



## OUR PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear friends



Time flies by and once again we are counting the shopping days until Christmas. This has been a particularly busy year for the WBA. We said goodbye to some long serving members of staff and welcome some new faces, including Annie Davis who will be co-ordinating our events and fundraising programme next year.

Although it has as been a difficult year financially, the WBA is working hard to maintain a high level of service to our members. Let us all wish for a more settled New Year and I look forward to many new and exciting fund raising activities in 2011.

I hope you have a very Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Best wishes

*Fiona Lansdowne*

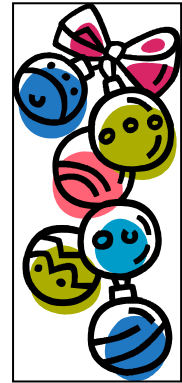
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## Christmas Cards

It's not too late to get your WBA Christmas cards. We've a new 'Christmas tree' design this year which was drawn by a member of the WBA.

Cards are available in packs of 10 and cost just £4.00 plus 60p postage.

To order your cards call 01380 723382



## Winter Draw!

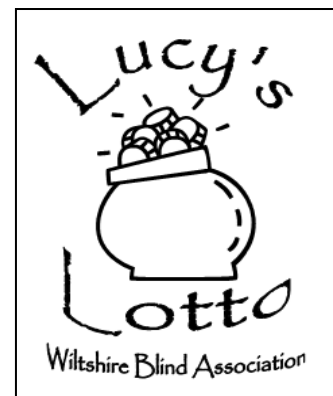
Tickets for our Winter Raffle are enclosed in this newsletter. It's your chance to win a Luxury Hamper and there are many more exciting prizes as well. Tickets cost just £5 a book. The draw takes place on Friday, 14 January 2011. Please return monies, counterfoils and unsold tickets to us by Monday, 10 January 2011 in the Freepost envelope provided.

**Good Luck!**

## Stuck for a Christmas present?

Why not buy a Lucy's lotto number as a gift. We will send a membership number with a Christmas greetings card from you. Please let us know the message and the name and address of the person you would like to send it to.

Lucy's lotto continues to grow with more than 130 members. Obviously the more members the more money in the prize fund. Lotto tickets cost just £24 which is just £2 a month.



Recent winners are August No. 91, September No.100, October No.188 and November 149

For more information and an application form contact Annie on 01380 723682

## St Lucy's Christmas closing

The office will be closed from 1pm on Thursday, 23 December and will re-open at 9.00am on Tuesday, 4 January 2011.

## Looking Ahead

Don't forget we still have large print calendars, desk diaries and pocket diaries for 2011 available! These have been designed specifically for visually impaired people and gain in popularity every year.



For more information contact Ian or Yvonne on 01380 723682

### 2011 CENSUS

The 2011 Census takes place on 27 March 2011. For blind and partially sighted people there will be large print formats, audio guides and Braille versions. There will also be census field staff on hand locally in the community, as well as telephone call centres. More detailed information about the 2011 Census can be found at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk)

### Orange Boxes

We'd like to thank everyone who has donated to the WBA by collecting money by filling Orange Boxes. To make collection easier, could you now wait until you have two full boxes before asking us to pick them up. This will save us time and petrol money and make sure that the money collected goes straight into providing better services.

### Articles for the Blind

We've been experiencing some problems with Royal Mail over parcels marked as 'Articles for the Blind'. All items we send to you under this scheme will meet their requirements, so if you are asked to pay a surcharge on a letter or parcel please let us know.

If you are returning an item to us for repair make sure you have a valid return label. The package also needs to be easily opened by Royal Mail to check what's in it. For more information call us on 01380 723682

## CLUB NEWS

### News from around the clubs

#### Happy Birthday!

The Cricklade Coffee Club celebrated its 1st birthday with a fun-filled morning of skittles, games, raffle and cake.



#### Amesbury gets a new leader

Welcome to Avril Appleby-Flemming who has taken over as Club leader at Amesbury. Avril is a former Drama and Creative Arts Facilitator working with a variety of disabled groups and has just moved back to Wiltshire from Devon. The club meets every 2nd Tuesday for coffee and cakes, a guest speaker, and has an active membership of more than 30 members.

For more information on any of our clubs call 01380 723682

#### Vera Nelson (2 February 1921 - 7 October 2010)

A long-term volunteer at the Devizes Handicraft Club, Vera will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

Vera and her husband Bill retired in 1988 and moved to Devizes to be closer to their family. Vera joined the WBA as a volunteer and for more than 20 years taught knitting and painting each Friday at the handicraft club, as well as fundraising by knitting garments to order.

Our thoughts are with Vera's family and we will always remember her for her tireless enthusiasm and kindness.

