

Bournemouth Society for the Visually Impaired



providing support, guidance & information
to the visually impaired for over 100 years



Eye can't, but I can!

ISSUE 28 OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2013 Editor: Jo Wood

Barbara and Steve's Tandem Adventure

Member Barbara Russell and volunteer Steve Shuck proudly completed the inaugural 'London 100' on their tandem on Sunday 4th August.



For the story of their amazing adventure, please see pages 5-8
(If this inspires you to donate to Barbara and Steve's fundraising
campaign, please go to www.justgiving.com/Barbara-Russell2
or alternatively, just call in at the office!)

Philip's Thoughts

'We try to run BSVI so that it feels like a family - a family for visually impaired people. The Centre is somewhere to come and meet with friends. We also take members out on various day trips. However, there comes a time when staff and volunteers are unable to provide the level of care some of our members need. Over the past few months we have sadly said goodbye to some of our less able members, who are now receiving suitable care for their needs. We miss them greatly and wish them well in their new surroundings.

There is always room for more to come along and join in the activities. We can provide a cooked lunch on Mondays or Thursdays if that would suit you - just get in touch with the office and they will help you discover what we do, both on and off-site.

We are currently looking at events for the Christmas period - I know it seems too early to think of Christmas now so we will send you information about our festive celebrations a little nearer the time.'

Philip

Southbourne Bowls



Southbourne Bowls Club invited a group of members to enjoy an afternoon of bowls and a cream tea on Friday 13th September. A big thank you goes to Pam McKenna, President of the club, for organising the day and making BSVI her nominated charity for this year.

Archery Club

Good news - we are pleased to announce that the Archery Club will start again on Tuesday 1st October and run until May 2014. The sessions will take place from 6 - 8pm in the Rooper Hall. Transport can be provided for £4. Please contact the office if you would like to book a place and take up this exciting and new sporting challenge!



BSVI services

Emotional Support - We have 2 BACP qualified Counsellors who can support you either at the Centre or in your own homes, either weekly or fortnightly. If you think you may benefit from their assistance, please call Caterina or Marie on **01202 522184**. Our Counsellors also provide support for family members or carers.

Chiropody - Margareth Sackett provides appointments every 6 weeks or so. Transport can be arranged. The next date is **13th November**. Please phone **01202 546644** to book.

Job Focus - Karen Kerley, Employment Co-ordinator from Action for Blind People (Salisbury) offers employment assistance sessions to visually impaired people on the first Wednesday of each month from 10.30-12.30. Please call Karen on **01722 345440** for more information.

Befriending - For those unable to attend the Centre, volunteers will visit you or provide Telephone Befriending. We currently have a team of 9 Befrienders who regularly visit over 20 people. For further information, whether you would like to receive visits or volunteer as a Befriender, please contact Geraldine Bradley on **01202 522184**.

ActivEyes - The ActivEyes Youth Group runs on Saturday mornings for youngsters aged 8 and over. The dates for the next 2 months are **Saturday 19th October** and **Saturday 16th November** from 10.30-12.30.

Please go to contact@activeyes.org.uk for further details or find the group on Facebook.

Tuesday morning Drop In Café - Any visually impaired person is welcome to 'drop in' to the Café on Tuesdays between 10.30 and 12.30 for a chat and a cooked breakfast. Pre-booked roast lunches are available on the last Tuesday of each month. Minibus transport can be arranged.

Hearing Club - The new club for the hard of hearing set up by the Sight and Hearing team, continues to expand. Future sessions will take place on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 10.30-12. Transport is available from BSVI at a cost of £4 for the round trip - please book in the office 2 days in advance.

My Guide - Volunteers have now completed their Level 2 training and are ready to offer their assistance. Do you require help to get out and explore your local area on foot? For more details, contact Geraldine Bradley on **01202 522184**.

The Walking Group is taking a temporary break over the winter months and will resume in the Spring.

Winter Fayre



Our popular and annual BSVI Winter Fayre will take place on **Saturday 30th November**

between **10am** and **12 noon** in the Rooper Hall.

