

Huntingdonshire
Society
for
the **B**lind

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE
SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND**

REGISTERED CHARITY 202573

NEWSLETTER - SPRING 2021

**8 ST MARY'S STREET
HUNTINGDON
PE29 3PE**

**THE CENTRE INCLUDES THE OFFICE, SHOP AND
EQUIPMENT ROOM**

Telephone: 01480 453438

**Email: info@huntsblind.co.uk
www.huntsblind.co.uk
facebook: /huntsblind
twitter: www.twitter.co.uk/@huntsblind**

**WE HAVE STAFF AVAILABLE FROM 10.00 am to 3.00 pm
MONDAY TO FRIDAY**

Here to help:

Manager	Erika Brown
Administrator/Finance Officer/IT Advisor	Emma Martin
Social Activities Co-ordinator	Andrea Murphy
Social Activities Co-ordinator/ Fundraising Co-ordinator	Rachel Sutherland
Outreach worker (north)	Vicki Jones
Outreach worker (south)	Jenny McInnes
Eye clinic liaison officer	Vicky French

Welcome to our spring 2021 newsletter which I hope you enjoy reading or listening to.

Thank you to everyone who has made a contribution to this edition. As part of our latest Arts and Crafts project, members were invited to send in their lockdown thoughts which we've included in this newsletter. Reading your comments and through our chats with members we know that this (hopefully final) lockdown has been harder than the others for many but as spring makes its presence ever clearer with colourful flowers and earlier dawn chorus' there is much to be positive about. In line with the Government's roadmap out of lockdown we are planning to re-open the shop/office on Monday 12th April and we're very much looking forward to welcoming people back. Whilst the office has been closed and staff have been working from home, we have continued to provide services to members but in slightly adapted ways and we've been delighted with our new telephone conferencing service which has reconnected many members with each other.

As restrictions ease we can begin to make plans for restarting social groups - something I know we're all very excited about. The safety of staff, volunteers and members is, as ever, our highest priority and we will be working closely with the venues we use throughout the district to make sure that when we do return all necessary measures are in place. As things currently stand we hope to restart social groups in July but watch this space!!

Reflecting on the last 12 months and how the Society has faced the challenges the pandemic presented I couldn't be more proud of how staff and volunteers have adapted to ensure that we continue to provide our services and I know members are very grateful for the ongoing support the Society has provided. So I hope you won't mind if I use this space to say a huge thank you to the staff and volunteer team for their continued hard work, commitment and support in these challenging times. Here's to better times ahead of us all.

Stay safe, stay well.

Erika, Manager

SOCIETY NEWS AND NOTICES

Member News

Birthdays

We would like to send our best wishes to all members celebrating a birthday in April, May, June and July. Members celebrating a **special birthday** in the coming months are: Fiona Cunningham, Maggie Baker, Pauline Harding, Gwen Phillips, Margaret Topham, Allan Argyle, John Seymour, Sheila Jakes, Margaret Macgregor, Bill Hammerton, Lindsey Haynes, Sandra Perry, David Heading, Jean Plumbe, Fred Smith & Joyce Main.

Deaths

We are very sorry to report the deaths of the following members: Marcia Heathcote, Terry Eastwood, Derek Mills, Janet Burden, Jenny Carrol, Lilian Donald, Audrey Paterson, Ernestina Budworth, Les Whittick, Melvyn Barker, Michael Bush, Dorothy Langham, Arthur Roberts, Theresa Bowman, Lilian Farrow, Arthur Mull, Basil Setchell, Carol Ashman, Geoffrey Westaway and Marilyn Carter.

Mike Bush, February 1934 – January 2021

For those of you who've come along to fundraising coffee mornings and to social groups Mike Bush will have been a familiar figure. A member of the Society for many decades, Mike was very supportive of our activities and was always keen to entertain with his wonderful repertoire of tunes which he played on his accordion. His music, along with his cheerful and friendly disposition was greatly appreciated by all. Sadly Mike passed away in January and will be greatly missed by his many friends at the Society.



