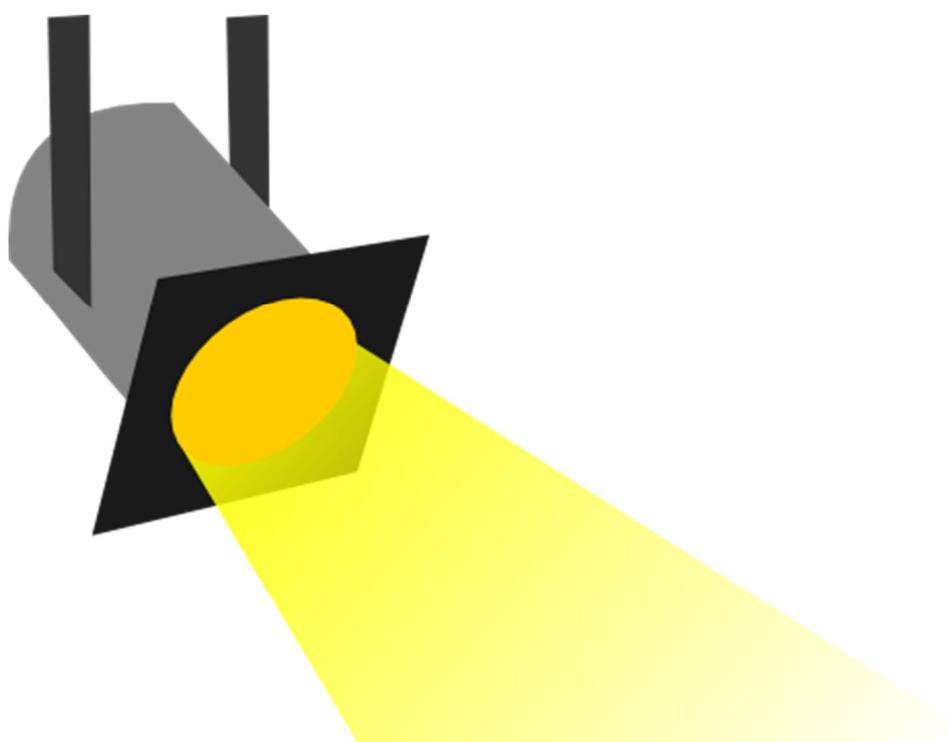


Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

June/July 2020

ISSUE 96

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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 1st July



The Editor writes:

Welcome to the June/July edition of Spotlight.

Unfortunately, due to the current circumstances, many regular features are missing, however this confinement has produced a book review and some articles, so many thanks to the contributors, all contributions are gratefully received.

Many thanks to the anonymous reader who sent in a note regarding the RNIB approved Credit Card article on page 12 of the last edition. The article was an edited down version of a press release sent out by RNIB/Nat West. The reader advised that they had had their RNIB approved RBS debit card since 2015. As RBS/Nat West is part of the same banking group, this prompted me to do some more digging behind the RNIB/Nat West press release. Imagine my surprise when I discovered Nat West launched this Credit Card in 2017 and the banking app not long after! Whilst it is normal business practice to promote your services and products, to re-release old press releases word for word is quite odd! I can only guess that it was sent out in error??? Sorry for the fake news.

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, 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

As we continue through these difficult times, I wanted to reassure readers that whilst we are not operating our sight centres, we are still here, working on a rota basis to man the telephones and respond to letters. When not covering the office, we are working from home accessing emails, updating social media and online activity. If you need anything just get in touch, we would love to hear from you.

Fundraising Walk

I wanted to personally thank Linda North for completing a great sponsored challenge, which in turn has raised funds for the Charity. I'll hand you over to Lin –

Hello readers my name is Linda North and I wanted to tell you about a charity walk that I did on the on Saturday 29th of February this year. The walk was organised by the Masons, of which my husband is a member. Fortunately we were allowed to nominate a charity of our own choice, which two friends and me elected to do.

I got up at 5:15 in the morning because the charity walk, which consisted 10 miles and 12 bridges, started at 9:30 from Battersea Park railway station and we had to travel there from Clacton. Along with me were two friends, Mike and Sally from my walking group in Clacton. We drove to Newbury Park, got the tube to Sloane Square, which was quite a long distance from the starting place, but we made it by the skin of our teeth.

We got chatting to an elderly gentleman who was taking part who recently had a knee operation but wanted to do the walk to get into a bit of fitness again. He had previously in his life been a long-distance walker and runner. He came from Maldon and proved to be invaluable along the walk with his instructions, as his instructions were far better printed than ours.

