

## On Top Of The World!

On Sunday 20th February Jenny Gage, our Chief Officer and her father Andrew Gage successfully reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. They were raising money for Sight Concern, and they both agree that they earned every penny they were sponsored for.

Mount Kilimanjaro is the world's highest free-standing mountain, at 5895 metres or 19,340 feet. Just making it to the top is challenging enough, however not satisfied with this we decided to take the controversial Western Breach Assault, known as the toughest and most dangerous route on the mountain. Do I regret this decision.... not for a minute, although I did question this when we were past the 'point of no return' on our summit day and I knew I simply had to keep scrambling up this



snowy rock face, no matter how much it hurt, if I was to survive this.

Our 8 days began with a hair-raising Land Rover ride to the Landorossi Gate of the National Park, from here we started our 6 day ascent, averaging >

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## Embracing Technology Update

If you have the audio version of the newsletter, then this article will be especially important to you.

In our last newsletter we announced that all future editions would be on memory stick, but unfortunately technology has beaten us this time and we are still using audio tapes.

We hope to be using USB sticks in the near future and if you need any help or advice with regard to using USB sticks and Boomboxes, then please contact us.

## Equipment Order Payments

As you know, you can order equipment from suppliers (RNIB, Cobolt etc) through us and often pay for it when you receive it. Unfortunately we can no longer continue with this, because we have had a number of incidences when the goods haven't been paid for and we are out of pocket. Therefore as of 1st April 2011, we will be asking for payment in advance before we order goods. We currently cannot accept any credit cards so it will remain as cash or cheque payment. This will not affect your statutory rights but it will enable us to ensure that the ordering process runs smoothly.

**Call us on 01905 723245**



7 - 8 hours of trekking a day. We passed through forest, across moorland, then through the high desert (which ironically was mostly snow covered due to 12 hours of torrential rain on our first night) and finally to the summit before spending 2 days descending, which was more painful on our weary legs than expected.

We experienced all the highs and lows of climbing mountains of this height, including altitude sickness and sleeping in tents at freezing temperatures of  $-10^{\circ}$ , but also stunning scenery, standing above the clouds, watching the sun rise and set. We had the good fortune to have clear skies when we needed them; on our summit day and the second night when we had a full moon lighting up the next 3000 snow covered metres

awaiting us. We were woken at 4am for our summit attempt. We spent the next 4 hours trekking up a steep mountain face. Our guide was telling us not to look up as we would see how far we still had to go, sense was telling you not to look down as you would terrify yourself! We finally hauled ourselves

over this treacherous section into the glacial area, which was truly stunning but involved trudging for another 20 minutes through deep snow before attempting the final 190 metre ascent to the summit.

At this point approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  of people simply cannot make it to the summit, but there was no stopping us. We had made it this far and sheer determination was going to get us to the top. About  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours later we had made it to Uhuru Peak, the feeling of elation overriding the pain and exhaustion. We were standing on the top of the world and it was incredible!

So far we have raised over £1,500 for Sight Concern. If you haven't sponsored us and wish to do so, please send a cheque or log onto [www.everyclick.com/sightconcernkili](http://www.everyclick.com/sightconcernkili)

## Festive Fun

Towards the end of November we held a very successful Christmas Fayre here at the Bradbury Centre. We had lots of different stalls selling a variety of festive goods, a Pamper Grotto set up by the therapists and a raffle.



The Fayre made a profit of over £1,000 for Sight Concern and we were so grateful for the many donations which helped us make so much money for the Charity.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> December we held our annual Christmas Lunch for Centre users and volunteers, once again catering was done by Neil Tabram and his trainees from Worcester College of Technology. Eighty people sat down to enjoy an excellent meal, beautifully cooked and served by very helpful and willing young people. The entertainment as usual was provided by the staff, but none of them will be giving up their day jobs anytime soon!

We are very fortunate to have the College offer to cook and serve the lunch each year and we hope they will continue this wonderful tradition.

## Golfing in the Dark!

Recently we were invited to put a team of players into the Nine at Night Texas Scramble being held over the winter months at Ravensmeadow Golf Club.