Tanya Forster, October 1973 – February 2021

Many of you will have read or heard the sad news of the passing of Tanya Forster. Tanya was a very much loved and respected member of the staff team at Hunts Blind for nearly two years between 2016 and 2017. She was our Fundraising Coordinator and did a brilliant job of securing funding for our building project. She orchestrated the move of our fundraising coffee mornings initially to The Commemoration Hall in Huntingdon and later to All Saints Church. Through her endless contacts she arranged incredible gifts for auction and along with a group of friends trekked for 3 days in Iceland to fundraise for the Society and other charities. Tanya touched the hearts of many people in the local community. She was very kind, caring and thoughtful and will be sadly missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.



Office/shop closure

The shop/office will be closed for the Easter bank holidays, Friday 2nd and Monday 5th April and May bank holidays, Monday 3rd and Monday 31st May 2021.

MESSAGE FROM VICKY FRENCH

Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital

So we are already well into 2021 and signs of Spring are with us which I am very pleased to see.

All of the North West Anglia Foundation Trust Hospitals remain busy but the numbers of positive covid tests are creeping down which is great news and we have moved from surge 5 level to surge 4 level here at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Our guidelines regarding visiting and attending the hospital remain the same as those published in the winter newsletter. (All visitors are restricted except: one accompanying person with an

outpatient at the discretion of the clinician, carers to support patients in exceptional circumstances such as anxiety, dementia, learning difficulties etc).

If you do have a loved one in hospital virtual visiting is in place (where it is possible to do so) via the Trust's iPads which can be taken onto wards to enable patients to stay connected to their friends and family. Please contact the ward direct for further information. We also have Letters to Loved Ones Initiative in place which allows friends and families to email patients get well messages and include family photos. These messages are then printed off and passed to patients to read and keep. The dedicated email address is nwangliaft.lettersforlovedones@nhs.net (please ensure your email includes the patient's name, hospital name, the ward they are being cared for on and the bay they are in, if known).

Here in the Eye Clinic we are still running our injection clinics although the number of patients per clinic has to be capped to ensure social distancing can be adhered to. It is important for patients who attend to continue to wear a face covering and to follow social distancing rules whilst in the hospital. Appointments which can be dealt with virtually via either video or telephone call are continuing to do so. Your appointment letter will clearly state if you are to attend in person or if you will have a telephone consultation. If following a telephone consultation a decision is made for the patient to attend the clinic then an appointment will be booked. The Low Vision Clinic has restarted face to face appointments and The Emergency Eye Clinic is continuing to run as usual. All non urgent surgery remains on hold but urgent cataract surgery is taking place.

I am still here and available to talk over the phone or we can meet whilst you are here attending an appointment at Eye Clinic. All CVIs are continuing to be processed as usual. If you have any questions please, as always feel free to call me on 01480 416416 x3190. If I am not in the office, leave me a message with your name and telephone number and I will call you back.

If you are concerned about your sight or feel there has been a change in your vision which is worrying you, please call us. The Eye Clinic receptionists can take down your details and arrange for a nurse to call you back, their number is 01480 416416 x8261.

Finally, if anyone wishes to receive an appointment letter in large print or on coloured paper and is not currently receiving such in this format please let me know and I will update our system to request this happens in the future. Call (01480 416416 x3190) or email me victoriafrench@nhs.net.

Take care and stay safe.

Vicky French - Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital

Activities Report by Rachel

Another social groups newsletter update without seeing you all but the fun continues nonetheless!

Our weekly Zoom quizzes are still going strong and a lovely group of regular participants has formed. Not only do we compete for first place but bottom place is quite sought after too. I won't reveal any names but you know who you are.

Since Christmas we have trialled a new call system called Babl which connects a group of members via their landline or mobile phone. The call can accommodate up to 50 people at one time – perhaps a little ambitious - but we usually have between 6 and 8 members. In the first lockdown one of our members, Frank, came up with an idea to connect people by sharing positive, fun moments so we've adapted Frank's idea to the calling system and 'Positivity Calls' is the result.

