood
8. Chair, Hole
9. Hair, Work

Round 2- Each of the answers to this round consists of one word written three times. Ready, steady, go go go!

10. Which group spent 15 weeks at the top of the UK singles chart with a cover version of a 1967 hit?
11. Which 1970 American-Japanese movie dramatizes the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?
12. Which Channel 4 property programme, first aired in May 2001, is presented by Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer?
13. What follows 'Paddy Clarke' to provide the full title of a 1993 novel by the Irish writer Roddy Doyle?
14. Premiered in 1998, what is the name of the stage musical that recounts the rags to riches story of the 1961 football pools winner Viv Nicholson?
15. At the 1996 Labour Party Conference, what did Tony Blair state his top three priorities on coming to office would be?

16. Often heard at sporting events and political rallies, what is the opening of the chant which was popularised by Welsh comedian Max Boyce in the 1970's?

17. In which popular sitcom did the characters Tom and Linda La Hughes share a flat at 69 Paradise Passage, London?

18. Originally called 'Gypsy Girl', by what name was this single known on its release in November 1976? It peaked at number three in the UK chart but was a number one in seven countries.

Technology

App of the Month : Moovit

By J M Wiggins

No, my spell checker hasn't gone on strike. This app is called Moovit. The name suggests it might be a fitness app, but it is actually a real time public transport and journey planner. It is available for free on the iPhone and android phones and is (on the iPhone at least) accessible with voice over, which so many other apps of this type are not.

You start by selecting your country and region. If you travel to another part of the UK, you will have to select its corresponding region. You can then type in a destination into the search box as you would on similar apps. Moovit will then offer you several results based on your search.

The more precise your request, the better results you will get, for example "High Street Colchester". You can also set the date and time you want to travel. Moovit will then offer you several travel options for walking, bicycle, Uber or public transport. Once you have picked your journey option you can then start the live mode which will guide you to your destination. It is important at this point to stress that Moovit will not give you turn-by-turn directions as a GPS would, but simply a route planner of about half a dozen steps eg "walk for 11 minutes to C1 bus stop."

But where it comes into its own is once you are on the bus. Moovit will give you continuous alerts as to how many stops you have left on your route then tell you when it is time to get off the bus.

I tried this on my regular bus route to town and it was more reliable than the driver remembering to tell me I'd reached my stop. It was like having a sighted person sitting next to me telling me when to get off the bus. If the bus you require has onboard GPS, Moovit will tell you exactly how long you have to wait for the bus. Otherwise it uses the published timetable to tell you when the bus is due.

Other functions include being able to see where your nearest public transport stops, or stations are. This could be useful if you move to a new area where you don't know the location of your nearest stop.

In conclusion I think using Moovit in conjunction with a satnav app such as Blind Square could enable some people to gain more independence and feel more confident about embarking on unfamiliar journeys. But as with all technology it isn't a replacement for a pair of eyes and can fail, so I wouldn't rely on it completely. It is reliant on your internet connection and as always with these apps, locations are not always updated. You would still need to have some knowledge of the route and destination.

RNIB NEWS

RNIB have a wealth of information on their website. Here's an example:-

Did you know there is a lanyard you can wear at major UK airports and some supermarkets to signal that you have a hidden disability and might want support?

Read about the lanyard <https://rnibenews.org.uk/4UA0-4N9F-22PNL0-2UA44-0/c.aspx>

Need help with PIP?

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit that can help you with the extra costs caused by illness or disability, including sight loss. We have a toolkit to help make claiming PIP easier.

Get the toolkit <https://rnibenews.org.uk/4UA0-4N9F-22PNL0-2UA47-0/c.aspx>

Entertainment

Theatres

The National Theatre in London has a range of productions and facilities for visually impaired people

Guide Dogs

If you'd like to bring your guide dog into the auditorium, let us know when you book your ticket. We can offer you an aisle seat, and let you know about any special effects that might affect your dog. Alternatively, you can leave your guide dog with our front-of-house staff.

Audio-Described Performances

Audio description is a live commentary interspersed with the actors' dialogue. This is relayed via a headset linked to the infra-red audio system. There is a short 'programme notes' session, before the production, which explains the atmosphere, costumes, characters and action. Programme notes are also available on CD in advance. **[More information on the Audio-described performance page](#)**

Touch Tours

We offer a free touch tour for every audio-described production, usually before a matinee. You can feel the set, props and costume and familiarise yourself with the voices of the actors and audio describer. Let us know if you need a member of staff to accompany you. Guide dogs are welcome on set.

To join a touch tour, phone 020 7452 3000.

Free Cast Lists

Available in large print and braille from the Box Office for all performances.

Free Mailing List for Audio-Described Performances

If you'd like to receive updates and booking information for audio-described performances and touch tours, please let us know which format you'd prefer – large print, braille or CD.

Tel 020 7452 3000

Fax 020 7452 3535

Email access@nationaltheatre.org.uk

Exhibitions

Audio Described Tour of The Postal Museum, London, WC1X 0DA

Date: Sunday 26th May 2019

Time: 2.30pm

Ticket Price £3.50

Tel: 0300 0300 700

Web: www.postalmuseum.org

An audio described tour to discover the surprising story of the world's first social network. Ride Mail Rail and journey back in time with 15 minutes of underground exploration. Suitable for blind and partially-sighted visitors. Light refreshments are included. Admission includes entry to all exhibitions and an optional ride on Mail Rail. Visitors can book a space or one accompanying companion (included in the admission fee).

Activities

Goalball

Are you interested in playing Goalball or becoming a coach or an official?

Goalball UK and D4Sport are launching a new club in Essex and are holding a free 'have a go' session for anyone to attend - visually impaired or sighted, young or old, male or female. No experience is necessary.