All was going well at first but as we moved further round the course and we lost what little light there was, things became far more difficult. There were lots of cries of "I've lost my golf bag!" and "I can't see where I'm going!" At one time I heard the plaintive cry "Where am I? What have I tripped over?" Using our only torch I spun round to see that Andy Muxlow had wandered off into a large bunker and had wrapped himself around the sand rake!

The 4 golfers really got into the spirit of the game, playing well and had notched up a respectable score when everything was worked out back at the clubhouse. The evening ended with a very enjoyable meal.

Many thanks go to the brave players who were Andy Muxlow, Charlie Langstone, Daniel Browning and Stephen Charles and the guides Jed King, Alan Bacchus, Terry Belcher and Nigel Smith, who did a tremendous job. Special thanks must go to Guy Marson from Modus Creative and Leo Tarrant from Ravensmeadow Golf Club for giving our golfers the chance to challenge themselves in this way.

## Happy Holiday

In September last year we enjoyed a five day holiday at the Russell Hotel, Bognor Regis, West Sussex. This hotel is fairly new and has been designed to suit the needs of visually impaired people, which it most certainly did!

During the day we had lovely outings to local attractions such as Worthing, Arundel and the spectacular Spinnaker Tower in Portsmouth. At night we had entertainment in the hotel.

Sadly, Friday arrived far too soon and we bade farewell to Bognor and travelled back home to Worcestershire with many happy memories. The holiday was great and I wish to say a big thank you to those who made it all possible.



## Spend, Spend, Spend!

On 28th October 2010, a group of us went on a trip to the Everyman Theatre in Cheltenham to see an audio described version of the musical Spend, Spend, Spend! The story of Viv Nicholson, who after winning the football pools as a young woman, then went on to spend every penny.

On arrival, we found our seats which were right at the front of the auditorium and we were then given our audio description headsets which were very easy to use.

As soon as the show started we knew that we were in for a real treat with many of the actors also playing instruments as well. The story followed Viv through the highs and lows of her life with her many husbands and was full of humour and surprises - men dressed as bunny girls being one of them!!

We all thoroughly enjoyed the show and would like to say a big thank you to everyone involved in making the afternoon such a success.

# Information Technology Day

On Tuesday 5th April 2011, we will be holding our own mini "Sight Village" in the hall at the Bradbury Centre. A number of companies are attending, all of which specialise in equipment for people with sight loss. They will be demonstrating equipment ranging from day to day gadgets to high tech electronic magnification and software for computers. The open day is from 10am until 3pm. Entry is free and refreshments will be available. If you are a blue badge holder you can park on the road in Sansome Place for a couple of hours as parking at the centre may be difficult in the morning.



## 2011 Holiday

This year once more we have decided to book another holiday using Creative Travel in conjunction with Vision Hotels. We have booked to go to Windermere Manor Hotel, close to Lake Windermere in the Lake District, between Monday 11th and Friday 15th July 2011.

The cost of the holiday is £327 which includes designated pick up spots in Worcestershire, namely Evesham, Bromsgrove, Redditch and Worcester and all coach travel throughout the week. Bed, breakfast, evening meal and entertainment are also included plus days out by coach, with a Resort Manager on hand throughout. There are only a few single rooms available on this trip which will go quickly and single occupancy of a double or twin room will cost an extra £7.50 per night (a total of £30).

Once again the same rules apply from Sight Concern, which are that if you need help and support to get around and cannot cope alone in unfamiliar places, you must take someone with you to help you get the best out of your holiday.

If anyone is interested in this holiday please telephone Chris Belcher at the Bradbury Centre on 01905 723245.



## Side Glance

This next article is specifically for people who have lost their central vision but have some useful peripheral/side vision - predominantly people who have Macular Degeneration of some description.

We hold 2 afternoon sessions a month whereby people are taught and supported on how to use their peripheral vision more effectively. The official term is "Eccentric Viewing" and some of you may have already heard of this. This type of training has been around for some time and for some people it has enabled them to improve their mobility or read their own correspondence more effectively. We cannot guarantee that people will be reading novels again but it has worked in other areas of the country and had good success rates.

The Macular Disease Society is a great advocate of this and we are lucky to have a service user who has had training in "Eccentric Viewing" techniques and will run the sessions for us. The maximum number in the group is 2 people and the sessions are held on the first and second Thursday of the month from 2.00- 4.00pm. If you are interested please contact us on 01905 723245.