The feedback from members has been very positive. In the call each member is invited to share something uplifting and positive, for example; a poem, joke, piece of writing or even a memory which makes them smile. Some members choose to just listen in which is absolutely fine. We run these calls monthly and each one takes around 30 minutes with

no cost to yourself. It has been a real success. If you think this is something you would like to try, please contact Rachel on 07542 680280 or call the office.

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying the spring like weather which is about at the moment. Every newsletter I say how much we are missing you all but we truly are. The end does seem in sight so fingers crossed we are back together soon. In the meantime keep safe and well.

Lockdown Arts & Crafts by Andrea



Twenty-eight boxes full of materials and instructions were delivered to the members of the group in December for two projects – a Father Brushmas decoration and Santa napkin holders for the Christmas Day dinner table.

Arts and Crafts and the positivity challenge

February's project was something that had to fit in an envelope and be posted due to the Government's ruling of essential travel only. Members were invited to draw a self-portrait or note their thoughts on what has helped them through the pandemic. We received some great self-portraits but there could only be one winner and that was Stephanie. The judges (the staff team at Hunts Blind), thought the sketch was a very good likeness. Well done Steph!

All of the written challenges were so uplifting and have been shared below and will hopefully give a positive outlook for the year ahead.

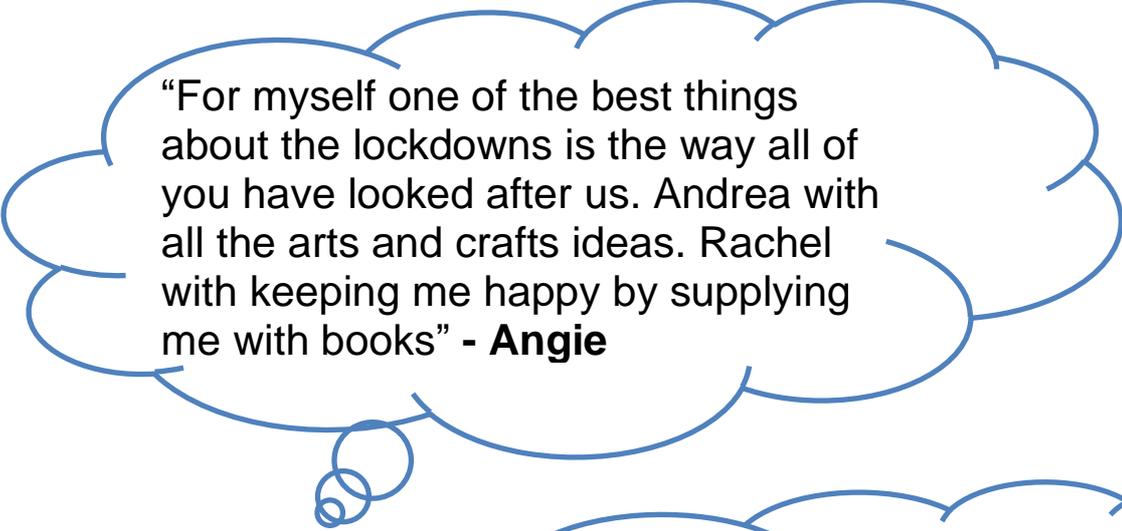
“If there was no change there would be no butterflies” - **Sharon**

“The kindness I shall never forget. I am giving a little back by phoning people who are lonely. I hope the kindness will go on after this is all over. I am grateful to the Society for their help and kindness to me, you are the best” - **June**

