



NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 44

WINTER 2015

**MERRY CHRISTMAS &
A HAPPY NEW YEAR**



EAST SUFFOLK ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND

Registered Charity No. 206886

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NEWSLETTER ALSO AVAILABLE ON CD AND MEMORY STICKS

This newsletter is also available in audio format on both a CD and a USB memory stick (as commonly used by talking book suppliers). If you would like to receive them in future in either of these formats rather than large print, please either fill in the sheet on the last but one page of this newsletter and return it to the address shown, or please phone the office on 01473 611011 on any morning Monday through to Thursday.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Here we are again, winter closing in and the end of yet another year just around the corner, but that said, let's not dwell on dark cold winter days, lets be positive and look back on a job well done this year and look forward to warmer and brighter days to come as we move into 2016.

This year has again seen some staff changes with Ian Hunt joining us to replace Beverly Alderton, who retired after many years of dedicated service to ESAB and its members. I'm sure I speak for us all in wishing Bev all the very best for the future and of course in offering a warm welcome to Ian as he joins the team. I would also like to welcome Pat Durrell who joined the Board of Trustees this year. I'm sure Pat, a member of our district committees in both Felixstowe and Shotley will prove to be a real asset to the board as we oversee current activities and plan for the future.

This year the day to day challenges on the organisation continued unabated, the largest and most important of these being the delivery of a valued and relevant service to our members. Looking back over the year, I think we can claim to have done just that! Many members I've spoken to are extremely appreciative of our efforts and more than once I've heard words such as; "you're the only folk who really help" and "I'm not sure what I would do without your help". On behalf of all our members I'd like to thank everybody who together make ESAB the caring and supportive organisation it is. I cannot mention here every individual by name but I do offer our collective thanks to all those who organise our social activities, fundraising events or help the association in other ways; such as giving of their time as Trustees and District committee members, not forgetting those who tirelessly help out at socials each month including our volunteer drivers. Without the combined efforts of this

amazing group of people our members would undoubtedly live less fulfilling lives.

One of the real challenges for our wider organisation is recruiting the many volunteers that are needed to run our District Committees, social meetings and of course drivers to get our members to and from our events. If anyone reading or listening to this newsletter has family or friends that may be able to help out for a few hours each month, then could I ask that you or they contact the office or your local Community Worker? We will then put the right people in touch to explain what's involved and hopefully if all goes well we can recruit a few more badly needed volunteers to continue the good work.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to express thanks to the officers and employees of the association, their individual and collective effort, commitment and dedication is also vitally important in making ESAB the success it is.

Until a few years ago, a home collecting box was sent out with each of our newsletters; recently a number of members have requested that we again provide a box for their use. Hence, within this mailing you should find a new yellow collecting box. Please feel free to use this to collect change be-it for your local group or the organisation centrally. If you require more boxes or wish to have any picked up, please speak with your Community Worker or call the office to make arrangements.

Finally as 2015 draws to a close, I'll take this opportunity to wish you all, the warmest of seasonal greetings and happiness for the coming year.

Stephen W J Hodgkiss

LARGE PRINT 2016 CALENDARS

We again this year have a limited number of large print calendars available for our members. The calendars are free of charge although we would appreciate a donation if at all possible. They cost around £3 each to print and distribute. To order your calendar please ring the office on **01473 611011**.

PHYLIS PIPE OF STOWMARKET WHO IS ALSO A MEMBER OF BLIND VETERANS UK WRITES ABOUT HER RECENT VISIT TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE.

Blind Veterans UK (formerly known as St Dunstons) formed in 1915 are celebrating 100 years of service to men and women who have served in the armed forces and who have a significant visual impairment acquired during or after their time in the Services. Our large centre on the Downs at Elvingdean near Brighton is second home to many of us who attend their holiday theme weeks throughout the year.

I live by myself and have an excellent official carer and when convenient we go together on my holidays to Elvingdean. Susan is good company and mixes well with the folks down at the Elvingdean Centre.

On 4th June this year, we were collected from my bungalow at 11.30am by our driver Graham, an excellent driver who knows London well. After picking up another comrade and carer in Norton we hit the highway.

The Buckingham Palace gates were supposed to open at 3pm but Susan had a phone call from a Blind Veteran friend letting us know that the gates would be open at 2.30pm. The line of Blind Veterans and carers attending numbered 7,000 and went up the Mall forever more. Bill, our Blind Vet passenger and I both had wheelchairs so this was a daunting thought. However, Graham our driver pulled in not far from the gates, handed out the wheelchairs, got us seated right alongside the line of guests and carers and off we went. A police lady came over and led us to the wheelchair queue and we were in within 10 minutes, showing our photos and handing in our passes.

Such an impressive building, and we went around the rear to find the large expanse of lawn. I saw this fine gravel path and was concerned for Susan pushing me over this in the wheelchair. No need to fret, there were men from the forces at hand taking over the job, so smart and friendly and talkative. We reached the rear of the palace (who cleans all those windows!) using little ramps placed everywhere over the lawn for the wheelchairs.