## CLUBS AS AT NOVEMBER 2010

For more information, please call 01380 723682

DAY	CLUB	VENUE	TIME
<b>MONDAYS</b>	Devizes Social Club	Nursted Centre	11am to 3pm
<b>MONDAYS</b>	Warminster Social Craft	St John's Church Hall	2pm to 4pm
<b>EVERY 2nd TUESDAY</b>	Amesbury Social Club	Antrobus House	10.30am to 12.30pm
<b>TUESDAYS</b>	Swindon Craft	Craven House	10am to 2pm
<b>TUESDAYS</b>	Trowbridge Social Club	The Halve	2pm to 4pm
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	Salisbury Social/ Craft	The Friary	1.30pm to 4pm
<b>WEDNESDAYS</b>	Swindon /Social	Craven House	2pm to 4pm
<b>1ST WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH</b>	Corsham	Holton House, Post Office Lane	10am to 12pm
<b>2ND THURSDAY EACH MONTH</b>	Chippenham Social	Jubilee Hall	10.30am to 11.30am
<b>1ST FRIDAY EACH MONTH</b>	Active Blind Social Club	Baptist Church Hall	10am to 12pm
<b>FRIDAYS</b>	Devizes Handicraft	Nursted Centre	10.30am to 2.30pm
<b>EVERY SECOND MONDAY</b>	Swindon BATS Sports & Social Club	Craven House	2pm to 4pm
<b>2nd TUESDAY EACH MONTH</b>	B/Avon Coffee Morning	Cedar Court	10am to 12pm
<b>3rd TUESDAY EACH MONTH</b>	Cricklade Coffee Club	United Reform Church	10.30 am to 12pm
<b>2nd &amp; 4th WEDNSDAY EACH MONTH</b>	Highworth Social Wednesday Club	Highworth Methodist Church	10.15am to 12.15 pm

## Managing your own support

Adult care and support services are changing across the whole Country. These changes are to give people more freedom, choice and control over the type of care and support they want. This is called self-directed support.

Instead of the social care team at Wiltshire Council providing or arranging services for you, the new scheme allows you to arrange services for yourself. It puts you in control by giving you a personal budget so you can choose what to buy with the money allocated to you.

If you are happy with the way things are you can still keep things the same or you can even choose a mix of options - buying in some services yourself while still asking Wiltshire Council to provide others.

### **How can I get self-directed support?**

A community care assessment is made of your needs and your financial position to assess your eligibility for self-directed support. The social care team at Wiltshire Council 0300 456 0111 can give you more information.

If you are eligible, a personal budget or direct payment will be set. This is based on the cost of your support needs if the council were providing them. Your individual support plan is then agreed. This sets out what you need to achieve to lead as independent and fulfilling a life as you can. It will also outline the cost of any care or support that you need. The support plan shows how you intend to spend the money to make sure you have the support you need. You can write this plan yourself, if you want, with help from family or friends.

Once your support plan has been agreed, your direct payment can be fixed. This is the actual amount of money you will receive to purchase your care or support needs.



### **What can I spend my direct payment on?**

Your direct payment must be spent on achieving the things that have been agreed in your support plan. It cannot be spent on anything that is illegal or would endanger you or another person. You can use the money for things like buying the time of a carer or personal assistant, day activities, respite breaks at locations of your choice, or to buy equipment and adaptations.

### **Is a direct payment taxable and will it affect any benefits that I might receive?**

No. A direct payment does not count as income for tax or benefit purposes. A direct payment is specifically to pay for your care and support; it is not a loan. You will be asked by social care team at Wiltshire Council to provide confirmation of how you have used the money.

### **What if I need help to manage my support or money?**

You can get help from a family member, a friend or a local organisation on managing self-directed support. You can also ask Wiltshire Council for help.



### **What if my needs change?**

Your support plan will be reviewed from time to time to make sure you are getting the services you need and that the money is being spent properly. If your needs change significantly before the review date you should ask for a re-assessment. This may lead to a change in your direct payment.

We'll tell you more about the changes in our Spring Newsletter.

## SMILE TIME

### Reindeer Report



By U.A.Fanthorpe

Chimneys: colder  
Flightpaths: busier  
Driver: Christmas (F)  
Still baffled by postcodes.  
Children: more  
And stay up later.  
Presents: heavier  
Pay: frozen.  
Mission in spite  
Of all this:  
Accomplished

### MEMBER PROFILE

WBA member Tracy Plank proves that being blind is no barrier to achieving her goals.

Tracy is an active member of the Saxon & Wellow Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) and recently competed in the RDA National Championships in Hartpury Gloucestershire.

The event Tracy competed in was a walk and trot for visually impaired riders and Tracy beat off stiff competition from riders competing from as far afield as Northern Ireland and Scotland to win the class. Tracy was competing in an unled category, so all her work was on hearing alone. She is now the proud owner of a silver cup.