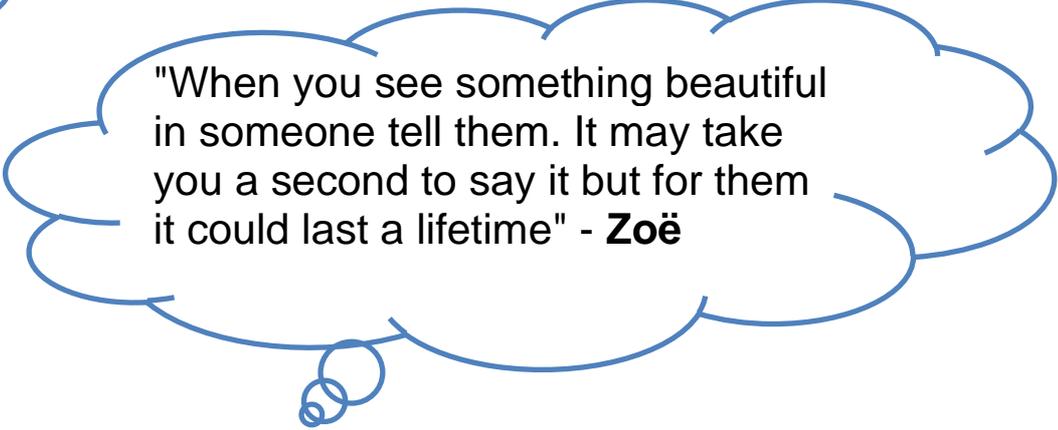
“The person that has got me through this awful time is my little dog, her name is Meg. I don't know what I would have done without her, bless her” **And Meg writes** “ Hello I am Meg, and I look after Sheila, my mum. I love her to bits and I know she loves me” - **Sheila**

Lily sent a list of positive things - Neighbours helping with the shopping and checking in on her. Family Facetime and telephoning. Her garden and sharing veg with friends – Just trying to keep happy.

Judy says phone calls from her daughter and texts from her grandson helps her. Neighbours have set up a What's App group so help is at hand if it is needed. Friends of Judy have swapped recipes, mostly sweet treats!



“For myself one of the best things about the lockdowns is the way all of you have looked after us. Andrea with all the arts and crafts ideas. Rachel with keeping me happy by supplying me with books” - **Angie**



"When you see something beautiful in someone tell them. It may take you a second to say it but for them it could last a lifetime" - **Zoë**

The poem below was sent in by Hunts Blind member, Angie. The poem describes the Arts and Crafts group perfectly!

It's hard to thread our needles, as the eyes seem very small,
And double – sided sticky tape is quite beyond us all.
Our cutting is all wonky, arthritis is to blame,
Our homemade cards just won't stand up, which really is a shame.
The knitting has dropped stitches, our crochet's all askew,
We lose our place in projects because we often need the loo!
We've had accidents with glitter, some spillages with paint,
And a very awkward moment when glue made someone nearly faint.
But we love our bi-monthly meetings and though little craft is done,
There's lots of joy and laughter, companionship and fun.
We'd never miss a session because we know that secretly
We just come for a natter, a biscuit and a cup of tea!

Our second poem was written by Arts & Crafts member, Stephanie.

The NHS overwhelmed, we told to stay at home.
2020 was the year we only spoke on the phone.
Many people isolated, from everyone they know.
Trying to keep motivated, while we all stay at home.
Everyone coming together, to help those in need.
Hoping for better weather, and students trying to succeed.
The virus is spreading badly, All across the globe.
Killing so many people, so time to sort the wardrobe.
It may be driving us round the bend, but this is how the virus thrives.
It will all eventually come to an end, and now to save so many lives.

If you are interested in getting involved with the Arts and Crafts group please contact the office.

Theatre Group Update

We continue to monitor the Arts Theatre website and as soon as we are able to safely organise and the book the next performance for our theatre group, we will be in touch.

If you are interested in joining the theatre group, please contact the office.

FUNDRAISING NEWS

Our fundraising activities and events remain cancelled for the time being but you can still support the Society through membership to our 200+ club. The scheme helps to raise over £1500 per year for the Society and distributes the same amount in prize winnings to shareholders. If you would like to join the 200 club (one share is £12 per year) please complete the form on the back of this newsletter or contact the office on 01480 453438 for more information.