Chairs and tables over a vast lawn, and over to the left a very long marquee with signs. Susan was in charge and managed to find a table near the front. Plenty more tables at the rear under the trees but that would mean a long walk to get to the food. There was only one vacant

chair and she sat down to rest. Such a hot day. Susan then took off to read the signs telling her about the food and drinks available. It was all so well organised. A lovely tea party. Everyone in lounge suits (no medals) and pretty dresses. Two military bands playing and taking turns so there was music non-stop, and lots of laughter and chatter and vets finding old friends. Food was varied and plentiful and tasty. The sun was hot so Susan held up an umbrella to give me some shade.

At 4pm the drums rolled and everyone who could stand got up for the National Anthem. The Countess of Wessex had arrived. She mingled through the huge crowd. I did not see her as she passed by me. Susan described her dress and hat and how very pretty she was. To Susan's surprise up walked a friend Brenda who had phoned us and was so glad to find us. A waiter arrived carrying tubs of ice cream which went down well and we later went to the marque for desserts and tea, cake, little fruit pies and lemonade.

At 5.30 we said farewell but we will see our friends again as they will be at Brighton for the same week as myself. We headed for the front gates. Plenty of facilities on the way. Out of the gates we contacted Graham and he told Susan to head down the Mall and look for the car. Bill and his carer were not far behind. Once we got out of the city we sailed home by 9.30pm – a day to remember by all of us.

THANK YOU BEVERLEY ALDERTON

Beverley Alderton who has been our Community Worker covering Felixstowe and the Shotley peninsula has recently made the decision to leave us after 15 years of dedicated service to East Suffolk Blind members following a lengthy period of illness.

Beverley has always gone the extra mile with her wonderful caring skills to support and help our members enjoy independent and fulfilling lives, often working way and beyond the hours she was employed for. In addition to her work with individual members, she also played a big part in the sports and social



life of the local members. She was heavily involved in the setting up and running of the Felixstowe Blind Shooters Club, which continues to flourish, and she played a huge role in the organisation of both social and fund raising events in both Felixstowe and Shotley areas, as well as arranging a number of small exhibitions for our members bringing together local service providers and retailers of daily living aids for the visually impaired.

Beverley was given a lot of support by her husband Ian, who was a member of the Super Swing Big Band, who on at least three occasions were the star turn at fund raising dinner dances at the Orwell Hotel in Felixstowe. I am sure that Beverley would join us in also thanking Ian for his background support.

Beverley, we are very sorry to be losing you; you will be sorely missed. We wish you all the very best for the future and wish you continued improvement in your health and look forward to staying in touch.

YACHT SAILING EXPERIENCE FOR ESAB MEMBERS

On May 11th of this year, the local sailing charity based at Levington Marina near Felixstowe called “The East Anglian Sailing Trust” (EAST) invited ESAB to encourage as many of its members as it could to come along and enjoy a day’s sailing out of Levington Marina.

On the day we were blessed with as good a weather day as you could get for sailing, and nine of ESAB’s members from as far away as Lowestoft were able to go out on eight yachts provided by volunteer owners for a half day’s sailing. The boats all left the marina at 10.30am and headed out into the North Sea off Felixstowe under full sail after which they returned, some onto the River Stour and some onto the River Orwell where they dropped anchor for a well-earned late lunch. After lunch they went for another short sail on the river before returning to the marina at 4pm. The picture above shows a picture of everybody involved on the day standing outside EAST’s building at the marina after all (excluding the Guide Dogs!) had returned from their enjoyable day’s sailing.



Each of the boats was equipped with an audio steering response system that gave audio feedback to whoever was steering the boat as to which direction the steering should be adjusted to stay on the charted course, which made it ideal for visually impaired sailors. The feedback I received from those who went out sailing was of a thoroughly enjoyable day where the skippers and crews involved the visually impaired sailors as much as possible, not only steering the boats but also in pulling on ropes at the appropriate times.

This is an event which will happen again around May 2016 and I would like to encourage any member who would like to have a first time experience of a fun day sailing or indeed any member who may have done it in the past but had given it up as their eyesight deteriorated, to take advantage of this opportunity. I know it is early days but if any of you would like to take advantage of this fabulous opportunity please get in touch with your Community Worker or us here in the office on 01473 611011 and we will make sure your name goes on the list for next summer.

IMAGINE – A POEM BY GRAHAM THOMPSON

Imagine a world without any light,
no sunny days, just the dark of night.
Imagine being unable to see the faces of the ones you love,
not being able to see down below nor up above.

Imagine not being able to see this amazing world of ours,
blind to the beauty of animals, trees and flowers.
Imagine not being able to see the written word,
having to rely on memory and what you've heard.

Imagine not being able to see your way around,
and crossing busy roads just by using sound.
Imagine not being able to see your favourite TV,
and missing the beauty of a Christmas tree,

But if you are blind, you need not despair,
for there is a light we all can share.
The special light Jesus offers to each and every one,
passed down with love from The Father to Son.

SOME FATHER CHRISTMAS FACTS

The original Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas was a Bishop of Myra in Anatolia (modern day Turkey) in around 270AD and had a reputation for secretly giving gifts to those in need

Father Christmas' suit was a variety of different colours, green, blue, and brown until he was famously given the red and white suit from Coca-Cola in an advertising campaign in the 1930's.