The entrance fee will be 50p and stalls selling cards, gifts, cakes and plants will be available to tempt you and give you a 'head start' to your Christmas shopping!

Refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies will also be on sale.

Please do come along and support your local charity - we look forward to seeing you!

Pub Quiz

Our next fundraising Pub Quiz will be on **Saturday 30th November**. The doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm Quiz start. Please contact the office for more details or to reserve a table for your team.

(Tickets are £8 and include Fish and Chips and an ice cream)

999 Day

BSVI staff and volunteers attended this event on Saturday 21st September at the Eye Unit, Bournemouth Hospital. Together with Dorset Fire and Police, we provided information to assist those with visual impairment to stay safe.

'Go Tandem!' Barbara's London 100

'Cycling three times a week through winter, spring and summer, through waterlogged forest roads and enjoying fast peddling up challenging hills has prepared us to be a great team together, covering longer distances with every outing, feeling stronger and "cycling fit."

Sundays were a 7.30am start for a 50 mile ride and a regular stop after 30 miles to improve circulation and restore energy with a favourite purchased rock cake!

Our "bicycle made for two" proved to be a reliable and perfect machine for the London-Surrey 100 mile event. At 3.45am on Sunday 4th August we excitedly set off for London with our "keen machine" expertly loaded into the back of Steve's car and packed with well tested energy provisions for the day.

From the M25 I played a small role as map reader which I had prepared earlier in Braille. At 7.00am we drove past famous landmarks through heavy traffic.

After unloading at Finsbury Park, we joined many other cyclists for 5 miles in the



direction of the Olympic Park. With saddles warmed up and numbers pinned on, we joined other tandem cyclists who were looking forward to the 100 miles challenge. The atmosphere was buzzing as we lined up in our starting time for our group, with the PA system counting us down and thousands cheering us on our way.

All disabled cyclists had VIP wristbands to allow us to start cycling near the front of our groups. Each bike was fitted with an electronic distance monitor which signalled the exact start of the 100 miles after a short ride out of the Olympic Park.

It was a brilliant moment as we peddled out of the stadium 5

and soon all the cyclists steered along the empty London streets at a comfortable pace.

The weather was perfect and the huge crowds lining the pavements and cheering from balconies created an awesome experience.

Steve was a great “tourist guide on wheels” as we enjoyed covering more miles and passing famous buildings. The route was well planned with marshals and at certain distances there were refreshment hubs for a comfort break and top-up water.

Even the peaceful villages of Surrey gave a carnival cheer as we all continued to the next stage. The landscape changed all the time. We attacked the steep slopes of Leith Hill with our determined enthusiasm and a strong peddling rhythm.

Box Hill was a gradual climbing pace, with a fun zig zag approach to the very top. We soon recovered and enjoyed the “Big Dipper” sensation of freewheeling down the other side!

Another 30 miles through larger towns and crowds making music with drums and blowing whistles. The tandem



was cheered and the ‘90 miles’ signal gave us a great boost to push through the last ten miles.

Cycling back around the built up approach to the finish on the Mall, we cycled in front of Big Ben as it struck 4pm! I shall never forget that moment as we crossed the finish line and our medals were presented to us. We felt relieved to leave the saddle and pleased with a wonderful day. We congratulated our tandem friends before cycling through the busy traffic to load up the car and happily motor home.

We had finished in a time of **8 hours 1 minute 13 seconds.**

We are all so proud of Barbara and Steve’s achievement and commitment. They became media ‘stars’ with interviews in the Bournemouth Echo and on Radio Solent.

Steve's Story

'Seven months hard training and the day had finally arrived. Up at 3am and at 3.45 Barbara and I left for London, excited and ready for a great day on the tandem.

It was light by the time we parked in North London, we unloaded the bike and started a 5 mile warm up to get to the start at the Olympic Park in Stratford.

Along the way we met up with more and more cyclists.

15,000 plus cyclists at the iconic sports venue was an impressive sight. The atmosphere was fun and friendly as everyone looked forward to the challenge of cycling 100 miles.