HSB 200+ Club Results

Congratulations to 200 club draw prize winners for December, January, February and March:

December

1st prize - £125, M Sneath

2nd prize - £60, G Mack

3rd prize - £30, J Shaw

4th prize - £20, E Barber

5th prize - £15, P Porter

February

1st prize – £25, R Overall

2nd prize – £15, I Willard

3rd prize – £10, B Laskey

January

1st prize - £25, B Yare

2nd prize - £15, B Buist

3rd prize - £10, E Barber

March

1st prize - £25, D Cole

2nd prize - £15, D Mayers

3rd prize - £10, D Sneath

VISIT OUR RESOURCE ROOM

Whilst the Society's resource centre is closed we are still able to arrange delivery of equipment direct to your home avoiding unnecessary contact and travel. Please don't hesitate to call us if you require information or advice on any equipment. Payment can be taken safely over the telephone.



New products

This fully automatic blood pressure and pulse monitor is easy to read and also announces the measured values clearly. The cuff fits wrists 14 to 19.5cm in diameter. The easy-to-read display shows systolic pressure, diastolic pressure, date, time, and pulse, and notifies you of incorrect usage. Voice output of measured values has adjustable volume (four levels, including mute) and is available in English, German, French, Italian and Turkish.

The monitor will also detect an irregular heartbeat and has a colour-coded risk indicator. Two user memories are available, each holding 60 measured values. The monitor requires two AAA batteries, which are included and is available from RNIB priced at £47.94.

Light your way in the dark with the Pharos cane light from Ambutech.

This rechargeable cane light comes with three mounting brackets so that it can be fitted to any Ambutech mobility cane and produces 40 lumens of bright white light to illuminate your path and let other walkers see you more easily.



Recharge the Pharos's built-in battery by plugging its USB connector into a charging plug or a USB port. Run time and charging time are approximately 45 minutes.

This cane light has an easy-to-use on/off switch, is water-resistant and also comes with a handy attached keychain.

The cane light is available from RNIB priced at £19.19.

Talking Microwave

The Society has two talking microwaves available for long term loan, free of charge. If you are interested in having one of the microwaves, please contact the office.

TECH CORNER by Emma

In January Hunts Blind held a Tech Surgery event. The events are proving to be popular with members attending the 20 minute sessions over Zoom. We will be holding the next Tech Surgery event on May

27th 9.30am - 12pm. If you wish to attend, please contact Emma. A twenty minute time slot will be allocated to you and you will receive a confirmation email with the links to attend the event. Come prepared with your tech questions.

As well as the Tech Surgery event's, Hunts Blind is also holding a monthly Tablet Group over Zoom. The meeting takes place on the 3rd Wednesday of each month 10am -12pm. The meeting is an open forum, come along with any questions you have. It's also a good opportunity to share information and tips with fellow members. If you would like to attend, please contact the office.

For those of you have embraced tech over the last year and are interested in fitness, British Blind Sport have some great workouts on the website - britishblindsport.org.uk/ and their YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/c/BritishBlindSportOrgUK>.

Head to the Active At Home section on the British Blind Sport website where you will find a whole range of audio led classes including gentle exercise, yoga, strength & weight classes and HIIT and cardio classes amongst others.