The day started off cold, wet and windy, but the weather improved along the way, so by the time we got to Westminster Bridge, which I believe was bridge number six, we stopped to have a coffee and a bite to eat. At that time the sun came out which made it really pleasant. We stopped on every

bridge to take a selfie including John from Maldon. He took a selfie of us and we took a selfie of him and we had great fun along the way laughing and joking. It took us 4 1/2 hours to get to Tower Hill station because Sally, who was with us, wanted to take pictures of everything, as she wasn't familiar with London and everything fascinated her. We could've done it a lot quicker, but it didn't matter because the weather stayed sunny until the end of the walk. Unfortunately there was no one there to meet us at the end, so we were a bit disappointed that we didn't have some proof of finishing the walk. However, we had all our sponsors on our sheets and we are all able to collect all donations.

I managed to collect £286 so my husband and I made up figure up to £300, with the funds going to Essex Blind Charity.

It was a very good day and we had lots of laughs along the way. London was very crowded, there were many people wearing masks, but it was in February! Little did we know what there was in store for us at the end of March! The Masons, who organised this event, are thinking of doing it every year and I would recommend it.

Everybody keep well and keep safe.

Lin

County News

At the time of going to press, we are still being advised to stay locked down, so all our sight centres are closed. We know that there will be a gradual easing of restrictions, but at this time there is still no clear timeline as to when or what extent that will be. When we are allowed to reopen, we will have to put control measures in place for staff, volunteers and clients to remain safe, so PPE, hand sanitizing and an appointment system will be set up.

As soon as we know when we are able to start reopening face to face services we will put details on the website and social media. If you do not have online access, you can always check by ringing the office on 01206 548196.

Spotlight On

In 2018 Graham got back into playing Goalball with the Cambridge Dons and wanted to share this recent article on the club by Mark Taylor (mark.taylor@iliffemedia.co.uk)

"As I look back on the time I've spent with the goalball team and with the sport in general, I would say it's been incredibly essential for me in terms of adapting to living with a visual impairment and just seeing other young people going around and doing things."

Reflecting on the past eight years of Cambridge Dons Goalball Club, Warren Wilson does not even hint at the impact that he has had on so many other people. Even getting the 29-year-old to agree to an interview was difficult, it was not that there was a reluctance on his part, more that he was trying to push others forward.

The suggestion was to speak to GB goalball player Sarah Leiter, a fellow member of Cambridge Dons, but she was eager for Wilson to take the spotlight. He is such a pivotal part of the club, in every sense, but has a selfless way of making others the focal point. However, the Dons would probably not exist without Wilson.

With the support of Steve Morley and Robyn Speed at Cambridge City Council, and others including Alan Chamley, it was decided to set up a goalball club in January 2012. Chamley had prior experience with a visually impaired sports team as he ran the Eastern Vipers cricket team, and was joined in supporting the venture by his son Stuart, and a coach called Tyler Gilkes was funded by the city council.

Wilson was one of the founding members, he is the only one still with the Dons, and, in his own words it was a "very humble beginning" with friends and family, not necessarily visually impaired, roped in, including then girlfriend Charlotte Hewer. His initial idea had been to start a visually impaired football team in Cambridge, but the city council had suggested goalball and a couple of taster sessions later, the seed had been sown.

The eagerness to be involved in sport had come from Wilson losing his sight through a rare genetic condition when he was 19, in 2009.

“It was something that my family didn’t really know much about, it’s a very rare condition and it was just while I was doing my A-level exams at Long Road Sixth Form College,” he says. “My sight was deteriorating and luckily I had just enough sight to finish writing my last one and then also, lucky is how you could look at it, that I had Addenbrooke’s just across the road. “I made use of their facilities while my sight was deteriorating. It was an unusual way to do your A-level exams, I think.”

Wilson is registered blind and has low contrast across his field of vision. He has light perception across most of his field of vision, except for a little bit on his left eye, and cannot see colours properly, just shapes and shadows. He cannot see distance very well, and the contrast is affected so it is quite a severe level of sight to lose.

“I wasn’t the most sporty person, but the attitude I had was ‘let’s give sport a go now I can’t see what I’m doing very well!’ jokes Wilson. A difficulty in handling the competitive side of sport had pushed Wilson away from sport as a teenager. “I tended to crumble under the pressure and the competition,” he says. But those inhibitions were cast aside.

“People suggested sports to me but I said no as I was never really into sport,” Wilson explains. “But as I started going on and doing more things, like learning how to use the computer, the cane, getting out and about using buses and trains, going to university, I thought there was so much you can do. “There was so much adapted out there for a visual impairment so I thought let’s see how sport works.”

That approach, together with just wanting to stay fit is what took him first to football, before settling on goalball, and so many people will be grateful that he did. Leiter was one of the first people to join the club after it had been set up, and along with two other players helped give it a good kick on. From the six at the launch as founding members, they have now got 30, in a sport that is only three-a-side.