## Trips Out

At the time of going to press, no day trips have been planned for this year. There will be a meeting of the Leisure Group on 10th March where the day trips for this year will be agreed.

At present we hope to provide a trip out in May and another in August which will be advertised via talking newspapers and with our local Branches as soon as possible.

## Easter Services

We shall be holding our popular Easter Services this year on Tuesday 19th, Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st April here in the Main Hall of the Bradbury Centre at 10.45am each morning. David Hassell will be taking the services as usual and all are welcome to attend.



# Back to Basics Cookery Classes

We are now in our second year of the Back to Basics Cookery Classes. For those of you who haven't heard about the classes, they are held over 7 weeks, on a Wednesday afternoon from 2.00 - 4.00pm. There is a minimum charge of £3.50 per week to cover the cost of the ingredients.

We start the first week with chopping fruit and vegetables and progress to the final week where we put all the skills together. There is a maximum of four people to a class and there is one to one support for those people who need it. The feedback from previous attendees has been very positive with many of them commenting on how the course has helped with their confidence and independence. Picking up a sharp knife was a "no no" but with support and encouragement everyone went home with all their fingers intact and dishes they had cooked from scratch.

There are still places on the next course which is due to start on Wednesday 4th May. Volunteer transport may be available at a cost of £4.50 per week. If you are interested please contact Rhian at Sight Concern on 01905 723245.

## Courgette and Avocado Soup

### Method

Heat the oil in a large saucepan and fry the onion and garlic for 3-4 minutes. Add the courgettes, stock and salt and pepper. Cover and cook for 10 minutes or until the courgettes are very soft. Cool slightly and then add the avocado. Put into a blender and whizz until smooth. Serve immediately.

### Ingredients

Serves 6

2 medium courgettes, thinly sliced  
1 medium onion, sliced  
1 clove garlic, crushed or 1 teaspoon of "easy garlic"  
500ml vegetable oil  
1 medium avocado stoned, peeled and sliced  
2 tbsp olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

This recipe is a good source of lutein, antioxidants and vitamin C, all of which are essential vitamins and nutrients for our eyes.

# Which Way Now

For many people being newly diagnosed with sight loss or recently registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted) the pathway to accessing information and services can be quite daunting.

The Which Way Now programme offers a range of opportunities to learn more about products, services and support which are available both locally and nationally. Some of the topics covered include low vision e.g magnification, lighting and colour contrast. A session on the spoken and written word includes talking books, audio description and large print. Plus a session on useful gadgets and products which can make life easier. The programme started last year and the feedback we have received has been very positive.

**Here are a few of the comments:**

***"Very informative sessions." "I met people with similar issues and problems." "It gave me the opportunity to try out pieces of equipment." "I felt isolated before I came to the sessions, it was nice to share information with others in the group." "It improved my confidence and gave me information I didn't have before."***



Which Way Now is held over five Thursday afternoons from 2.00 - 4.00pm. We hold them at the Bradbury Centre but if there are enough people in one particular area of the county who wish to attend, we will hold it at a venue within that area. If you would like to know more about the sessions or would like to come along to the next one which starts at the end of March, please contact Rhian Thompson on 01905 723245.

## Farewell to Robert

Many of our Centre users and staff were very sorry to learn that Robert Neil was leaving his volunteer role in the gym.

Robert had been with us since early 2007 and has done a magnificent job running the gym. He trained at the Royal National College in Hereford and originally came to us on a 6 week work placement. Robert enjoyed the placement so much, he offered to stay on as a volunteer. Over the 4 years he was with us, he built up a very successful client list and lots of people benefited as a result of his hard work.



Robert made the sad decision to leave us in early January, as for some time he had been struggling with health issues and travelling from Tewkesbury was becoming increasingly more difficult over the winter months.

We, of course, did not want him to leave without saying goodbye and thanking him. So we had a collection for Robert and he visited the Centre recently to receive our thanks and good wishes in person.

## Who's New!

We are very happy to welcome 2 new members of staff who have recently joined us:

Fiona Blake is our new Fundraising Manager, working 3 days a week. She is developing corporate partnerships, flagship events and student challenges. Please get in touch with her and pass on your contacts.

