

Essex Blind Charity



Spotlight

August/September 2020

ISSUE 97

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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 September 4th



The Editor writes:

Welcome to the August/September edition of Spotlight. After months of lockdown and virtual services, we are at last able to start face to face activities again, albeit on a limited basis. So, we are not fully back to how we were, but it is a start! There is more on this in the Community Support Team section and all the latest on products and services both in Essex and online throughout this edition.

The audio versions of Spotlight, which are kindly produced and distributed by Pat Wilson and the team at Chelmsford and District Talking News, have been sadly affected by the lockdown. Pat will be starting up again as soon as she has studio access, but if you do know someone who would like a printed or email version in the meantime, please let us know and we will send one out.

Finally, I would like to thank all our contributors who have sent in articles, keep them coming!

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 copies in Braille or on cassette.

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 good news is that we are now able to restart our face to face services, albeit on a limited basis from 3rd August. Sight Centre services will be limited to our permanent Resource Centre in Colchester as the hosts of our other sight centres have not given a date for us to resume services yet.

We will be operating a pre-booked appointment service in Colchester and appointments can be made by calling 01206 548196. Appointments will be available from Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm and Saturday 10am - 12pm, but expect a minimum 48 hour gap between booking and the appointment. Can't get to Colchester? We can also offer virtual appointments via Zoom.

We will be offering home doorstep visits in place of home visiting, where we will bring our services to your doorstep or garden. Again, these can be booked by contacting us on 01206 548196.

ECLO services will be resumed for the Colchester Eye Clinic but as yet we do not know when services in Broomfield or Brentwood will recommence.

County News

Healthwatch Essex have launched a live chat facility on their website to help the public access their Information Service as easily as possible. The facility, which will be available from 10am to 2pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, will allow members of the public and professionals to chat online with one of our knowledgeable, friendly Information Team.

The Information Service exists to help people access, understand, and navigate health, social care and wellbeing services in Essex. Anyone can contact the team confidentially for help on health and social care services, how to access support, what to do about a concern or complaint or how to share feedback about services.

Throughout the last few months, there has been a significant change in the way that health and social care services are delivered. Healthwatch know that it may be a confusing time and they are here to support and help people navigating that rapidly changing system.

The link for their live chat is as follows:

<https://healthwatchessex.org.uk/>

Essential supermarket information and updates

Accessing food and groceries in the UK can present a challenge, particularly if you are blind or partially sighted. Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK, supermarkets have asked people to shop differently and the major chains have adapted their online services to try and meet demand.

The [Sight Advice FAQ website](#), a resource for blind and partially sighted people supported by RNIB, has a range of useful information on a variety of subjects including how to [arrange shopping deliveries](#) and [how to get essential food supplies if you are struggling financially](#).

Also, there is a new delivery service – called Food Shop – which has dedicated support for shoppers with sight loss and can reach most of the UK's population. (<https://www.rnib.org.uk/sight-loss-advice/food-shop-trial>)

The following supermarkets all have services they can offer to assist you:

- [ALDI](#)
- [Asda](#)
- [Co-op](#)
- [Marks and Spencer](#)
- [Morrisons](#)
- [Sainsbury's](#)
- [Tesco](#)
- [Waitrose](#)

RNIB Helpline 0303 123 9999

Spotlight On

Visually Impaired Sailing Association (Visa-gb)

VISA-GB is run by blind and partially sighted sailing enthusiasts to help others enjoy the freedom of sailing.

Started in 2009 by Colin Fowler with the clear vision of enabling visually impaired adults to become active members of the sailing crew rather than passengers, over the past 10 years they have sailed thousands of miles in both UK and international waters. With a membership of over 200 and an active sailing membership of over 100 visually impaired enthusiasts, they aspire to become the UK's largest charity dedicated to offshore sailing exclusively for visually impaired adults.

The Charity is managed by a board of eight trustees, all sail, and only one is fully sighted. An organisation run by and for blind and visually impaired adults.

“There is only one crew, no division, no isolation, we are one team”

Visa-gb's aim is to empower, motivate and encourage both blind and visually impaired people to join a team sailing yachts and to enjoy getting stuck into something that's great fun. They work to enable as many blind and visually impaired adults as possible to have a go at sailing so that they can experience the related benefits, increase their social circle, and become a part of a growing and forward thinking organisation.

The benefits of sailing, working as a team, and living and working together have been shown to improve mental health and well-being amongst those in the VI community.

No matter who you are, where you come from, if you have some sight or none at all you will be welcomed by Visa-gb. The aim is to empower you to take a full and active role in our sailing trips and our charity. Out on the water you'll be a part of running the yacht, casting off, cooking a meal, setting a sail, steering a course, making a brew and much more. Helping you gain confidence by working in a team. You will be encouraged to learn new skills, improve and develop existing ones, and to take a full and

meaningful part in all aspects of what visa-gb do. Of course, enjoying the experience, meeting new people, making new friends and being a part of something special is very much part of the whole experience.