In Canada Father Christmas has his own Postcode HOH OHO

Assuming every house Father Christmas delivered to left something to drink (8 fluid ounces) he would drink about 137 million gallons of milk, Sherry, Guinness, Beer or Baileys.

Assuming everyone also left a mince pie he would consume around 374 billion calories

Running an 8-minute mile he would have to run for 109,000 years without eating to burn the calories off.

It has been estimated that he would spend 1/1000th second in each house and the sleigh would weigh 500,000 tonnes

TALKING NEWSPAPERS IN YOUR AREA

Hopefully most of you will already be benefitting from your regular Talking Newspapers who provide a regular audio magazine of local news and items of interest. If you are not receiving these and would like to start doing so, the following are the contact details for all of the local Talking newspaper organisations in East Suffolk.

BECCLLES & BUNGAY DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

THREE RIVERS

Charmian Lee

Tel: 01986 895503

IPSWICH & DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

SOUND ON

Eileen Damant

Tel: 07484 130819

LEISTON & DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

Evelyn Rumsby

Tel: 01728 453579

LOWESTOFT & DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

SOUND EAST

Pat Powell

Tel: 01502 566470

STOWMARKET & DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

NEWTALK

John Webb

Tel: 01449 615678

WAVENEY DISTRICT Talking Newspapers

Trevor Freeborn

Tel: 01379 608774

PROTECT YOURSELF THIS WINTER

This article is about avoiding unnecessarily ending up in hospital this coming winter. That's the message from local GPs, as they encourage older people to be aware of the health challenges that winter can bring. They are also asking family members, carers and neighbours to keep an eye on older people so they can stay well. It might seem obvious for your family doctor to encourage you to look after your health. However, there are a number of things you can do to keep yourself healthy, meaning you can face the winter months without worrying about being unwell, having to rely on family members or ending up in hospital. No one wants to end up a hospital patient and by taking some simple action, you can reduce the chance of being affected by ill health.

Get a flu jab!

Winter brings an increase in the number of cases of flu, a highly infectious viral illness that is spread by coughing and sneezing. Everyone aged 65 or over, (and younger people with certain medical conditions), is entitled to a free flu vaccination. If you haven't had one yet, contact your GP surgery to arrange to have it done. Many people underestimate the effects of flu, thinking it's just a bad cold. In fact, for older people the most common complication is a bacterial chest infection, which can lead to pneumonia and a stay in hospital. Getting a flu vaccination is quick and simple, and will give you the reassurance of being protected.

Keep your hands clean

Norovirus, which is known as the winter vomiting bug, is a highly contagious virus that causes vomiting and diarrhoea, and is easily spread by hands or touching contaminated surfaces. Good hand hygiene can reduce your chances of catching the virus. Wash your hands frequently using soap and hot water, particularly after using the toilet and before preparing food.

Keep warm this winter

A cold home can have a significant negative impact on your health. One of the best ways you can keep yourself healthy over winter is by keeping warm - this can help prevent colds and flu, as well as more serious conditions such as stroke, heart attack, pneumonia and depression. Try to keep your main living room at 18 to 21 degrees centigrade. Food is an important source of energy which helps keep your body warm. Try to have hot meals and drinks regularly and try and keep active around the home. Wrap up warm, inside and out. Wear layers of clothing to keep warm.

Beat the winter blues

Talk about your anxieties with someone else, a friend, relative or a group such as the Samaritans. Talking about the things that are worrying you can make a big difference.

Exercise has been shown to have a positive effect on mental, as well as physical health. A small amount of activity is better than none. You do not need to go to the gym. A simple walk or exercising to a DVD will make you feel more energised and boost your mood.

Take some time to yourself. Some simple breathing exercises can help or just 10 to 15 minutes away from everything, reading a book, going for a walk or having a bath.

Better quality sleep can be achieved by keeping to a regular sleep routine, consuming less alcohol, exercising and relaxing before bedtime.

Find out more

To find out more about improving your mental wellbeing, visit [**www. readytochange.org.uk**](http://www.readytochange.org.uk)

Know who to call - The NHS 111 service is a free to call medical advice line which is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you have a medical question and it's not life-threatening, call 111 and a trained

advisor will help you. NHS 111 can advise you on the most appropriate service for your needs.

ADMIT TO YOURSELF WHEN YOU'RE FEELING UNWELL

No matter how young or old you are, the idea of having to stay in hospital is no-one's idea of fun. If you are older, the thought of a hospital stay can be particularly frightening - you might be worried about the security of your home, or the inconvenience caused to your family, or who will look after your pet. That's why GPs in Suffolk are offering advice on how you can best protect your health and avoid an unnecessary hospital stay.

Seeking help

Dr Mark Shenton, a GP in Stowmarket and chairman of the NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group said, "One of the most important things you can do is to admit to yourself when you are feeling unwell. If you do feel ill and you don't know what to do, you should seek help. If you seek help early then it's likely your health condition can be treated quickly, enabling you to get on enjoying life. If you ignore the symptoms they could become more serious, meaning you may end up in hospital."