The Dons have three novice teams, two intermediate teams and an elite team, they have helped developed Leiter and Filmon Eyassu to represent

GB, won elite level competitions, were second in the Goalball Cup and are one of the biggest teams in the country.

“I never knew it would go on to become this big really, but it’s fantastic that it has. I’m really pleased,” says Wilson. “As I look back, I’ve gone through so many changes in my personal life during the time I’ve been playing goalball, and being involved with the Cambridge goalball team’s been a constant.

“It’s something I’m very passionate about and it’s a team that means a lot to me. It might just be a local amateur sports club but the bond we have within the team is strong. It’s a community as much as it is a sports club. It’s a group of people who meet up on a regular basis, and it becomes far more than a sports club quite easily.” Looking to the future, Wilson, who works with the RNIB, hopes the Dons’ success continues and they can remain sustainable for the long term.

“I would love it to continue for as long as there is a need for it and that goalball is going,” he adds. “I think for as long as possible, bringing people into sport, and bringing a community of like-minded people together – that’s the key for the club.”

Events

Vision England is an exciting residential programme for young people aged 11 – 17 with vision impairment in the UK, in partnership with the Field Studies Council (FSC). Young people are supported to play a leading role in changing their communities and the environment for the better. Activities may include conservation activities like coppicing and tree planting, wildlife walks, bush craft, hiking and camping, all for £25.

Date: 27 July – 2 August 2020

Venue: Juniper Hall Field Centre, Dorking Surrey

Date: 2 August – 8 August 2020

Venue: Preston Montford Field Centre, Shrewsbury Shropshire

Date: 16 August – 22 August 2020

Venue: Castle Head Field Centre, Grange-Over-Sands Lake District

Contact 07816 599 260 or email visionengland@sense.org.uk for more information or apply online at www.sense.org.uk/visionengland

Quiz

British Isles Quiz

1. Name Britain's longest river.
2. What is the highest mountain in England?
3. Which city is known as the Granite City?
4. Aquae Sulis is the Roman name for which modern city?
5. Which range of hills in the West Country has Cheddar Gorge and its caves as well as Wookey Hole caves?
6. What is the name of the extensive area of marshland on the south-east coast of Kent?
7. What is the name of the World Heritage Site on the coastline of Dorset and East Devon?
8. On which island are the Cuillin Hills?
9. Which word, common in the South of England, describes a steep-sided river valley where the water flows through coastal cliffs to the sea?
10. What was the UK's earliest National Park?
11. Name the UK's largest lakes by area and volume.
12. Which English county has the second longest coastline?

Entertainment

Book Review

Jamrach's Menagerie by Carol Birch

Jamrach's Menagerie tells the tale of a young boy, Jaffy Brown growing up in poverty in mid nineteenth century London. One day he is snatched by an escaped tiger and his life changes. This is the premise of the book, and thanks to the author's highly descriptive style, the reader is immediately transported to the grim reality of the poverty and hardship faced by street urchins existing in 1850's South and East London.

The tale of his new beginning, following his rescue from the tiger by Mr Jamrach, the owner of an exotic animal emporium, is the first fact-based account in this work of fiction. The story then takes a dramatic shift when he goes to sea for three years on board a whaling ship with the plan to find a mysterious dragon like creature for a wealthy collector. Other than the hunt for the dragon, this is the second fact-based account from the loss of the Essex, which was attacked and sunk by a whale in 1820.

This was a book of great promise. The author has a real gift for vivid, poetic description and could have taken the reader on an incredible voyage of imagination, as alluded to by the title and promising initial story of Jaffy's early life and his time at the menagerie. However, the author's gift made the middle section grisly and heavy going and I found myself wishing for it to be over with. It also mirrored the real life accounts of the Essex so much that I felt I was re reading 'In the Heart of the Sea'.

The final part of the book, tries to rekindle some of the initial promise of the story, but it felt like the author had run out of steam and settled for a predictable ending.

If you are interested in the story of the whaling ship Essex (which inspired Moby Dick), and the subsequent fate of the crew, who were marooned in small boats in the middle of the pacific ocean, the books 'The Loss of the Ship Essex, Sunk by a Whale: First-Person Accounts' by Thomas Nickerson, Owen Chase & 2 more or 'In the Heart of the Sea' by

Nathaniel Philbrick would be worth a read, but his factual accounts are fairly harrowing in places.

There is also a short account online that can be found on Wikipedia by searching for the 'sinking of the Essex'. As fanciful as it may seem, there are 10 reported sinking of ships by whales. The most recent took place in 1999 when a 111 year old, 73ft yacht was sunk in Alaska.

