

Founded in 1869

Email wrba@btconnect.com
Tel 01924 215555
www.wrba.org.uk



Parkside Centre
Leeds Road
Outwood
Wakefield
WF1 2PN

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2010

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

WRBA is holding its AGM at the **Parkside Centre** on **Tuesday 18th May at 1pm**. The ladies of the Parkside Catering Team will be providing the usual excellent refreshments after the meeting. We look forward to seeing any of our members who would like to attend the AGM and join us for tea afterwards; but please do let us know if you intend to come, as this helps with our planning.

Our President, **the Lord St Oswald**, will give an opening address and our Chief Executive, **Pam Walters**, will present a picture of the Association's work and its future.

'SIGHT AID' OUTREACH DEMONSTRATION DAYS:

The project continues to do well, providing regular opportunities for users and carers to try out or order equipment, and to get information. We now have our small 'Safety' booklet printed, with hints on staying safe when your sight is impaired. We will be sending a copy out to our members, and to all those who have attended the demonstration days. We are also preparing a short booklet for the public, to raise awareness about the need for eye care, and to provide some helpful tips and information about where to go for help.

Outwood/Wakefield – Parkside Centre, Leeds Road, Outwood, Wakefield WF1 2PN – **10.30am to 3.00pm** (normally the 3rd Monday of each month)

19 April, 17 May (special Computer/IT Day), 21 June,
19 July

Castleford – Trinity Methodist Church, Powell Street,
Castleford WF10 1EL – **10.30am to 2.30pm**
(normally the 1st Thursday of each month)
1 April, 6 May, 3 June, 1 July

South Kirkby – Langthwaite House Business Centre,
Langthwaite Grange Ind. Estate, South Kirkby WF9 3AE
10.30am to 3.00pm
(normally 2nd Tuesday of each month)
13 April, 11 May, 8 June, 13 July

There will be a different **FOCUS** on equipment each month
at the Demonstration Days

April – Kitchen

May – Communication (Reading, Writing, Telephones,
Braille/Moon)

June – Leisure

Equipment: to highlight some of the newer items we have
come across.

Non Slip Chopping Board-new design to stop the boards
slipping on work surfaces. Two-tone colours in 3 different
choices. **£7.95** (DK130UB/DK130FO/DK130GG)

PenFriend: a pocket-sized labelling device. It can identify
objects once the label has been recorded. Can be used to
label freezer items, film and music collections, household
objects and organise letters and create shopping lists. Can
be used as a portable notetaker. No limit to the length of
the message. **£54.95** (DL76)

Communiclock: New style clock. Cube shaped. Radio-
controlled talking calendar clock. Speaks time/date/alarm
and automatic time update. Mains or battery. Does not
have a clock face. **£21.23** (CC53)

All the above items will be available for demonstration
purposes at our Outreach Project Open Days.

A Big "Thank You" to Ossett Rotary and to Horbury Rotary for the beautiful bowls of hyacinths they delivered to our members in those areas. This service is much appreciated by our members and we are extremely grateful to the members of the Rotary who go to such trouble every year to deliver them.

Free Service to Braille Users

The Braille Unit at HMP Wakefield produce a weekly Braille guide to BBC television programmes free of charge. For more information contact the Braille unit on **01924 246000**

CAN YOU HELP WRBA RAISE MUCH NEEDED FUNDS BY HAVING ONE OF OUR COLLECTING BOXES?

If the answer is **"YES"** all you need to do is tick the appropriate box on the enclosed **Donations** sheet and send it back to us in the Freepost envelope. Please make sure you have included your name, address and telephone number. We will contact you and arrange to deliver a collecting box at a convenient time. When the box needs emptying, all you need do is ring the office on **01924 215555** and we will arrange to collect the box and issue you with a new one. What better way to support the work of WRBA with local visually impaired people, than to donate your unwanted change.

To all those of you who already have one of our collecting boxes, a big **"thank you"** for your support. If your box needs emptying, just contact the office and we will arrange for it to be collected.

National Scene: DeafBlind users

For those who have both hearing and visual loss there is some new national guidance on assessment for specialist support services, which has been issued to Local Authorities in England and Wales, and applies to children, adults and older people. Councils must keep a record of people in their

area who are deafblind, and make sure they have a full and proper assessment of their needs, by properly trained professionals. They must ensure that the appropriate services are provided to assist deafblind people, including having individual support workers if needed. They must also provide information in a range of formats, and provide a senior manager responsible for deafblind services. Some Authorities have been developing services for deafblind people, others have not been doing so well. Wakefield Family Services Sensory Impairment Team at Highfield House in Castleford, includes officers who have had training in dual sensory loss, so they are able to respond better to requests for support. Nationally, 'SENSE' is the voluntary organisation specialising in this issue. They have produced information sheets about users' rights, and guidance for professionals. There is also a Deafblind Directory of specialist services. If you have dual sensory loss and would like further information, telephone SENSE on **0845 127 0060**

The Department of Health has set up a 3 year project called EPIC (Engagement Partnership Information Communication) to help implement the UK Vision Strategy. It has selected 23 areas to develop detailed strategies for eye care services, and will involve local organisations (voluntary and statutory) sharing their advice, experience and ideas.

Cookery

For those interested in cooking, there is a new cookery book produced by visually impaired chefs. It has been produced in standard print, (unfortunately) and on audio CD. It costs £6.95, available from Bradbury Fields and Wirral Society for Blind and Partially Sighted People. To obtain a copy, please ring the WRBA office.