We had kindly been given passes to the VIP hospitality area where we met a number of other disabled tandem teams. This was a revelation and an inspiration to me.

Barbara amazes me in what she achieves and this morning we also chatted to a lady who had sadly lost a leg but with her husband was cycling their third 100 miles race. Another lady who had a degenerative muscle wasting disorder was using this event as a warm up

before cycling from Lands End to John O'Groats in October. We also met a blind chap who had run as many marathons as I had, so we swapped stories and experiences.

Whilst we were chatting to these wonderful characters the odd celebrity drifted past. An ex-international footballer and a smattering of TV faces were of no interest in comparison to the group we were chatting with!

Off we went at the mass start. Great excitement and superb encouragement from our fellow competitors as well as the many spectators along the route was to be the feature of our 8 hour journey.

"Go tandem!" was the cry all the way along the course. We laughed and cheered our way around the 100 miles.

Now that is a long way and 8 hours in the saddle becomes a tad uncomfortable but we had faith in our fitness and in one another. Some seriously testing hills challenged us and we proudly rode up every single one and did not once get off and push like many of the cyclists around us.

The miles ticked by, the sun 7

came out and we were confident of making the finish and enjoying every single moment. As we passed Big Ben it loudly struck 4pm and all we had to do was to cycle up Whitehall, turn left at Trafalgar Square, through Admiralty Arch to the finish in front of Buckingham Palace in the Mall.

A medal was hung around each of our necks - a wonderful memento of a very special day.

We had to ride back to the car park on open roads – we cruised around Piccadilly Circus and battled with London’s drivers through the West End. We got there safe and sound – somehow! We drove back home sore and tired but happy, having had an extraordinary experience that we will never forget.

Thanks to the many people at BSVI who sponsored us and encouraged us.’

£305 has been raised so far from this event, in addition to the £452 raised from the event in April. All this money will be used to purchase equipment to enable other visually impaired members to participate in more sporting activities.

Christmas Raffle



Enclosed with this newsletter you will find a book of BSVI Christmas Raffle tickets. Each ticket costs £1 and each book contains 5 tickets. The raffle will be drawn at the **Members’ Christmas Lunch** on **Thursday 19th December**. The 1st prize is a Kindle and the 2nd is a Luxury Hamper, with many more wonderful prizes on offer. Please generously support us - more tickets can be purchased or collected from the office.

Christmas Cards



BSVI Christmas cards are again being sold in the office, with 10 cards in a packet offered at reduced prices. Please feel free to come and take a look at our selection.

Christmas Lunch

A date for your diaries - the annual BSVI Christmas Lunch is on **Thursday 19th December** - more details will be with you shortly!

Mick & Daren Update

'Daren and I are doing fine, training five times per week and have both lost weight. We have been concentrating on weight training. I've got dates for three knee operations in November, but they say I should be up and running again within six weeks - I can't wait, I love running!

We are off walking the South West Coast Path for five days in September, going from Mevagissey to Coverack and will pass the half way marker on the way saying "310 miles have been completed." We will do two more walks (ten days) before November to get us around Lands End. We are going to concentrate on finishing this project next year as we are keen to start a new one which we are planning now - this will be our biggest and most scary to date and will require more fitness, but we must finish what we started first!

Close to Christmas we will be doing BSVI bucket collections at the Dolphin Centre, dressed as Santa and an Elf! To follow Mick and Daren's fundraising campaign, please go to:
www.justgiving.com/mickanddaren

Meet the Volunteer

Suzanne Bickle (aged 22) began volunteering in June, assisting with activities and in the Café. She says, 'I



feel really happy being able to help people less fortunate than myself; I enjoy seeing peoples' faces light up when I help them.' A recent Daily Echo article claimed, 'volunteering has its own reward - research has shown it can help you live longer.' If you are interested in joining the BSVI 'volunteer family', please contact us on **01202 546644**. We have many roles that may suit you, both in the Centre and out in the community, to help enrich the lives of local visually impaired people.

In the Community

Geraldine Bradley, Community Support Manager will be giving a talk to the Open House Group at Winton Methodist Church on Wednesday 6th November.

