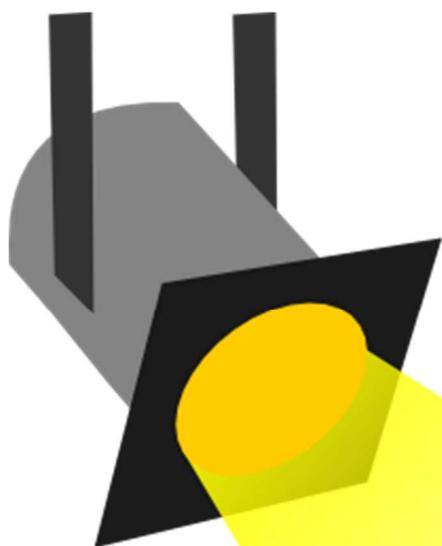


Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

**December 2019/
January 2020**

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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 5th January



The Editor writes:

Welcome to the Christmas/New Year edition of Spotlight. As well as being festive, this is a momentous issue as we travel from 2019 into 2020. Why is it so special? Well, if you didn't know it's our centenary year – a little more about that later in this issue, but next year we plan on celebrating!

This issue is crammed with information on everything from the latest technology to panto, events to holidays and the second instalment of Darren's musical quiz.

We are helped enormously in the distribution of Spotlight by Pat Wilson of Chelmsford Talking News, who makes and sends out audio versions. They are having to move studios and due to the size of the new one, are downsizing their equipment to fit. Sadly, this means an end to the cassette recording facility, so if you currently get your Talking News or Spotlight on cassette, please get in touch with your local talking newspaper and they will assist you in changing over to using a USB player.

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

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! As 2019 draws to a close, I can look back on my first year with Essex Sight as being really enjoyable. We have had some great successes with grants, the most significant being for a mobile sight centre, funded by Colchester Catalyst which has just been purchased to help people in the rural areas of north Essex, where access to public transport is very limited. The quest for more funding to help improve our offer across the County will continue and I hope to be able to bring in further funding in the new year to help us achieve that.

As mentioned earlier, we are entering our 100th year. Our story begins in 1920 when The Clothworkers' Company lent a room to a group of friends who felt there was a great need for an association to be formed to help the blind and partially sighted men and women of Essex, who had seemed to be forgotten. With two million newly disabled young ex-servicemen returning from the battlefronts of the First World War, there was greater public awareness of the importance of assisting disabled people and without a welfare state in those days, charity was very important.

The Essex County Association for the Blind was first registered under the Blind Person's Act of 1920. The idea was to find suitable accommodation for people according to their degree of blindness. From small beginnings the Association expanded, and London boroughs were added when County boundaries were moved.

By the late 1940's it was managing homes requisitioned and equipped by the Ministry of Health, looking after people who had been made homeless through enemy action with the full support of the County Education and Public Health Committees and other societies and organisations. The President at this time was Constance, Lady Courtauld, a member of the famous Courtauld family, well-known County benefactors.

After the War, the Association continued its welfare work including providing holidays. One surprise we found is that in 1950 it was noted: "Perhaps it is not generally known that in Essex we have a leper colony and our Association has done much to help Blind and Defective Sighted Residents in that Colony."

By 1957 it was felt that when the accommodation was expanded after the War, the most urgent need had been for much younger people than the people who were now on the waiting list. Our accommodation now comprised a nursing home with 71 beds, 6 hostels in Chelmsford, Wanstead, Leytonstone, Woodford and Clacton, as well as flatlets in Leytonstone and a 4-berth caravan, donated for holiday use in memory of a Mr W Cousins at Canvey Island.

In the late 50's two of the smaller properties were sold to acquire larger properties in Clacton and Frinton. In 1964 the constitution had been updated and the Charity was renamed Essex Voluntary Association for the Blind, or EVAB.

By 1967 the caravan was still giving pleasure to families and the charity still owned five properties. In 1972 the nursing home in Leytonstone was sold to fund the purchase of Sandy Point in Frinton and fully modernise all the other properties.

In 1987 Diana, Princess of Wales visited our homes in Frinton. Our Garden Parties had celebrity visitors including Barbara Windsor, Dame Vera Lynn, Ernie Wise and newsreader Martyn Lewis amongst others. The Charity now owned 5 homes and the flatlets in Leytonstone.