Jamrach's Emporium was an exotic animal store on the Ratcliffe Highway in the East End of London, owned by Charles Jamrach, a leading importer, breeder, and exporter of animals, selling to noblemen, zoos, menageries, and circus owners.

A fully grown Bengal Tiger escaped from its box at the Emporium in 1857 and picked up and carried off a passing nine-year-old boy, who, having never seen a big cat before, tried to pat it. Jamrach chased, wrestled, and beat the tiger into submission with a crowbar. The tiger and the boy survived. Jamrach offered £50 (£6800 today) in compensation to the boy, but the boy's father sued, ironically being awarded £50 by the courts due to Jamrach's heroic intervention and the boy being unharmed. However, Jamrach's legal fees came to £240 (£32,500).

Eager to get some of his expenses back, Jamrach sold the tiger to a travelling menagerie for £300. Thanks to its newfound fame, it went on to generate huge sums of money for the new owner! The tiger's escape, and subsequent rescue, are commemorated by a bronze statue near the entrance to Tobacco Dock, a short distance from the scene of the incident.

Worlds Awakening Radio

Graham tells us about World Awakening Radio, an Internet radio station he has become involved with.

Worlds Awakening Radio is run by a group of visually impaired people broadcasting daily from 9am until 11pm. Throughout the day there are a variety of shows covering all different tastes in music, from rock, easy listen to country and much more.

To listen, visit www.worldsawakeningradio.com or listen on your smart devices by asking to play 'worlds awakening radio from tune in' We all do this from home using software called station play list on our pc's or from an app called Backpack studio on the iPhone/iPad.

Back pack studio is a mobile app that allows you to record, mix, master your podcasts/radio shows in real time entirely from your iPhone or iPad instead of having to spend time recording and editing show before broadcasting. It is very voice-over friendly and easy to use both for sighted and visually impaired.

The app allows you to import media such as audio files to play out live to a stream. Files can be loaded from various cloud storage platforms such as Dropbox, Google Drive, or iTunes music library.

I joined the station back in April and now have started to do two shows a week using my pc and the station playlist studio software. I don't use a screen reader but some of the other presenters do use station playlist studio with Jaws and other screen reading software and they have found it very accessible, enabling them to do their shows with ease.

Since joining the station, I have been involved with a great fund raising event raising money for the NHS who have been working extremely hard throughout the COVID-19 virus crisis. Some of the station team came up with the idea to do a 42 hours straight broadcast. We held competitions including a Virtual Grand National, gave away prizes, had an auction of selection items and even had four half hour hijacks where listeners made a donation to take over the station for half hour playing five songs of their choice.

We do mugs (www.wedomugs.com) kindly provided gift vouchers to give out as prizes throughout this event and we raised over £4000! If anyone is interested in getting involved with the station please email management@worldsawakeningradio.com

Vocal Eyes

Vocal Eyes allow you to experience art and culture through audio description. Bringing theatre, museums, galleries and heritage sites to life for blind and partially sighted people.

Check out their website for more details and their weekly selection of accessible cultural experiences <https://vocaleyeyes.co.uk/>

Top Tips

Lin tells us about her experience in completing the Blue Badge application online.

I had trouble renewing my Blue Badge online. About half way through the form it asked for my disability and Visual Impaired or Blind was not listed on the page, but PIP was. So I filled the rest of the form in under the heading of PIP. I included all of the eight pages of PIP and the rest of the information they needed and sent it off to the council.

A month later, I got an email back saying they had rejected my application as I can still walk more than 200 meters.

I rang the RNIB and they said all I needed to do is to tick the box, which said Blind or Visually Impaired at the beginning of the form. I could not see this box to tick when I tried again.

I rang the RNIB again and we went through the form with them and when we got to the page for Disability, this page was in two sections. At the bottom of the top section there is a category called "OTHER" and when you go into this then "Blind or Visual Impaired is shown there.

It took me over a morning to fill it out. They say it's been made simpler? I beg to differ!

Answers to quiz

1. River Severn
 2. Scafell Pike (978 m)
 3. Aberdeen
 4. Bath
 5. The Mendip Hills
 6. Romney Marshes
 7. The Jurassic Coast
 8. The Isle of Skye
 9. A chine
 10. The Peak District (1951)
 11. Lough Neagh in Northern Ireland is the largest water body in the UK by area and Loch Ness is the largest by volume
 12. Essex (905 km)
-

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
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.ophtalmologydepartment@nhs.net

Essex Sight Centres

Brentwood

Brentwood Community Hospital
Crescent Drive
Shenfield CM15 8DR
1st Tuesday of month 10am-1pm
Last Thursday of month 1pm-4pm

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 4 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@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