During lockdown, the Visually Impaired Sailing Association have been very busy raising funds and organising themselves so that they can offer visually impaired adults a full programme of sailing for next year and beyond. The dates for 2021 for their diary are below.

If you would like to participate in any of the events in 2021 or beyond, you can register your interest in any of our offshore adventures by emailing Sue Hogge, (Membership Secretary and Vice Chair) at susiehogge@icloud.com or calling her on (07767) 717440.

Our Plans for 2021 include the following:

- Scottish Island Flotilla, 15th to 22nd May.
- The Royal Escape Race, 25th to 31st May.
- Round the Island Race 3rd July, charter 28th June to 4th July.
- Sea Vision 2021, 5th June to 3rd July.
- Blind Week 12th to 19th June 2021.
- Warm Weather Cruise September/October.

<http://www.visa-gb.org.uk>

Events

Sight Village

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, Sight Village will not be taking place as usual. In order to stay connected and keep people up to date with the latest products and services available to people who are blind and visually impaired, Sight Village Virtual will be run through Queen Alexandra College's Facebook and YouTube channels: -

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVP2OcDFITF7npCv4cFto88V9wBolc7Nh>

Social distancing and sight loss

Karishma, who is a campaigns officer for the RNIB explains their latest campaign:

I'm partially sighted and like many others I'm finding social distancing hard, sometimes impossible. It's been difficult to go to the supermarket and get food, to exercise or attend medical appointments.

It would be really helpful if more people understood how difficult it can be for blind and partially sighted people to social distance. That's why we've launched our [#WorldUpsideDown campaign](#).

To raise awareness - and grab the public's attention - we took over London's Piccadilly Lights and turned advertisements from major brands upside down alongside messages explaining the issues people with sight loss are facing. We're also asking the Government to take steps to make things better, including clarifying the rules on guiding and telling businesses how to make social distancing measures accessible.

We've reached thousands of people with our campaign, but we need your support to help us reach more.

Get involved by:

- Taking our [Sight loss and social distancing quiz](#) to find out about the challenges and how you can help. Then share it with your family and friends.
- [Watch our film](#) on interacting with someone with sight loss while social distancing.

If you've got sight loss, [tell us your top tips](#) for making social distancing more accessible. We'd love to hear them

Sight Loss: What You Need to Know virtual /phone sessions

The London Vision team will be hosting Sight Loss: What You Need to Know sessions over the coming months. The sessions will take place on the digital meeting platform Zoom, but they will be accessible for people with computers and smartphones and for people who only have access to a landline phone.

Each session will be themed; we will cover different areas including: reasons for registering as a blind partially sighted person, and the benefits associated with registration; tips and tricks for living with sight loss; getting out and about; introduction to technology, and sport and leisure.

The sessions will be informal and there will be plenty of opportunities to ask questions and share your ideas. We will also keep the groups small to allow for conversations. Your friends or family are also welcome to join in with these sessions and discussions.

If you are interested in joining, please call Chris on 020 3761 3651 or get in touch via e-mail info@londonvision.org
Please don't hesitate to get in touch with questions, and feel free to share this message with anyone you think might benefit from the course.

Important

When you join a session your phone call should be free but please check with your provider first.

Quiz

1. Into which sea does the Nile flow?
2. Which musical features 'Some Enchanted Evening'?
3. Which boxer was nicknamed 'The Dark Destroyer'?
4. Who had his first UK top 10 hit with 'Wichita Lineman'?
5. One and a half litres of champagne is known as a what?
6. In the musical about gangsters, who are with the 'Guys' in the title?
7. Which Greek author was famous for his fables?
8. Who composed the song 'Puttin' On The Ritz'?
9. Where in London is there a bronze statue of Charlie Chaplin?
10. Who played Hilda Ogden In Coronation Street?
11. What is the surname of the inventor of the world's first motorcycle?
12. In which country did Posh and Becks marry?
13. What is the surname of the last British tennis player to win the Wimbledon Women's Singles Title?
14. 617 Squadron of the RAF is better known as what?
15. Which US singer was born Eleanora Fagan?
16. Sarah Palin was the first female Governor of which State?
17. Which English city is home to the Whitworth Art Gallery?

Entertainment

Science Museum Reopens

The Science Museum will re-open on Wednesday 19 August 2020. As their top priority is the health and safety of visitors and staff, they've introduced [enhanced cleaning practices](#) and [free timed ticketing](#) to ensure everyone has an enjoyable visit to the museum.

As a thank you, they are giving email subscribers exclusive access to the museum on Tuesday 18 August, 24-hours before opening to the general public. Head to [the website](#) to book your free museum admission tickets and [find out how you can have a safe and inspiring visit](#).

Please be patient, due to high demand, you may need to force refresh your web page (CTRL f5) before booking your tickets. If you're still having trouble try using incognito mode.