In 1993 we launched the "Home from Home Appeal" to rebuild our home in Frinton. We managed to purchase land adjacent to the old homes, and build a brand new purpose-built home "Read House" which was opened by the Duke of Kent in 1999. Greenholme in Wanstead was sold just afterwards, as were Sandy Point, Essex House, Cranbrook and The Cedars. These are now private homes adjacent to Read House. Read House remains the only home now owned by the charity.

In 2004 the Charity updated its constitution and was renamed Essex Blind Charity. The community arm of the charity, Essex Sight was established to provide community support and assist people living independently.

We have many plans for 2020, but at the heart of them is ensuring we provide an excellent service for our visually impaired clients, increasing the awareness of the importance of eye health and increasing our profile, so people know we are here and offering a service to help them.

County News with Carol

There have been some big changes in the Colchester Resource Centre since the last issue of Spotlight. Thanks to funding from Colchester Catalyst Trust we now have a large kitchen area at one end fitted out with a range of talking and easy-to-see equipment. This will enable us to hold workshops and demos for food preparation and daily living skills.

Over the last couple of months, I have met many new people who are either living with sight loss or know someone who is. With the help of some of our fantastic volunteers, we have held sight centres in various Moat Housing living schemes across Maldon and the Dengie Peninsula and attended a community coffee morning in Doddinghurst, Brentwood.

These 'pop ups' have enabled us to reach people who might otherwise have not heard about Essex Sight and the services we offer. We hope to hold more of these sessions in 2020.

It was good to meet many of you at our annual exhibition at Firstsite in October. I hope everyone who attended found it interesting and enjoyable. Feedback from visitors and exhibitors was good. One issue that did arise was the lack of companies demonstrating lighting. We did invite a varied selection of organisations, but some did not accept.

We have several donated Daisy Players available. Some just play CDs, others will play USB sticks and SD cards. Please contact the Colchester office for details.

That's it for now. I hope everyone has a very happy and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Christmas and New Year Opening Hours

Monday 23rd December: 10am-2pm

Tuesday 24th December to Wednesday 1st January: CLOSED

Thursday 2nd January: 10am-2pm

Friday 3rd January: 10am-2pm

Sight Centre Activities

Weekly

Colchester

Tuesdays	10 – 12pm	Coffee Morning
Thursdays	By appointment	iPad/iPhone sessions
Monday – Friday	By appointment	Document Reading

Clacton

Thursdays	1 – 3pm	Social
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Chelmsford

Friday	10 – 1pm	Information and Advice
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Brentwood

Second Monday of month	10 - 1pm	Information and Advice
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Maldon

First Tuesday of month	10 - 1pm	Information and Advice
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Sight Village London – Graham Stearn

I attended sight village London in November, one of the many yearly events hosted by Queen Alexandra College (QAC). This is an unmissable event for people who are blind or partially-sighted, for professionals supporting and advising VIPs and for all businesses and other organisations wishing to improve their services for the visually impaired. Each year that I have attended the event, I have found out lots about the latest technology, products and support services available to people like myself with a visual impairment.

Their exhibitors include charities, commercial companies and voluntary organisations from across the UK, Europe and the world. In addition to the main show in Central England, QAC host a number of road show events in cities such as London, Leeds, Manchester, Exeter, Glasgow and Edinburgh. The event is a great place to discover new product/services that may be beneficial to use as a visually impaired person, from technology, holidays, education, sports and many more charities and organisations.

Check out the colleges website <https://www.qac.ac.uk/> for more information about what services they offer.

Seable Holidays

Seable Holidays have just launched their new brochure for 2020 adding three great new holiday destinations, Florence, Naples and Venice. They also now offer the option of group holidays to each of their destinations on set dates throughout the year. Their tailored holidays are suitable for everyone from independent travellers, groups, families and friends. The Naples and Venice trips are in March and there are places available (at time of writing).

For details and offers for any of our holidays or to request a brochure in your preferred format Braille, audio or large print please contact Emma.

E.mail: emma@seable.co.uk

Phone: 0203 3756947

Mobile: 07891546211

Website: www.seable.co.uk

Spotlight On

Guided Running

Colchester VI Running Network has been set up to create pathways for Blind and partially sighted people to access running with a guide in Colchester and the surrounding areas of Essex and South Suffolk.