Pharmacists' role

Dr Christopher Browning, a GP in Long Melford and chairman of the NHS West Suffolk Clinical commissioning Group said, "Your local pharmacist is one of the most accessible sources of help and advice. Pharmacists have had four years of training and so are experts on medicines. They really can help you. They will gladly give you advice and can offer a range of over-the-counter medicines to treat your condition. Your GP practice is another great source of help if you are feeling unwell. Don't hesitate to call your GP surgery to make an appointment. By getting checked-out at your GP practice you could prevent your condition becoming more serious. And don't forget that telephone help and advice is available 24 hours a day, every day. In Suffolk there is a 24 hour urgent medical helpline called NHS 111. You can call 111 at any time, free of charge and speak to a trained health advisor. This means if you have an urgent health question or query, you can get answers at any time of day. This service will advise on the best course of action and can put you in touch with the out of hours GP service. I often see patients at my surgery whose condition could have

been easily treated if they had only sought help sooner. As a GP I understand that for older people getting ill can be a frightening experience, which is why you might not want to seek help. But it needn't be scary. In fact, in most cases the issue can be easily sorted."

DON'T BE A WASTER!

Wasted medicines are costing the NHS almost £300 million a year - you can help GPs in Suffolk to reduce this waste.

GPs in the NHS Ipswich and East Suffolk and NHS West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group areas are supporting a new campaign to encourage patients and their carers who receive regular repeat medicines to only order the medicines they need to.

Dr Ben Solway, a GP in Ipswich said, "Wasted medicines means wasted NHS money, which could be better used to improve the health and wellbeing of local people. The NHS is under financial pressure so it is vital that every penny of NHS money is effectively spent. I would encourage people who have repeat or multiple prescriptions to think carefully before re-ordering, to establish whether ***they really need that repeat prescription.***"

Stockpiles

GPs and pharmacists regularly see stockpiles of medicines which have been ordered by patients that are not used. When re-ordering repeat prescriptions, patients and carers should only request the medicines and products they are currently using. Once medicines have left the pharmacy they cannot be used by anyone else.

It's important that people understand their prescriptions and what each prescribed medicine is for. If you don't understand anything, don't be afraid to ask your GP or pharmacist, who'll be happy to help.

Linda Lord, Chief Pharmacist, NHS West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group said, "There could be a number of reasons why someone may be ordering medicine on a repeat prescription but aren't using it. They may be experiencing side effects to the medication and don't like taking it, they may be worried that they will run out of medicine and so are ordering too much, they may feel they no longer need to take the medication but are reluctant to admit this to their doctor, or they could be passing on the medication to family and friends". If you are still ordering repeat prescription medication and aren't using it yourself, please speak to your

GP or pharmacist. They won't be annoyed or angry, in fact they'll be pleased to help you resolve the issue.

Do your bit

- Check what you need before placing your order
 - Do not stockpile medication - it usually takes about 48 hours for your GP practice to process a repeat prescription, so there is no need to keep a large stock at home
 - If you don't take a medicine that is prescribed for you, please don't order it
 - Do not share your medications with others as this is dangerous and puts others at risk
 - If in doubt talk to your GP or pharmacist
-

ARE YOU HAVING TREATMENT FOR WET AGE RELATED MACULAR DEGENERATION? THERE ARE CHANGES

If you are undergoing treatment for wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD), you may be concerned by changes to the frequency of your eye clinic appointments. For anyone with wet AMD it's critical that treatment is prompt and regular following diagnosis. However, there are a number of changes that may be made to your appointments as a result of new clinical advice.

Treatment for wet AMD, known as intravitreal injections, uses anti-VEGF drugs. VEGF stands for vascular endothelial growth factor, which is the substance in the body responsible for the development of healthy blood vessels. In wet AMD too much VEGF is produced in the eye, causing the growth of unwanted, unhealthy blood vessels. There are currently two anti-VEGF drug treatments in common use: Lucentis® and Eylea®.

Lucentis

For Lucentis patients, changes have been introduced to the frequency of injections. All patients will still receive a standard loading dosage at the start of their treatment: normally three or more consecutive monthly injections. After this initial phase, there are now a number of treatment regimens that your ophthalmologist can choose from. There are three main regimens, which have a subtle difference in the frequency of appointments. They also vary as to whether or not you have an intravitreal injection at every appointment.

The three regimens are:

1. You are monitored monthly but don't receive treatment at each visit unless the retina shows signs that the disease is active. This is known as an 'as needed' regime.
2. Monitoring is extended to six weeks, with an injection also being given on the day of the visit, if needed. If no injection is needed, then the next monitoring visit is extended to eight weeks. This clinical regimen is called 'monitor and extend'.
3. In the 'treat and extend' regimen you will be given an injection at every appointment even if the retina is not showing any signs of active disease on the scan. However, if the disease is inactive, your subsequent appointments will be extended by a further two weeks and this will continue until the disease shows signs of activity again. Then the interval between appointments may no longer increase or your clinic visits may become more frequent. Other treatment regimens are also possible, so your eye doctor is now able to tailor Lucentis treatment to your individual requirements.