Chief Exec Philip Tarrant is speaking at Greyfriars Forum club on 16th November.

Fundraising

During the last few months, BSVI received the following:
Donations from Asda at Castlepoint and Parley Optometrists.
Donations in memory of Mary Saint.



Pictured above are Bournemouth North Rotary Club President Chris Chubb presenting a cheque for £2,000 to BSVI's Geraldine Bradley and Philip Tarrant during August. This generous sum was donated to BSVI following the Club's Charity Golf Day during June. We thank all the Rotarians and golfers for their generosity.

We thank the Swing Unlimited Big Band for presenting a charity musical evening in aid of BSVI during August. £448 was raised and all the guests who attended enjoyed a

wonderful evening of musical entertainment.

BSVI were proud to receive £420 from the BIC from its Purbeck Terrace Air Show Hospitality Day. Staff attended the event on 29th August, providing information about visual impairment and BSVI.

BSVI raised £81 from a Car Boot sale organised by the Lions Club at Cotlands Road during August.

As this edition of the newsletter goes to press, we await news of the funds raised at the 'Night of Music' concert at BSG. We hope that everyone will have enjoyed listening to the Bournemouth Male Voice Choir and soloist soprano Fiona Aucott and will give you an update in our next edition.

Without your continued support, BSVI would be unable to make such a difference to the lives of the visually impaired in our area, so we thank everyone for their continued generosity.

For your diary - a fundraising **70's/80's Disco** will take place at Bournemouth Electric Club on **14th December at 7.30pm**. More details to follow. 10

BSVI Sight & Hearing Resource Centre

Opening Hours:

Monday - Friday

10 am - 1pm

No appointment necessary. Our friendly Resource Centre staff and volunteers are pleased to offer demonstrations of specialist equipment for sight and hearing impaired people which can then be ordered or purchased.

Large print 2014 calendars and diaries are now available to order or purchase.

A new addition to our Hearing Room is the BT6500 digital cordless phone that features an answering machine that blocks nuisance calls - priced at **£35**



We also have an ex-demo Optelec Traveller electronic portable magnifier for sale. This item had an original selling price of £1000 and is offered at **£200 ono.**

We remind friends, family and carers that we stock many items suitable as Christmas presents, such as large print crossword and Sudoku books, large print Scrabble, Uno and playing cards.

Broad tip pens and signature guides are also useful to the visually impaired when writing Christmas cards.

Thank you

We would like to thank **John Cresswell** and the **Dorset County Trefoil Choir** for providing talks and entertainment for our members during the last few months.

Forthcoming Events

We have planned Pub Lunch outings to **The Bridge House (10th October)** and **The Dorset Soldier (4th November)**

Back due to popular demand, we have rebooked **The Caledonians** for **Monday 11th November (2pm)** and **Andrew Cannon's Music** on **Monday 25th November (1.30pm)**

The annual Staff v Members **Cards Tournament** will take place on **Wednesday 11th December 2013.**

Meet the member



John Garard, age 43 is partially sighted and has been deaf from birth. He has Retinitis Pigmentosa and wears two digital hearing aids. John explains, 'my sight has deteriorated as I have got older and I struggle with balance and have to look around particularly slowly and carefully when I am crossing roads.'

John is independent, he lives alone, uses public transport and is undertaking a "skilled learning" college course - he recently passed Maths GCSE and Level 1 English. John is also a big AFC Bournemouth fan and a season ticket holder who often travels to away games.

John's Mum is a BSVI volunteer and he found out about us through her and a member of the Sight and Hearing team. He now often "drops in" to the Tuesday Café and says, 'it's really nice to come here and have chats with people with similar problems and especially to talk with the growing number of BSVI "Cherries" football fans! I've made a few friends and I really enjoy the cooked breakfasts and roast lunches!'

If you or any visually impaired person would like to 'drop in' to the Tuesday Café any week, please do come along and we will give you a warm welcome!

Bournemouth Society for the Visually Impaired

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Reg Charity No: 1114570

Our services are designed to enable people who have a significant visual impairment remain independent and be part of the community.