Date: 13th April

Time: 4pm-6m

Venue: Sports Centre, University of Essex Colchester Campus, CO4 3SQ
The nearest train stations are Colchester or Colchester Town (St.Botolphs).

Travel Support: Transport will be laid on to pick people up from various points in Colchester (i.e. train/bus station) and bring to the University of Essex and return at the end of the session.

For more information, and to register your interest, please contact Abigail Saxon- 01206 512595 or 07922 885632 abigail@disability4sport.co.uk

Book Review : The Flood by Ian Rankin

Reviewed by Pat at Braintree Audio Book Group

The story, set as it was in a mining village suffering the closure of its pit which was the lifeblood of the village, made for a melancholy atmosphere. As time went by, many of the younger residents moved away to find a new life. Those left behind resorted to escaping their depressing lives with heavy drinking, gossip and indulging in local superstitions.

The villagers suspected Mary Miller, a miner's daughter, of being a witch after her black hair turned white overnight following her near drowning in chemically polluted water. The accident brought about by local hooligans, blighted Mary's life which was made even more distressing when, becoming pregnant at the age of fifteen, she would not reveal the name of the father.

Years of speculation followed, and the truth was dramatically revealed towards the end of the book. The teenage years of her illegitimate son Sandy were stormy, causing Mary much grief, but finally in another near drowning, mother and son were reconciled.

Fans of Ian Rankin will not be disappointed in this book with its many colourful characters and intrigues.

Answers to quiz

1. French Window Shopping
2. Sun Cream Cake
3. Credit Card Trick
4. Traffic Jam Jar
5. Kate Bush Baby
6. Rat Race Horse
7. Blood Brother Hood
8. Chair Man Hole
9. Hair Net Work
10. Wet Wet Wet - with 'Love Is All Around' - originally by The Troggs
11. Tora! Tora! Tora!
12. Location, Location, Location
13. Ha Ha Ha
14. Spend Spend Spend
15. Education, Education, Education
16. Oggy Oggy Oggy
17. Gimme Gimme Gimme - stars James Dreyfus and Kathy Burke
18. Money, Money, Money – Abba

Contact details

Helpline and office 01206 548196
(Jonathan Dixon, Carol Massey, Christine Pratt, Denise Sanders)

Eye Care Liaison Officers 01206 548196
Christine & Denise (Colchester + Tendring hospitals)

Read House 01255 673654
(Janet Plant, General Manager, Sandra Edwards, Admin Assistant)

Essex Blind Charity produces and distributes Spotlight free of charge. However, donations in time or money are always welcome. If you are a UK taxpayer please consider filling in our gift aid form so we can claim back the tax paid on your donation, thereby allowing us to make even better use of your donation.

If you are writing or redrafting your will please consider leaving us a gift. Your support will enable us to continue to provide and develop the services we provide for people with sight loss throughout Essex. Thank you.

Gift Aid Declaration

**On behalf of Essex Blind Charity
Registered Charity No. 1103732**

The Gift Aid Scheme enables charities to make more of your donation by reclaiming the tax you have already paid. In order for us to make this claim on your donation(s) please complete this form and return it as soon as possible

Thank you!

Please treat the enclosed gift of £.....as a Gift Aid donation.

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.

Title.....Forename(s).....Surname.....

Address.....
.....
.....
.....

Post Code.....

I would like Essex Blind Charity to treat all donations I have made since 1 July 2012 as Gift Aid donations until I notify them otherwise.

Signature..... Date.....

Please return your completed form to:
Essex Blind Charity
Read House, 23 The Esplanade
Frinton on Sea, Essex CO13 9AU.

If you are not already on our mailing list for 'Spotlight' and would like to receive a regular copy, please complete the form below and return it to Carol Massey at Essex Sight, 40 Osborne Street, Colchester CO2 7DB

Name.....

Address.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Tel.....

How would you prefer to receive your copy?

Large Print..... Cassette Tape..... Memory Stick.....

Email.....

We would like to add your contact details to our database so that we may from time to time send you details of developments to our services, events taking place in your area and other information we feel may be of interest to you.

If you would prefer us not to do so, please tick here.....

We will not pass your details to anyone else without your permission.

You may request us to remove your details from our database at any time.

Essex Sight Centres

Braintree

Braintree Library
Fairfield Road
Braintree CM7 3YL
3rd Wednesday of each month
10 am to 1pm

Chelmsford

Chelmsford Library
Market Road
Chelmsford CM1 1LH
Every Friday 10 am to 1 pm

Colchester

40 Osborne Street
Colchester
CO2 7DB
Open Mon - Fri 10 am to 2 pm
Wednesday late opening to 4pm

Harwich

Harwich Library
Upper Kingsway
Dovercourt CO12 3JT
2nd Tuesday alternate months
10am – 1pm

Brentwood

Brentwood Library
New Road
Brentwood CM14 4BP
2nd Monday of each month
10 am to 1 pm

Clacton-on-Sea

CADOWs
Old Road
Clacton on Sea CO15 1HX
Every Thursday 1 pm to 3.30 pm

Frinton on Sea

Read House
23 The Esplanade
Frinton-on-Sea CO13 9AU
Mon-Fri 1pm - 4.30pm (by
appointment tel: 01255 673654)

Maldon

Maldon Library, Carmelite House
White Horse Lane
Maldon CM9 5FW
1st Tuesday of each month
10am-1pm

For more information contact Essex Sight Office on 01206 548196.

Email: services@essexblind.co.uk

**For information about permanent or respite residential care, contact:
General Manager at Read House, Janet Plant: on 01255 673654**

Email: janet@essexblind.co.uk