Eylea

If you are receiving Eylea, then following the three consecutive monthly loading doses, patients only need to have an injection every two months during the first year. After this, a patient follows the 'treat and extend' regimen where you will receive an injection at each appointment. However, the interval between appointments can be extended after each visit if the ophthalmologist considers your vision to be stable. We recommend that you ask your consultant after your original loading dose what treatment regimen you will be put on. From this you will be better able to understand the timescales between injections and feel confident that you're not being overlooked in the eye clinic's appointment system or missing any treatment.

SKILLS FOR SEEING NEWS by Nicholas Collins – Certified Low Vision Therapist

Filters and Tints

The summer sunshine is a welcome relief from the typical British weather. However, for many people with a macular condition it brings with it the problem of glare. The first solution many people jump to is to find the darkest pair of sunglasses money can buy. You may manage to reduce the problematic glare, but you might be unable to see where you are going! A

more effective way is to target the specific type of light that causes the glare, which is UV and blue light, while also allowing enough light into your eyes to enable you to see. For that you need UV and blue blocking filters.

If you think about the light spectrum like the colours of a rainbow, it goes from UV to blue to green to yellow etc. all the way to infra-red light. If you use a tint, it reduces the amount of light entering the eye across the entire light spectrum, making all the visible colours appear darker. A filter however blocks certain light wavelengths. A blue blocker filter stops UV and blue light entering your eye, while letting in most of the rest of the light spectrum. This helps you to use the good vision that you have. That's not to say that tints are bad and filters are good, but a filter can often be a more effective way of reducing glare with the potential benefit of improving your acuity (detail vision) and contrast.

The important thing when choosing the right filter or tint is getting away from the concept of 'the darker the shade the better'. Instead, your goal should be to select the lightest filter or tint possible which provides sufficient glare relief.

Filters and tints are described with the colour or shade, for example yellow, orange, amber or green and a percentage number. This number indicates how much light is let into the eye, therefore a "56% orange" filter lets in more light than a "16% amber" filter. My suggestion is to make comparisons of various shades, to try to determine which options help you to see best. You can then evaluate how well they reduce the glare in question. In my experience, the more effective filters for people with macular conditions tend to be in the yellow and orange ranges. They give an excellent balance between reducing glare, while not reducing your ability to see.

You may need different types of shades depending on your surroundings; a lighter pair for overcast days and a darker version for the elusive British summer! You will find getting the right filter can be as important as any magnifier. To find out more please go to this website.

<http://www.optimalowvision.co.uk/departments/dept=1636>

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TELEPHONE COUNSELLING SERVICE

The Macular Society offers a free telephone counselling service to people affected by macular conditions. Their qualified counsellors are registered with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). This is a free service open to all. To find out more, call their helpline on **0300 3030 111** or you can email counselling@macularsociety.org

ONLINE TODAY – HELPING PEOPLE WITH SENSORY LOSS TO GET ONLINE

RNIB can help people with sensory loss gain and develop skills that allow them to use technology and the internet with confidence. So whether you need help with using your smartphone, setting up social media accounts, or simply browsing the internet – they can make sure you're getting the most out of it!

They provide support in a number of ways, ranging from home visits to one to one and group sessions, as well as nationwide workshops and events. After talking through your needs, the team of staff and volunteers will be on hand to give you the best support and advice, which could include the following:

- Sharing tips, training and demos as part of nationwide events and workshops using computers, tablets and smart phones
- Setting up your email and social media accounts, like Gmail, Twitter and Facebook
- Helping you to chat online using Skype
- Showing you how to use your Tablet or eReader such as an iPad and Kindle
- Support with setting up and using your iPhone or other smartphone
- Showing you how to pay your bills and shop online
- Helping you to use a GPS navigation system
- Providing one to one training in the home (up to six sessions of one hour)

For further details please contact RNIB on **0303 123 9999**

RNIB LAUNCHES FULLY ACCESSIBLE 'READY TO GO' COMPUTER RANGE

Blind and partially sighted people can now buy from the RNIB a range of new accessible computers which come ready loaded with software specifically for the visually impaired. Working together with Sight and Sound Technology and Freedom Scientific, the RNIB has launched four computer models with preloaded JAWS speech software or MAGic screen magnification software. This is the first RNIB accessible computer, complete with preloaded software, which will help improve access to technology for people with sight loss. Customers can ask for it to be tailored to arrive with the software 'switched on' making it accessible from the outset. The software can also be 'switched off' so that other members of the family can use it too. Their aim is to provide blind and partially sighted people with easy access to technology, at an affordable price.

Customers will have access to one-to-one telephone support from Sight and Sound, and the RNIB Technology Support Squad is also on hand to help.

Prices are £849 for a computer preloaded with JAWS, and £699 for a computer preloaded with MAGic.

Find out more by visiting the RNIB online shop at:-

www.rnib.org.uk/shop/computers or call the Helpline on 0303 123 9999

SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON

London Science Museum has an audio described tour of their new Information Age gallery on the second floor which they hope to deliver on the second Saturday of each month. Seven touchable objects are located around the gallery, one in each zone. They are accompanied by large print and Braille labels. Tactile cane detector markers are incorporated into the floor to help highlight hazards. Join one of the free Volunteer Tour Guides on a journey through the history of information and communications technology. Find out more about the audio-described tours. They will also be holding audio-described object handling sessions. Spaces are limited to 6 per tour and booking is available through the Call Centre on **0207 942 4000**.