We use Licensed and experienced guide runners and have group events such as our Social runs and our “A Run/Walk in the Park VI Group”. We can also arrange more one to one sessions, using our licenced guides.

These events are as much about socialising as they are about running and fitness and are aimed at all experience levels, from first time runners/walkers to experienced marathon runners. Everyone is welcome, come along and give running/walking with a guide a try.

Don't worry if you don't live near Colchester, Gary has many contacts and may be able to steer you to a VI running group in your area.

December

Thursday 26th 11:00 am, Boxing Day 5, Witham. This is a race that we can support you in attending. Entry fee £10-14

January

Saturday 4th 8:30 am, Clacton “A Run/Walk in the Park VI Group” event

February

Thursday 13th 7:30 pm, Colchester Social Run

Saturday 22nd 8:30 am, Colchester Castle “A Run/Walk in the Park VI Group” event

If you would like any more information, or have any questions, please contact us at: garyperryman1@hotmail.co.uk

Quiz

Musical Movies Quiz Part 2

16. Which character sings On the Street Where You Live in My Fair Lady?
17. Which 70s film became a stage musical in London in 1998?
18. Which Gene was the Stinging Cowboy?
19. In which decade does the action of Grease take place?
20. Which English actor played the millionaire benefactor in Annie?
21. In which musical does Nurse Nellie Forbush appear?
22. Which of the many songs in Mary Poppins won the Oscar?
23. What was The Beatles' second film?
24. Which musical is the tale of a Jewish milkman in pre-revolutionary Russia?
25. Who played Eva's husband in Evita?
26. Who led 'The Rhythm of Life' sequence in Sweet Charity?
27. Which 70s musical film was set in pre-war Berlin?
28. Which Marilyn sang Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend?

Equipment and Technology

MEET THE FAMILY - A guide to Alexa Devices

By J M Wiggins

Since its release in 2014 the Amazon Echo running the Alexa software has not only grown in popularity, but the family of devices has also grown.

With new devices being launched this Christmas, it can be difficult to decide which device would be the best for you. So, here is a quick overview of the devices and what makes them different from each other (it is not a review or user guide).

Please note, all these devices require access to Wi-Fi, a power outlet and the Alexa app downloaded onto a smart phone or tablet. All devices run the Alexa software which allows you to ask for information, news, weather, sports, subscription-based music streaming services including Amazon Music and much, much more.

Amazon Echo Dot

The smallest and cheapest device is the Amazon Echo Dot 3rd Generation. It comes in a range of coloured fabric designs and the latest Dot has a built-in clock displayed on its side which could be useful as a bedside clock. They are all the same shape, a chunky round disc measuring 43 x 99 x 99 mm. Perfect for small spaces or as an entry level device. You will probably want to connect it to a more powerful speaker to listen to music. Currently £49.99 or £59.99 for the latest clock display Dot.

Amazon Echo

The Dot's big brother also comes in a range of coloured fabric designs. It's taller than the dot, measuring 148 x 99 x 99 mm and the speaker is good enough to listen to music. Currently £89.99 for the basic model or £139.99 for the Smart home hub feature, which will allow you to add and control smart devices such as plugs, cameras and lighting.

Echo Show

This device comes in several sizes and prices £79.99 for a 5.5” screen, £119.99 for the 8’ screen and £219.99 for the HD 10” screen. All versions have a choice of Black or White design. The screen allows you to access your digital photos, read recipes, view videos and make video calls as well as being a clock display.

Echo Studio

This new device priced at £189.99 and measuring 206 x 175mm (height x diameter) holds 5 surround sound speakers producing HD sound. It automatically adjusts the sound to suit the acoustics of your room, ideal for a music enthusiast. Amazon have introduced a new subscription for their music streaming service for £14.99 a month. This gives you a higher quality service which they are calling HD to tie in with this top of the range speaker, but all their music subscriptions can be used on this device.

Amazon Echo Buds

These unobtrusive bluetooth earphones priced at £119.99 allow you to take Alexa anywhere within range and keep your listening private. You control them with your voice so you don't have to go over to the Alexa device they are connected too.