COMPUTERS

There is a national charity called UcanDoIt, which was set up to provide computer training for disabled people in their own home. A third of their learners are visually impaired.

They can be contacted on **0207730 7766**

The Family Services Visual Impairment Team at Highfield House can also help with computer training, so if this is something you need or would like to try, do contact them to find out if they can help **01977 723922**

GUIDE DOGS

The Guide Dogs Association has just completed a 3 year study showing the positive effects on younger people of having a Guide Dog. So now the Association has removed the lower age barrier, to allow under 16's to be eligible. This will help many young visually impaired people with getting to school and joining in activities with friends. It is very much dependent on having carers who share the responsibilities, but this is a major step forward for support for young people, so well done Guide Dogs Association!

Sight loss and Dementia

The Thomas Pocklington Trust funded a study which has just been completed, into how visual impairment and dementia affects people's daily lives, what support people need and what services should be provided to help people who have these two conditions. Memory loss, balance problems, isolation and hallucinations were just some of the key problems people face. Recommendations included memory improvement, reducing loneliness, and giving carers better information. Better training and co-operation between various professionals was also crucial. Given the increase in numbers of older people and of visually impaired people in the coming years, this is going to be an increasingly important issue.

DLA

It has been announced that from 1st April 2011 people with 'severe visual impairment' will be able to claim the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. The Department of Work and Pensions has been working on the details and has begun a consultation programme. It is estimated that about 23,000 will benefit.

LOCAL NEWS

A Wakefield visually impaired resident, Paul Dakin, has just taken on his first Guide Dog, called Ronnie, to help him get out and about. What makes this so special is that Paul suffers from Agoraphobia (fear of open spaces) and it has taken a lot of hard work on his part, and help from the Wakefield North Community Mental Health team, to overcome it. So well did he do that he was able to do a sponsored walk for charity. This gives real encouragement to others Paul!

HOLIDAYS

We have some information on a number of hotels that offer special support for visually impaired people.

The Bradbury Hotel in East Preston, West Sussex, is run by the Royal Blind Society (RBS). There are tours to Weston-Super-Mare and Longleat, as well as breaks at St Annes on Sea, Teignmouth and Bognor Regis.

Bradbury Hotel reservations officer is Amanda Panesar, and she can be contacted on 01503 220422

The RBS also runs the Belmont Hotel at Llandudno. Contact telephone number is 01492 877770

TALKING BOOKS

Good news for avid readers. The RNIB has a standard allocation of 6 titles at a time for each person. But it issues an 14 extra books to people if they are students or lecturers, and they have now decided to increase the number you can borrow if you are going on holiday. They

will issue an extra 6 titles, for 2 holidays a year, for 4 weeks each time. If you go into hospital, they will issue an extra 3 titles, and will also issue an additional 3 books at Christmas. Also if you are part of a Reading Group, they will issue an extra book.

RNIB has also issued new guidance on insurance in relation to your talking book machine. Users now **do not** have to insure the player as part of their household contents policy.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

If you are able to 'download' music and talking books via the Internet, the new SD Card Media Player from Roberts, (who supply British Wireless for the Blind Society), will be ideal for you if you want a pocket size player just to take on holiday or carry around. It is like a very mini Walkman, 2 inches square, with just 2 basic buttons and works from an SD card (like the ones you use in cameras.) At £20, this little player is a gem, and it is a sign of things to come. More and more companies are looking to use 'SD' cards and 'USB' sticks for holding this kind of material.

WRBA NEWS

We have chosen this year to run one major sponsored event. Stephen Firth, our Outreach Officer, has gallantly agreed to walk the Three Peaks for us in the summer. Further details will be sent out to you in May.

We try to support other charities where we can, because so many do what they can to support us. Our President, the Lord St Oswald, has done the Himalayas, the Sahara, and Death Valley in the USA, in aid of the Hospice. In May he is doing a sponsored walk to raise funds in aid of our injured soldiers returning from Iraq. We have a sponsorship form and will be adding names and amounts to it, to send off to him in May. So if anyone wishes to send anything in to support this cause, we will be happy to add your amount and details to the list. If you decide to send something,

please do make sure to give us your name, and say that it is for this particular event.

MEMBERS' PAGE

People sometimes ask us about how WRBA works, and we think it is important that all our members have the information. Here are two questions recently asked.

1. "What is the AGM for, and why is it important?"

The AGM, Annual General Meeting, is the formal meeting that is required to elect the Committee Members who manage the organisation, and so that people who have an interest in it, (such as users, supporters, and financial 'governors',) can see what WRBA is doing with the funds it raises. We publish our accounts, and report on the year's events to show that we are doing the work we have agreed to do on behalf of our users according to our Constitution (WRBA's rules). We also present what we are going to be doing in the future. The AGM is important because we have to show that we are meeting our obligations, and our supporters need to be able to see how the organisation is working.

2. If I wanted to leave something to WRBA in my will, how could I do it?

Occasionally families have difficulty in sorting out a late-loved one's wishes in respect of legacies. Many families or Solicitors take the view that leaving something to 'the Blind' refers to the RNIB, as this is often the only organisation they know. In reality, our members may actually mean us, but do not have the information to make that clear.

Although in the past we have not discussed this issue very widely, we are aware that increasingly other organisations do, and we have therefore decided to draw up a leaflet that we can include in our next newsletter, setting out what to do if it was your wish to leave something to WRBA.