TECHNOLOGY, by Matt Harrison, e-learning Manager, Portland College

Here are Matt Harrison's top ten gifts for someone with a visual impairment in reverse order of price, with the majority costing less than £75 (starting with the cheapest item).

10. Liquid level indicator

A simple gadget that makes a massive difference to someone's independence. Hook this over the side of a cup or glass, and never over-fill it again. With beeps to indicate two different levels of liquid, they're ideal for hot drinks.

9. TV Max Glasses

Sit at a more comfortable distance from your television with the TV Max Glasses with adjustable x2 magnification. What's more each eye can be adjusted separately.

8. Boombox

Enjoy FM radio, audiobooks or MP3s with a portable, rechargeable boombox. Tactile buttons make it easy to use. Boombox even remembers your place on USB sticks, meaning you can listen to multiple books simultaneously.

7. Portable desk lamp

Improve the clarity of your reading matter with a portable desk lamp. Lighting can make a huge difference to your vision.

6. Talking cookware

Talking scales and measuring jugs may not help you win the Great British Bake Off, but you can be a little more independent in the kitchen, and may well avoid getting a soggy bottom! At the higher end of the price range, there are also talking microwaves.

5. Watches and clocks

There is a huge range of talking watches and clocks available. You may also be interested in watches with tactile faces or the Meteor Vibrating Watch. Most of these items are able to set themselves, taking the stress out of battery changes and the start and end of British Summer Time.

4. Audio labelers

Record voice memos onto special labels with these handy gadgets - all you have to do is scan the label to hear your voice memo. Use them to label CD cases or food in the freezer, or use them to make a talking address book or message pad next to the phone. The labels are very reasonably priced and can be used over and over again.

3. Portable video magnifiers

Pocket-sized video magnifiers are perfect for reading labels in shops, menus in restaurants, bus timetables or short articles in newspapers. Most allow for personalised contrast options, such as yellow text on a black background and different levels of magnification.

2. Portable desktop CCTV

We are starting to see more and more portable CCTV units on the market. These typically unfold and connect to your television or computer, allowing you to magnify printed text or photographs on the screen.

1. Tablet or smartphone

Topping my list are the versatile smartphones and tablet devices. Their use is almost limitless and while they are at the top of the price range, and a little daunting for some, the technology can revolutionise your life.

STRUGGLING TO HEAR THE PHONE RINGING?

It can be frustrating missing that all-important call. If you are struggling to hear your phone ring then you may be interested in **BT's ToneCaller**. Neat and unobtrusive the ToneCaller makes it easier to know when the phone is ringing.

Its adjustable ringtone volume lets you set it to the loudness you are comfortable with, whilst a choice of four ring tones allows the selection of a ringtone that can be heard more easily. With a 3 metre cable, the ToneCaller can be placed where it is most useful.

If you are interested in finding out more call the office on 01473 611011 or call BT on **0800 100 400**.

A BIT OF HUMOUR

- When you get a bladder infection, urine trouble.
- What does a clock do when it's hungry? It goes back four seconds.
- I wondered why the ball was getting bigger. Then it hit me!
- Broken pencils are pointless.
- I took the job at a bakery because I kneaded dough.
- England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool .
- I used to be a banker, but then I lost interest.

ESAB DISTRICT COMMITTEE REPORTS

BECCLES BRANCH

The year started with a most enjoyable event – afternoon tea prepared by the Beccles Inner Wheel and a duo providing musical entertainment. Delicious sandwiches and cakes were prepared and served by the Inner Wheel ladies, so that our regular helpers could, for once, be waited on.

In February our usual pianist, John Harris, performed for us and did his best to get a melody out of the rather ancient piano. We are awaiting the arrival of a newer donated piano in the New Year. Fortunately, our other regular singer – the well-known and much sought after Mark Anthony – provides his own musical accompaniment. We are extremely fortunate to have such high calibre entertainers at a very modest fee. In the summer, instead of fish and chips at the Victoria Hotel we enjoyed a roast beef lunch.

A new addition to the programme included a very successful event put on by Edinburgh Woollens. A large number of items of clothing, jewellery and other goods were available for purchase at a discount in September. A good deal of money was parted with and Edinburgh Woollens went away very satisfied.

I should add that we would not be able to put on such a stimulating programme were it not for the generosity of two local charities – Beccles Townlands Charity and Beccles Rotary Club - to which we are extremely grateful. Our members are not asked to contribute to our funds, but they are very good at filling Yellow Boxes!

Jennifer Langeskov, Chairman

FELIXSTOWE BRANCH

2015 has been a successful year for the Felixstowe Branch. Three of our longstanding committee members left but we were fortunate to be joined by a young couple, Lisa and Mark who have brought new ideas and enthusiasm to our group. We are pleased to welcome our new community worker, Ian Hunt who has brought some new members to our activities.

Our monthly socials are enjoyed by about 40 members and we are very grateful to our loyal volunteer helpers and drivers, without whom we couldn't operate. We had 2 outings this year, namely fish and chips at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club and afternoon tea at Felixstowe Golf Club.