[Book your free museum preview tickets](#)

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.

A group of their audio describers have written and recorded an Audio Introduction for each episode of the BBC's new series of Alan Bennett's much-loved monologues **Talking Heads**. You can [listen to the audio-described introduction and link through to the AD version on BBC iPlayer](#).

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

Top Tips

How to make a disposable mask fit better – by J M Wiggins

As we start venturing out more frequently it may become necessary to wear a mask. If you have already worn a mask, (especially the

disposable kind) then like me you may have discovered just how uncomfortable they become after a few minutes. They can slip on your face when you talk causing you to instinctively reach up to adjust the mask. They also have large gaps around the edges large enough for a hand to fit through let alone a tiny virus particle. These things alone make wearing one uncomfortable, and rather ineffective. However, I have seen videos on YouTube from medical professionals which show that with a little bit of DIY it is possible to make these masks almost a perfect fit, and I can speak from experience that it does work.

Hold your mask so that the elasticated ear loops are on each side and the stiff long edge is at the top. The side where the pleats are pointing down is the outside of the mask.

Fold the mask in half horizontally so that the 2 long edges are touching. Keep the pleated side outer most although you can fold the mask back the right way at the end if it becomes inside out.

With the mask held securely to avoid it slipping take one of the elastic loops and tie a knot it as close to the mask as possible. This can be tricky and I found it easier to twist the elastic first.

Repeat this step with the elastic on the other side.

Now open out the mask. There may be small corners at the edge near the knots; you can fold these inwards now or when the mask is in place.

Place the stiff edge of the mask on the bridge of your nose and pull the bottom edge under your chin.

Stretch the elasticated loops over your ears.

Smooth the stiff edge over your nose so that it fits securely.
Tuck in any stray corners.

That's it. You should now find the mask is a snug fit with minimal gaps.

Product Review

“Solo” USB Player Review by Linda North

This device is from King’s Access Technology and is part of the family of USB players which includes the Sovereign and the Sonic (if you receive your local talking newspaper then you may well have been provided with one of these devices to play it on.

I purchased the Solo, as I wanted a smaller device. I wanted something versatile and easy to use as I’m registered blind.

The buttons are simple to use and the player being so small (smaller than a mobile phone) means it is very easy to put in my handbag or pocket to carry with me. It takes a standard memory stick like those provided by the RNIB and Calibre. The only problem I feel is that the memory stick protrudes out of the end, but the device is sophisticated enough that the stick can be removed and put back without the player losing your place.

For anybody who is registered blind you can obtain it without the VAT, which means it, costs about £65 from Kings Access Technology. Their email address is:-

<https://www.kingsaccesstechnology.com/shop/solo-usb-personal-audio-player/>

I think it is money well spent and I very pleased with it.

Linda North

Out and About

Visit to Beth Chatto Gardens by Malcolm Bull

Those who are keen gardeners are likely to have visited the Beth Chatto garden at some point. Situated near Elmstead Market, only a few miles from Colchester, it is a world famous garden established by the late Beth Chatto in the 1970s on what was previously poor scrubland. The garden is now run by a Trust and many garden-related activities now take place there.

Like so many who were desperate to get back to a more normal existence, I wanted to take advantage of the opening up of some attractions and decided that a visit to the garden would be worth the price (£8.95 per person). Tickets currently have to be pre-booked online.

We chose a day during the hot weather at the end of June. However, apart from the dry garden, at the start of the walk round, there is plenty of shade throughout the garden. As there are some flights of steps and various lakes and ponds, it is advisable for any visually impaired visitors to have a sighted guide. Apart from a marked route to the reception desk and then into the garden, there were no restrictions and the paths are generally quite wide with other more expansive walking areas. At the time of our visit, the cafe was closed but I understand this may now have re-opened.

Beth Chatto was a real plantswoman and less interested in statues and topiary, which can be found in many other famous gardens. She won ten consecutive gold medals at the Chelsea Flower Show and believed strongly that plants would perform best if planted in their natural conditions. For example, it was pointless planting a shade loving plant in the sun, or vice versa. She travelled widely and many of the plants now established in the garden have origins overseas. This was all very evident during our visit to the garden with flowers providing a mass of colour, and many mature trees and shrubs.

We spent a very enjoyable and peaceful hour and a half in the garden. There were very few other visitors in evidence, which made it easy for us to get around.

Answers to quiz

1. Mediterranean
 2. South Pacific
 3. Nigel Benn
 4. Glen Campbell
 5. Magnum
 6. Dolls
 7. Aesop
 8. Irving Berlin
 9. Leicester Square
 10. Jean Alexander
 11. Daimler
 12. Ireland
 13. Wade
 14. Dambusters
 15. Billie Holiday
 16. Alaska
 17. Manchester
-

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-ftp.ophthalmologydepartment@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

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)

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 4 pm

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