Other manufacturers are including the Alexa software into their products and several accessories are available. Prices are correct as of time of writing but may change in the run up to Christmas/New Year sales.

App, App and Away! Smart phone App News

Talking News

National charity British Wireless for the Blind Fund (BWBF) and The Talking News Federation (TNF) have joined forces once again to bring together local Talking Newspapers from across the UK.

This new app features over 200 regional Talking Newspapers, making it easier than ever to keep up with what's going on in your own community or in areas where you may have friends or family and is available on Android and ios devices..

Lloyds Banking group joins Be My Eyes

Managing your banking and finances just got a whole lot easier as Lloyds Banking Group is joining forces with Be My Eyes to help support their blind and low-vision customers with general banking enquiries.

Start by accessing the Specialized Help menu from the Be My Eyes home screen and select Lloyds Bank, Halifax, or Bank of Scotland. From their respective company profiles, just tap the call button and you're on your way. Calling any of these three banks works just like any other Be My Eyes call, except that an official representative will assist you through the video feed from your camera. The bank representative will be able to assist you with your questions related to their products or services. Currently, this service can only be accessed from the UK and in English. Account specific inquiries relating to payments or money transfers should still be addressed through the Halifax, Bank of Scotland or Lloyd's Bank helplines or your local branch.

Entertainment

Theatres (audio described performance)

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

London Palladium

- **Date:** Friday 3 January 2020
- **Time:** 7:30 pm
- **Ticket price:** £40 (discounted from current Band A price)
- **Touch Tour:** Time TBC
- Featuring an all-star cast including Paul O'Grady, Julian Clary, Paul Zerdin, Nigel Havers and Gary Wilmot. Roll up, roll up, join the circus and be swept away by a true spectacular!
- **Tel.** 0207 087 7966

The Snail and The Whale

Apollo, Shaftsbury Avenue, London

- **Date:** Sunday 15 December 2019
- **Time:** 4:00 pm
- **Ticket price:** From £15 (50% off for access tickets)
- **Touch Tour:** 3:15 pm

Join an adventurous young girl and her seafaring father as they reimagine the story of a tiny snail's incredible trip around the world, inspired by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's much-loved picture book. A heart-warming adventure for everyone aged four and up.

Tel. 0330 333 4815

Exhibition

David Britton – A Retrospective

The Minories Gallery, Colchester

- **Date:** Monday – Saturday
- **Time:** 10am – 5pm
- **Ticket price:** Admission Free

Visually Impaired Artist, David Britton has been painting Colchester and its surroundings since the age of 12, having been inspired by the renowned marine Artist Frederick (Fid) Harnack. This retrospective

exhibition is a chance to meet the artist and see over 150 of his paintings for what may be one last time.

Answers to quiz

16. Freddie Eynsford-Hill

17. Saturday Night Fever

18. Autry

19. 1950s

20. Albert Finney

21. South Pacific

22. Chim Chim Cheree

23. Help!

24. Fiddler on the Roof

25. Jonathan Pryce

26. Sammy David Jr.

27. Cabaret

28. Monroe

Contact details

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

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

Read House 01255 673654
(Janet Plant, General Manager, Tina Cox, Admin Assistant)

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, receive an Information Pack or arrange to be shown around, please contact Janet or Tina.

How you can support us

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.

Are you on our mailing list?

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..... 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.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Colchester Eye Clinic contact numbers

To book or change a NEW appointment only
01206 286870 / 286871 / 286872

To enquire about or change a date for SURGERY only
01206 286874 / 286875

To book or change a FOLLOW UP appointment only
01206 286860 – Mr Sheldrick and Mr Mukherjee
01206 286863 – Mr Patel and Mr Bansal
01206 286856 – Mr Dimitriou and Mrs Gordon
01206 286769 – Mrs Shenoy

For any enquiry relating to Secondary Optometry
01206 286868

For any enquiry relating to Orthoptics
01206 286866

For the EMERGENCY EYE CLINIC only
01206 286882 – we do not accept self-referrals unless the patient is already under our care or has a pink card for the same condition.

If anyone would like to contact the department by email the address is chu-ftr.ophthalmologydepartment@nhs.net

Essex Sight Centres

Brentwood

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

Chelmsford

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

Clacton-on-Sea

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

Colchester

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

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@essexsight.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