Felixstowe Sound Shooters group were very pleased to welcome their friends from Blind Veterans UK, based in Brighton for their annual shooting competition. This was the fifth match between the teams, Felixstowe having won the previous four. This time it was a close competition but Blind Veterans won, taking the shield back home. The picture above shows those who received awards.



Throughout the year, we work hard to fundraise. In July the Tutti Frutti Choir performed in a sell-out concert and generously donated all the proceeds to our branch. In August a group of our volunteers spent the day at Felixstowe Triangle raising the profile of the charity and encouraging the public to part with their money buying our bargains! We were pleased to provide refreshments at the Daily Living Aids Exhibition in September. Our latest event has been a charity curry evening held at the *Bombay Nite* restaurant. Our thanks must go to the staff of the restaurant and our chairman, Mike for organising this.

Some of our members attend a weekly theatre workshop in Ipswich, gaining much confidence and friendship. We must thank our volunteer driver, Gill for her dedication to this activity.

Here's to 2016 when we will try to involve as many members as possible in our events.

Jane Fox, Secretary

HALESWORTH BRANCH

This year has been very quiet owing to a number of our members moving away to be nearer their families or long term illness. Unfortunately we lost Dee Shiplee who was a great supporter of our club, her untimely death was very sad for the family.

Throughout the year our members have enjoyed some great afternoons with quizzes and nonstop banter between members and volunteers plus refreshments ably supplied by Avril. In July we enjoyed lunch at the White Heart which was enjoyed by all who attended. We have reserved tables for our traditional Christmas lunch again at the White Heart.

Looking forward to the New Year we hope we can continue with an increase in membership which would enable us to justify the cost of entertainment.

Will Pye, Chairman

LOWESTOFT BRANCH

Lowestoft Blind Activities Club (LBAC)

A busy year for the members with events throughout the year including: monthly target shooting, darts nights, quiz nights, tenpin bowling and new age kurling with two trips to the Greyhound Races. Additional summer activities included two rambles and canoeing with the Bungay Canoe Club. The Members of LBAC would like say a special thank you to all their volunteers especially the drivers without whom none of their activities could take place.

Lowestoft Blind Bowls Club (LBBC)

The club has two seasons; outdoor and indoor meeting on Wednesdays with an in club competition running every week and lessons offered to new members to get them started. The summer season draws to a close with the memorial Stan Gilbert Cup, a 2 day competition organised by Stan's daughter Lesley. The singles title went to Alan Lyne with Gail Hepworth as runner up and the pairs was won by Ron Greaves and Alan Lyne, with Ray Ling and Gail Hepworth as runners up. Congratulations and well done to all who took part.

Lowestoft Live Arts



The club runs from September to the end of May allowing a break in the summer for other activities. The majority of members continue to make their rugs while some have also joined the Norfolk Knitters. Other crafts offered include drawing and painting, decorating hessian shopping bags, sewing bags and toys, macramé and basket work.

ESAB Social Group

Our Social at the Lowestoft 60+ Club is well attended with members enjoying entertainment, refreshments and a raffle. A special thank you to our volunteers for keeping our social going and to the 60+ Club who always make us feel very welcome.

In May a number of our members enjoyed a day sailing at Levington, with the East Anglian Sailing Trust. Our street collection in June raised £280 and other donations from individuals, local charities and businesses all help to support our social. 2015 ends with a pre-Christmas dinner at the Masonic Hall in mid-December and we will return to our meetings as usual on 26th January.

A very big thank you to our Community workers, Melissa and Jenny, for all their hard work and all the volunteers who help our members in the various clubs to enjoy the various activities and with street collections. Finally thank you to our members who have made donations through the yellow box scheme or directly towards our social.

For more information on the various Lowestoft clubs please contact Kathryn - Secretary Lowestoft Committee – on 01502 585329.

WOODBRIIDGE BRANCH

My last year as Chairman has been as usual a very happy and interesting one, with our general knowledge and music quizzes which our VIP's love, talks on bees and entertained by the plate bell ringers from Felixstowe. We look forward to The Cantabile Choir in November and our Christmas lunch in December.

A huge thanks to Anne Smith who retired after 25 years on the committee and who was presented with a silver photo frame at our June lunch at Seckford Hall.

We have sponsored another guide dog puppy called Sparkle- a black Labrador- who's Pupdates keep us informed of his progress. Thank you to Steve Hodgkiss for arranging the Dial-A-Ride grant. The street collection in July raised £270 thanks to Roger Hobson for organising and all the helpers. Also thanks to Woodbridge Football Club, our venue for our socials.

Though my very special thanks must go to all my committee members and helpers who over my many years as Chairman have been so helpful and an inspiration. Lesley Hodgkiss has been my tower of strength these past two years taking on various roles including Transport Secretary since Joyce Green retired, so a huge thank you to her.

Flowers were presented at Woodbridge Social to Mr & Mrs Albon (pictured right) on the occasion of their 70th Wedding Anniversary.



I will continue my support for ESAB in the coming years and wish you all a very Happy Xmas and healthy 2016.

Val Murray, Chairman

SHOTLEY PENINSULA BRANCH

This year our members have enjoyed a variety of talks, musical afternoons and other activities. We have also had a summer outing to the Hintlesham Golf Club for lunch. We are now looking forward to returning to Hintlesham for our Christmas lunch.