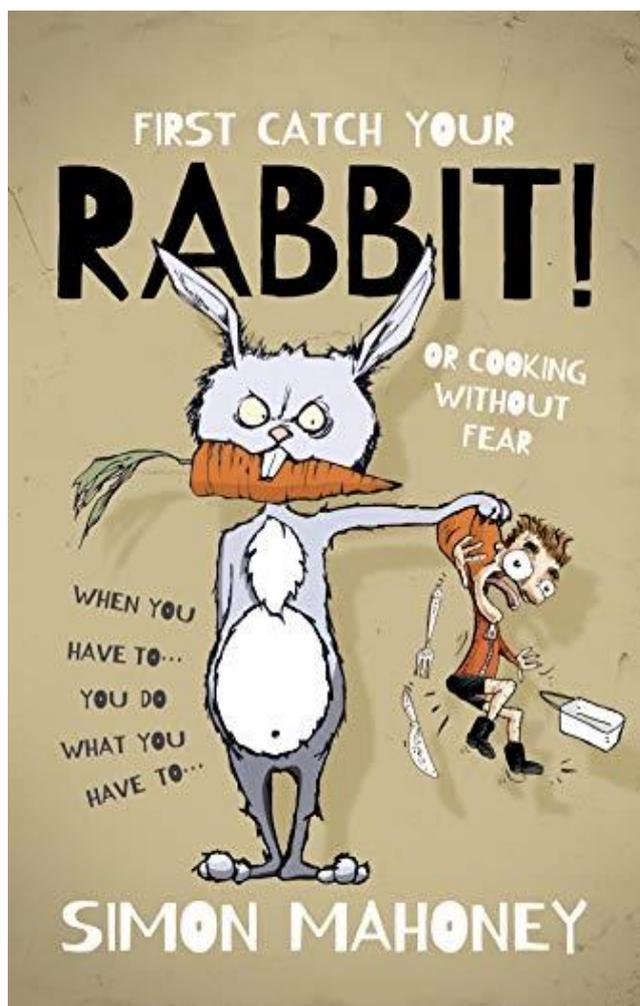
Physical activity is proved to relieve stress, improve mental health and boost the immune system. On the British Blind Sport Facebook page you can find links to the classes and more information. BBS are encouraging followers to swap their at-home workout tips and tricks and become part of the #BBSSquad!

QAC SIGHT VILLAGE CENTRAL

Sight Village Central has a new date. The event due to take place on Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th June 2021 will now take place on Tuesday 17th & Wednesday 18th August 2021. The address for the event is Cranmore Park Conference and Events Centre, Solihull, B90 4LF. The event is free to visit. The venue has great transport links and is easily accessible. For further information call 0121 428 5041 or email sv@qac.ac.uk.

Visit the Sight Village exhibition to find out more about the latest technology, equipment and support services available to people who are blind or partially-sighted. QAC Sight Village is described as “The UK's Leading exhibition for blind and partially sighted people and for those experiencing sight problems”

First Catch Your Rabbit



First Catch Your Rabbit is a basic kitchen survival guide written by Simon Mahoney, a recent widower who is totally blind. Simon had to regain use of the kitchen after his wife died. How he did it, with no eyes in the house, is described in the book. The book is in large print and the primary target is people with significant or total vision loss.

First Catch Your Rabbit is not a cook book as such. Recipes are included but they are merely a vehicle to demonstrate various simple techniques and safety tips.

The author maintains that anyone can cook and that there is nothing mysterious or difficult about being able to cook what and when you

want.

First Catch Your Rabbit is available as both a book and an E-book from Amazon and there is a direct link on the authors web site www.wingingitblind.com. The book retails at £7.50 and the E-book at £6.50.

Simon Mahoney is a former Royal Marine, Social Worker and freelance artist. He has been totally blind for over two years. His wife died at the

beginning of the pandemic which prompted him to write First Catch Your Rabbit. He has written one previous book "A Descent into Darkness", which is an account of his slide into darkness, what he found on the way and how he dealt with it. He has also written a number of articles for a magazine called Health is Your Wealth.

Simon is currently working on a sequel to the first book called WINGING it BLIND. He is also writing a book about his family for his grandchildren.