Tracey has also recently achieved a nationally recognised Grade 1 qualification in stable management.



## FIGHTING BLINDNESS

New advances in retinal implant technology are enabling “blind people to see”. Researchers have come up with an experimental chip that can help restore sight. The chip is fitted behind the retina and allows the person to detect objects with their eyes. It converts light that enters the eye into electrical impulses which are fed into the optic nerve behind the eye. The brain learns to interpret the signals to help the person detect objects.

The best results, so far, have been achieved with people diagnosed with Retinitis pigmentosa, a group of hereditary eye conditions that affect the retina - the light sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. However, it would not work for other eye diseases in which, for example, the optic nerve is damaged.

Watch this space for more updates!

## ‘SEEING’ WITH YOUR TASTE BUDS



In a new BBC series, TV characters Wallace and Gromit have been exploring the world of invention through the five senses and discovering the fact and fiction behind top sensory inventions.

One example they tested showed how the blind can 'see' through taste using hi-tech sunglasses.

The device consists of a high-tech 'lollipop' that rests on the tongue. It converts images from a video camera, that are worn on a pair of sunglasses into signals that stimulate electrodes on the lollipop. The brain recognises that the signals stimulating the tongue have nothing to do with taste, and re-routes them to the visual centre of the brain for processing.

The brain is able to interpret the image, giving rudimentary vision.

“Cracking good invention, Gromit!”

## Postcard from Babbacombe

### Day 1 Friday

Off into the foggy west country for a week-long holiday in Devon - destination Babbacombe. As this was my first holiday with the WBA I was a little apprehensive of what was in store. I was pleasantly surprised when we arrived at our hotel – The Anchorage.

### Day 2 Saturday

A lovely sunny day and a trip to Brixham. The highlight of the day was fresh crab sandwiches at the pub at the end of the quay.



### Day 3 Sunday

A trip to Buckfast Abbey – a thriving monastic community and a chance to buy their famous ‘Tonic wine’.



### Day 4 Monday

Day spent in Babbacombe and a chance to ride in the famous cliff railway and sample the “best fish and Chips in South West England”.

### Day 5 Tuesday

A visit to the Widecombe and the lovely parish church, where as a group of blind and VIP visitors we were allowed to touch the medieval alter.

### Day 6 Wednesday

A lovely day spent on the River Dart with a boat trip from Totnes to Dartmouth.

### Day 7 Thursday

A visit to the famous Trago Mill outlet store and leisure park at Newton Abbott, which resembles a castle from the outside. A chance to do some last minute souvenir shopping!



### Day 8 Friday

Time to return to Wiltshire after a fantastic week. Special thanks to the team from the WBA – Gail, Yvonne and Les who couldn't have done any more to make the holiday most enjoyable.

## Holidays 2011 *Llandudno*

**Where:** The Belmont Hotel, Llandudno, Conwy, North Wales

**When:** Wednesday, 27 April to Wednesday, 4 May 2011

**What's included:** 7 nights half board and one full day trip and one half day trip. Over the weekend Llandudno is holding its annual Victorian Extravaganza, so there will be lots to do within easy walking distance of the hotel

**Cost:** £450 per person (deposits will be required by the end of January 2011)

**Unfortunately it is no longer possible for us to provide helpers, so if you are unable to manage on your own you will need to bring someone with you.**

For further details, please call 01380 723682

## ADVICE AND SERVICES

### CHANGES TO DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWENCE

The Government has announced a change to the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) that means blind people will receive the higher rate of the Mobility Component of the DLA benefit from 2011.

To receive DLA you must be:

- under 65** when you first make your claim (you can continue to receive it after 65)
- and** a UK resident
- and** have lived in the UK for no less than 26 weeks in the 52 weeks before you claim.



DLA is tax free and you can receive it regardless of what you earn, what other benefits you claim or how much savings you have.

For blind people who spend significant amounts on taxis to the shops, doctors, social activities, etc the additional £30 a week that the change represents will go a long way to helping them become more mobile and independent.

### BIG PRINT TV & RADIO GUIDE

Big Print is the only national weekly newspaper with accompanying TV and Radio guide in large print - and it is posted directly to your door.

You can keep up-to-date with the latest news and make sure you don't miss out on your favourite TV and radio programmes.



It cost £1.25 per issue or you can take out an annual subscription for £65 (52 copies), half yearly £32.50 (26 copies) or quarterly £16.25 (13 copies).

For more information and to order call 0303 123 9999 or email [shop@rnib.org.uk](mailto:shop@rnib.org.uk)

## ADVICE AND SERVICES

### PLAYAWAY

Playaway is the latest technology in audio books and is now available in libraries.