The photograph left, shows one of our members, Frank Norman from Holbrook, proudly showing off his commemorative Arctic Convoys medal at the Shotley Peninsula Social. The medal was recently presented, under the instructions of President Putin, 70 years on, for

the part that Frank and many others played in defeating Nazi Germany. Thousands of Allied seamen lost their lives as the British ships, delivering supplies, sailed in the unwelcoming, stormy waters of the Atlantic Ocean, under constant threat of attack from German U-Boats and Aircraft. So well done Frank!

This year we have been very fortunate in acquiring the services of a number of volunteers who help with catering and driving our members to the monthly meetings and we are extremely grateful for their help.

Please see the eulogy below for one of our very dear friends and long standing member of our branch, Hetti Parrack.

On behalf of the Shotley Peninsula Branch may we as a committee wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Lorraine Parry, Chairperson

Eulogy for Henriette Rose Madeleine Parrack (31 Oct 1919 – 3 Oct 2015)

Henriette was born just after the First World War on the 31st October 1919 to Marcel and Marie Faure in St Etienne France. Her parents having both been in northern France during the war. Her father, Marcel, having fought and survived Verdun.

Henriette had a happy childhood in and around Dunieres a small village outside St Etienne where her father was a steam train driver for SNCF. Henriette's brother Louis was born and all was well until the outbreak of World War Two in 1939 which saw the German occupation and great hardship. Whilst on a visit in late 1944 to her aunt and cousin near Bethune in Northern France, she found herself unable to return home due to the German blockade following the Allied invasion. This proved to be her life time opportunity as she met a young English paratrooper Gordon Parrack from the 6th Airborne division, having recently fought in Normandy. She fell head over heels in love with Gordon (was given the nickname of Doug in France as he looked like Douglas Fairbanks, the actor) who promised to return to be with her after the end of the war. He kept his promise but not after having first fought in Java and Palestine. Due to an administrative error they effectively married twice, once in France in August (Church blessing) and on the 6th Sept 1947 in Surrey England.

After a short honeymoon on Box Hill, the Army transferred them to Germany. Henriette fell pregnant shortly after the marriage but refused to have her child born in Germany so very late in her pregnancy she insisted on returning to England to give birth which she did on the 7th May 1948 to a baby boy she named Alan. After her husband's decision to leave the army in 1953 they moved to France where after a short spell living with her parents in the Paris region they eventually settled in Biarritz and Bayonne. Doug worked as a mechanic for General Motors maintaining Chevrolet cars for the rich and famous. Henriette had a second child born on the 9th November 1956 they named Eric. They had a tough but wonderful life in the Basque Country, but decided to return to England in 1960 where they settled happily in Grays & Linford Essex in which time they travelled the world including overseas postings in the Caribbean and Sicily. They decided to retire to Brantham Suffolk in the mid 80's. She enjoyed her retirement especially spending the winters in Portugal until Doug's untimely death in 2000. Henriette was devastated, her sight and osteoarthritis got steadily worse, even so she managed to spend various winters with her friends in Portugal as well as many wonderful holidays, sometimes with her granddaughters Kaylee and Karen.

Her biggest treat was having a good Sunday lunch at a local pub, something she never tired of. Henriette was one of the best cooks around with signature dishes that all the family enjoyed. Henriette's health deteriorated and in September 2014 only a few weeks after seeing her grandson Richard getting married, she fell getting out of her living room chair and hit her head badly which she never recovered from.

Unfortunately she never managed to attend her grandson Paul's wedding during the summer and she died on the 3rd of October just short of her 96th birthday.

Henriette was loved by all her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She will also always be remembered for her colourful use of the English language, often telling her grandchildren when they were young to "Orange" instead of arrange their hair!!

Hopefully Henriette is now back with the love of her life and she will be greatly missed by all who survived her.

EAST SUFFOLK BLIND CONTACT NUMBERS

DON'T FORGET OUR 5 HELPLINES WHERE YOU CAN CONTACT US OR LEAVE A MESSAGE:-

Lowestoft **Melissa** **01502 580533**

Beccles/Halesworth/Southwold Jenny 01502 717159

Leiston/Woodbridge/ Framlingham Lesley 01473 611650

Felixstowe/Shotley Peninsula Eye/Stowmarket	Ian	01473 788380
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Head Office 01473 611011



RETURNS SLIP FOR THE WINTER 2015 NEWSLETTER

If you require any of the following please tick relevant boxes, fill in your name and postcode below and return to ESAB, The Old Station, Little Bealings, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP13 6LT:-

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By email at:

(Insert your email address)

I no longer want to receive the Newsletter ☐

I am interested in a demonstration of computers configured specially for the visually impaired ☐

YOUR NAME:

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This photo shows the scene at the recent daily living aids exhibition that ESAB organised at the Salvation Army in Felixstowe. There were a total of nine exhibitors with a huge range of daily living aids and services on display, and it was well attended by our members in the Felixstowe area. ESAB organises two of this type of exhibition across eastern Suffolk each year, and we would encourage all members to try to visit one when they occur in their locality, as it is a huge opportunity to see so much under one roof.