Irene Hodgetts will also be working part-time for us. She will be co-ordinating a new project called Eyes Right, which is community based and is seeking to prevent avoidable sight loss through workshops.

There will be more news from them about their roles in future newsletters.

We hope you will join us in making them feel welcome and that they will enjoy working as part of our team.

# Hospital Information Project

We have recently received funding which will enable us to put information points into Ophthalmology clinics at Kidderminster, Worcester and Bromsgrove hospitals. Rather than put one member of staff into one hospital we are recruiting volunteers to cover the three sites thus utilising the funding to assist more patients. Their role will be to talk to patients, family and carers after the medical side of the appointment is over.

Recent consultation with patients has highlighted that they receive excellent medical care but are often left wondering about what happens now. Who can they turn to for support with those day to day issues such as daily living aids or what benefits, if any, are available to them?

The volunteers will be on hand to talk to patients, signpost them to local and national organisations and just be a "listening ear". If anyone would like more information on the project please contact Rhian Thompson on 01905 723245.

## A First Class Day Out

For several months, Kidderminster Branch had been planning an afternoon trip on the Severn Valley Railway.

The trip was arranged for Monday 20th September 2010. 25 members, one guide dog and 5 volunteers arrived at Kidderminster

Station and with the assistance of railway staff, all were safely seated well before the 2pm departure. The party fitted into one carriage and from the continuous chatter, it appeared that everyone was enjoying the experience.

The weather was beautiful, some of the trees were starting to show their autumnal colours and wisps of steam reminded us that we were being pulled by a steam engine. As we passed the safari park, we saw some of the animals roaming around. On arrival at Bridgnorth, there was a forty minutes break when we could stretch our legs.

We returned back to Kidderminster at 5pm. The members were extremely pleased with their day out and want a return visit next year.

Photograph courtesy of Kidderminster Shuttle



# Digital Switch Over



Registered blind or partially sighted people should have received a letter (and audio CD) from the BBC Switchover Help Scheme, informing them of their entitlement to help with the digital switchover. We understand that only people who have means tested benefits are entitled to receive this help free of charge.

The Central region is switching to digital TV area by area and will be starting on 6th April. We have details of switchover area dates in Reception at the Bradbury Centre, please call 01905 723245 if you would like more information on this. You will need to switch over to digital if you have five channels or less on any TV in your home or you will be left with a blank screen at switchover.

The help scheme run by the BBC offers a standard option for £40 and includes:

1. Easy to use digital equipment
2. Installation by a security checked installer (or delivery only if you prefer)
3. A 12 month aftercare service, including a free helpline

If you have not received any information about this and you think you may need help, please let us know and we will give you the number you need to call to find out more.

One of our Centre users has also told us about a Smart Talk Freeview Digital Box from Goodmans, although this is a more expensive option, it is more accessible. It has been developed in conjunction with RNIB to provide full access to digital TV and radio services for blind and partially sighted people.

The box reads aloud all the commands and instructions that appear on the screen and also tells you the channel, time and even what the programme is about. This is useful to people who live alone and really enjoy their telly. The cost is £85.10 ex VAT/ £102.12 incl VAT from the RNIB. We have more details about this at Sight Concern if anyone is interested.

## The Despatch is Hatched

The UK-wide registered charity Infosound, in association with British Wireless for the Blind Fund, now produces a free, monthly audio compilation of information that could be of particular interest to blind and partially-sighted people.

Called the Infosound Despatch and usually lasting for about an hour, the monthly selection of audio articles aims to cover a wide variety of different topics about living with sight loss - useful products, leisure, holidays, mobility, housing, employment, money, consumer issues and support services.

It's totally free and delivered on standard audio CD to listeners' homes every month - and it does not have to be returned.

All the charity's other services are only available on their website ([www.infosound.org.uk](http://www.infosound.org.uk)), so the new monthly Despatch is specifically for vision-impaired people who do not have access to the Internet.

Anyone who would like the free monthly service is asked to phone the local number 084 55 55 55 28 and leave their name, address and telephone number or to email [audio@infosound.org.uk](mailto:audio@infosound.org.uk)

## News from the RNIB

### More audio description on Channel 4

Currently, UK law sets a target for all terrestrial TV channels to provide audio description for at least 10 per cent of programmes.