It's a simple portable all-in-one format. There's no need for a separate player as your book comes ready loaded on the Playaway, with earphones and batteries included. It's truly portable and a great way to listen to books on the go.



Playaways are now available at larger libraries. As small as a tape cassette, the entire book is held within it, meaning you don't have to keep slotting them in and out of a machine. You can also bookmark where you get to.

For more information contact your local library or call Wiltshire Libraries on 01225 713727

### SMART TALK

Smart Talk, the world's first talking Freeview digital box is the solution for anyone who has ever been left frustrated or angry because the TV guide was difficult to use.

This TV set top box announces all on-screen information, including programme guides and menus, using synthetic speech. Designed and developed in conjunction with the RNIB to provide full access to Freeview digital TV and radio services for blind and partially sighted people.



The product is available for £85.10 excluding VAT

## EVENTS

### 2011 Events Plan

We've a whole host of fundraising and member events planned for 2011. Take a look at what's on for the first part of next year below:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>Jan</b>	Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>	New Year Raffle Draw	St Lucy's
<b>Mar</b>	Fri 4 <sup>th</sup>	Wine tasting evening and auction	Odstock Manor, Nr Salisbury
	Wed 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Dining in the Dark	The Manor, Shrewton
<b>Apr</b>	To be confirmed	'B Bright 4 Sight' sponsored canal walk	Devizes – Kennet & Avon Canal
		Members event 'Hand on Avebury' - visit and talk	Avebury
<b>May</b>	To be confirmed	Dining in the Dark	Swindon
<b>Jun</b>	Sun 13 <sup>th</sup>	Bowood Dog Show WBA bar	Bowood House, Nr Calne
	To be confirmed	Members event Garden visit	Seend House, Nr Melksham
<b>Jul</b>	Sat 9 <sup>th</sup>	Dragon Boat Race	Chippenham
	To be confirmed	Dining in the Dark – Devizes Food Festival	Devizes
	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	Annual General Meeting	Dauntsey's School West Lavington
<b>Aug</b>	To be confirmed	Members event - Seaside visit	Weston-super-Mare Pier

## RECENT EVENTS

### **Wine Tasting Evening 28th October**

More than 30 guests sampled a wonderful array of wines from across the world at a recent wine tasting evening hosted by Giles and Ann Currie at their home in Aldbourne and sponsored by Great Western Wine of Bath. The event raised more than £1,000!



If you would like to enjoy a selection of the wine we tasted and donate to the WBA, Great Western Wine are offering a mixed case of 12 wines of fantastic wines at just £94.90 or six bottles at £47.45. Great Western Wine will donate 15% of any sales value (£13.35 per case) to the WBA. You can order online at [www.greatwesternwine](http://www.greatwesternwine) or call 01225 332817

### **Dining in the Dark 1st November**

The WBA has been raising awareness of the everyday challenges faced by blind and visually impaired people with a “blind eating” experience. 20 guests tried out our first “Dining in the Dark” event at the Bistro restaurant in Devizes. It was a terrific success and we’ll be holding more events “Dining in the Dark” events next year.



### **Thank you**



We’d like to thank our corporate sponsors for all their support in 2010. Special thanks go to Avagio who raised £300 in sponsorship, Haine & Smith who collected £1,155 in customer donations & QinetiQ who raised more than £910 at their recent Firework’s Night.

## AND FINALLY

### DONATION AND GIFT AID: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Wiltshire Blind Association often provides a lifeline for individuals coming to terms with losing their sight. However, we rely almost entirely on the generosity of the general public to fund these vital services. If you've ever wondered how you can help us to continue our work, please consider either adding Gift Aid to a donation, or whether you would like to remember us in your Will.

#### **GIFT AID**

If you are a UK taxpayer, we would receive an additional 28p for every £1 you donate if you complete and sign the form of declaration at the bottom of this page. Just return the form with your donation to The Wiltshire Blind Association, St Lucy's, 1 Commercial Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 1EH.

#### **LEGACIES**

Leaving us a gift in your Will, however large or small, will help provide a full range of support services to people living in Wiltshire and Swindon who are registered blind and partially sighted. By remembering us in your Will you can ensure that this essential help continues in the future. So once you've remembered the people you care about, please don't forget the Wiltshire Blind Association.

I have pleasure in giving a donation to the Wiltshire Blind Association of £..... to provide services to registered blind and partially sighted people living in the Wiltshire and Swindon area.

Name.....

Address.....

Post Code.....

I am a UK taxpayer and wish all my donations after 6th April 2000 to the Wiltshire Blind to be treated as Gift Aid on which tax may be reclaimed. I understand that I must pay an amount in Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax in the relevant tax year equal to any tax reclaimed by the Association in that year.

Signed.....