Charles Bonnet Syndrome storyline on Coronation Street

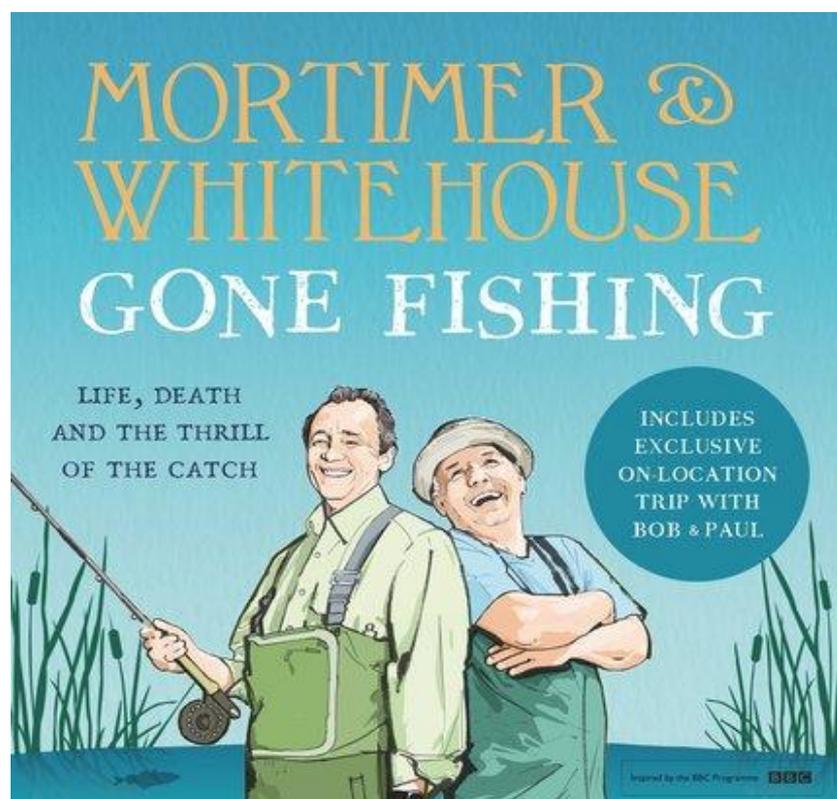
Fans of Coronation Street will be aware that the character Johnny Connor has recently been experiencing various hallucinations including mice and cockroaches as well as seeing visions of his late son. Johnny is subsequently diagnosed with Charles Bonnet syndrome. The actor Richard Hawley, who plays Johnny Connor in Coronation Street, said of the condition: "Once you have a diagnosis of Charles Bonnet syndrome things can get a little better simply because you know what it is. Before you get a diagnosis people can look at it and can worry themselves that this is a mental health problem, which is what I tried to do with the performance with Johnny, to look like he was having mental health problems."

To make things true to life, the Corrie script-writers consulted Judith Potts, who runs Esme's Umbrella, which provides support to people with CBS. Richard also spoke to Nina Chesworth who has CBS, she has a family and is also a visual artist.

Please find a link below to the Tom Walker podcast 'That'll be the day.' In this podcast, Judith Potts, along with Nina Chesworth explain about CBS and what it was like to work with the Coronation Street script-writers. <https://youtu.be/hmMyjb6UBSc>

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES PRESENTS

The Sunday Times bestseller Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing, Life, Death and the Thrill of the Catch by Paul Whitehouse and Bob Mortimer



Bob Mortimer and Paul Whitehouse have been friends for 30 years, but when life intervened, what was once a joyous and spontaneous friendship dwindled to the odd phone call or occasional catch up. Then, Glory Be! They were both diagnosed with heart disease and realised that time is short. They'd better spend it fishing...

So they dusted off their kits, chucked on their waders and ventured into the achingly beautiful British countryside to fish, rediscover the joys of their friendship and ruminate on some of life's most profound questions, such as: How did we get so old? Where are all the fish? What are your favourite pocket meats? What should we do if we find a corpse?

Following the success of the BBC's Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing series, this wonderful book by two lifelong friends is a love letter to the joys of angling, the thrill of the catch and the virtue of having a right daft laff with your mates. On the fish, the equipment, the food, and the locations, Gone Fishing is the perfect book for fans of Bob Mortimer, Paul Whitehouse and for anyone who wants to read a brilliantly written and endlessly funny joint memoir on life, friendship and joys of fishing.