Channel 4 has agreed to double its commitment to audio description to cover 20% of programmes on Channel 4, More 4, E4, Film 4 and Film 4 +1 by January 2011. As the broadcaster of the 2012 Paralympic Games, Channel 4 will feature a number of audio described programmes in the build up to the Games, beginning this August.

For more information visit [www.rnib.org.uk/audiodescription](http://www.rnib.org.uk/audiodescription)

### Giant print books for partially sighted people

RNIB's National Library Service is pleased to offer a growing collection of books in 24 point type for partially sighted adults. These books are very popular for partially sighted people who want to carry on reading print. This is a free service delivered by RNIB's National Library Service.

For more information phone the RNIB Helpline on 0303 123 9999 or email [library@rnib.org.uk](mailto:library@rnib.org.uk)

# Fundraising News

Worcester Wychavon Rotary Club are proud to present a concert of The Flowers Band conducted by Paul Holland, in aid of Sight Concern Worcestershire. The concert will be held at Pershore Abbey on Saturday 2nd of April 2011 at 7.30pm.

The Flowers Band is a prestigious band and current 2010 'Champion Band of West England'. The Flowers Brass Band is now in its 41st year having won competitions across the country and this year are kindly playing to raise money for Sight Concern and to provide an evening of excellent entertainment. Tickets cost £12 each and are available from The Bradbury Centre.



The Rotary Club of Worcester Severn proudly presents a concert of Buddy Holly and the Crickets 'Buddy Holly's Rock'n'Roll Juke Box' in aid of Sight Concern Worcestershire and Worcestershire Breast Unit Campaign. The concert will be held at The Forum Theatre, Malvern on Saturday 7th May 2011 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £20 each and are available from The Bradbury Centre or you can book direct with the theatre by calling 01684 892277.

## Can You Help?

We are currently looking to recruit volunteers who can help with the placement and collection of static collection boxes in the pubs, newsagents etc within your local area. If this is something you may be interested in, please contact Katy Wakefield at the Bradbury Centre on 01905 723245.



## Where there's a Will...

***"I hadn't left the house for two years before  
I got involved with Sight Concern"***

Gifts from wills mean we can help local people to deal with the grief and effects of sight loss, teach new skills, give vital information and help people find their confidence again. There are currently as many as 10,000 people affected by visual impairment across Worcestershire. The most common eye conditions are related to age and health issues such as diabetes.

We must raise over £400,000 every year just to provide our current services and demand is increasing. So we need your help to do something amazing. Would you consider leaving a gift in your will? Without the kindness and generosity of the people who leave us legacy gifts each year, much of our vital work could not continue.

Every gift is hugely appreciated – no matter how small, it can help bring about big change supporting services in Worcestershire for local people with sight loss. Many people choose to leave a residuary gift (a share of an estate) as it usually maintains or increases in value over time.

### **Including a gift to Sight Concern Worcestershire in your will is easy.**

If you're making a will for the first time, all you need to do is give your solicitor our registered address and charity number which you'll find on the back cover.

**If you already have a will**, please complete the codicil on the back cover (which will be read in conjunction with your will) and give it to your solicitor – they will do the rest.

If you have any questions about leaving a gift in your will, contact Fiona Blake, Fundraising Manager 01905 332 902 or [fiona@sightconcern.co.uk](mailto:fiona@sightconcern.co.uk)

# Leaving a Legacy - Codicil Form

**If you already have a will**, please complete the codicil below (which will be read in conjunction with your will) and give it to your solicitor - they will do the rest.

I [full name] \_\_\_\_\_

of [full address] \_\_\_\_\_

declare this to be a (first/second) codicil to my will dated: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

In addition to any legacies given in my said will, I give to Sight Concern Worcestershire, The Bradbury Centre, 2 Sansome Walk, Worcester WR1 1LH, registered charity number 1136716

\_\_\_\_\_ % share of my estate (please tick and complete the relevant section)

the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ amount in words \_\_\_\_\_

or specific item \_\_\_\_\_ to be used for its general purposes, and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or duly authorised officer of Sight Concern Worcestershire shall be a full and sufficient discharge. In all other respects I confirm my said will and any other codicils thereto.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

In the presence of:

**Witness 1**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Witness 2**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