Borrow from the Borrowbox eAudiobook collection :

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/library-online/eaudio-books>

You will need a library card and PIN – you can join online at:

<https://cambridgeshire.spydus.co.uk/cgi-bin/spydus.exe/MSGTRN/WPAC/BRWREG>



Your Library's RBDigital Service Is Moving to Libby

RBDigital ebooks, eaudiobooks, magazines and comics are now available in the Libby app, from OverDrive. Libby is a free award winning app where you can borrow and enjoy digital content from your public library. For more information head over to the library website -

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/library-online/>

On Behalf Of The Garden Gnome

From Ramsey to St Neots
From Earith to St Ives
Our gnomes look forward to support
To help them improve their lives
We've all seen gardens in the mud
When the Great Ouse floods and foams
The gnomes are seeking your support
With homes for homeless gnomes

They're alright in the summer

Perhaps leaning on a spade
Or sitting with a fishing rod
Watching tennis being played
But when the snow is on the ground
And the north wind coldly moans
Every one of them is left outside
No one thinks of homeless gnomes

They've all of them got whiskers
It's a feature of the breed
But as the gardening years roll by
Well, sure some have gone to seed
Their ruddy cheeks are pallid
And their beards may need a comb
Why not give them your support
And give a gnome a home

HUNTINGDONSHIRE TALKING NEWSPAPER

We are very grateful to The Talking Newspaper who record our Society newsletter onto CD so if you would like to receive it in this format or you would like the weekly Hunts Post then please contact us at the **Hunts Society for the Blind on 01480 453438.**

WINTER QUIZ ANSWERS

G	N	I	M	R	A	H	C	E	C	N	I	R	P	Y
E	E	F	R	A	W	D	F	R	O	G	K	I	N	G
L	S	T	O	M	T	H	U	M	B	K	E	O	E	Y
P	O	S	Y	O	B	T	S	O	L	R	M	T	E	S
M	O	A	K	J	A	C	K	A	R	I	S	K	T	I
I	G	E	G	O	R	I	T	O	S	L	N	O	A	A
S	R	B	E	L	O	S	T	R	K	A	O	T	L	D
N	E	A	N	A	N	H	E	I	W	B	T	T	L	P
O	H	L	I	A	H	Z	N	T	N	E	T	O	E	E
W	T	I	E	G	A	G	W	I	G	A	U	R	R	T
W	O	B	I	N	R	O	S	R	A	U	B	T	E	E
H	M	A	A	A	D	S	M	E	E	T	I	E	D	R
I	N	B	T	I	U	W	E	N	D	Y	P	M	N	P
T	A	A	W	P	P	N	I	D	D	A	L	A	I	A
E	S	R	E	T	S	I	S	Y	L	G	U	D	C	N

Unused Letters Spell - TIGER LILY

HSB 200+CLUB

This is a scheme to raise funds for the Society and for us to give our supporters the chance to win money prizes every month.

For the annual subscription of £12 per share you will be entered in twelve monthly draws. Last year we raised over £1500 for the society and gave equal amounts in prize money.

If you would like to join please complete the form below and enclose payment or come and visit us at the shop/office.

.....
Please complete and return to Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind at: 8, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3PE.

Name.....

Address.....

Postcode.....Tel No

In the event we are unable to contact you please give the name of a beneficiaryTel No.....

I wish to apply for.....shares, at £12 per year, in the 200+club

Payment can be made via BACS to CAF Bank, sort code 40 52 40, account number 00021399 - please include your name and "200 Club" as a reference. Alternatively contact the office to make payment by card over the phone or enclose a cheque made payable to Huntingdonshire Society for the Blind.

Signed.....Date.....

Office Use only

200+ Club number issued

Date of first draw

Date of reminder

SPRING QUIZ

There are 38 rock and pop bands to find in this word search which when completed leaves 10 unused letters that will spell out another pop duo.



- | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|------------|-------------|-----|
| Abba | Free | Madness | Soft Cell | |
| AC-DC | Fleetwood Mac | Meatloaf | Status Quo | |
| Aerosmith | Foo Fighters | Muse | Styx | |
| Aha | Genesis | Nirvana | The Cure | |
| Blur | Green Day | Pulp | The Ramones | |
| Chicago | Heart | Queen | Toto | |
| Coldplay | INXS | Radiohead | T Rex | |
| Cream | Kasabian | REM | Wham | XTC |
| ELO | Kiss | Simply Red | Yazoo | Yes |

Unused letters _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _