

“What’s On @” – January - February

Welcome to the January/February edition of the Wandsworth Vision Newsletter. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas period and are ready for what we hope will be a fruitful and eventful 2019. As always you will find information about regular Wandsworth Vision activities; one-off Wandsworth Vision events, and details about external activities and events hosted by other charities and organisations. We’ve also included an ‘In the News’ section to keep you in the loop about the latest news stories related to sight loss and a simple recipe suggestion courtesy of Barbara, our Healthy and Safe Cookery class tutor.

Partial Centre Closure Tuesday 26th & Wednesday 27th February

On Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th February the centre will be partially closed due to the Living with Sight Loss sessions. Staff will be available to answer phone calls and emails but due to the sensitivity of the discussions that will be taking place during the 2-day sessions we ask that you avoid the centre if possible. There is a possibility that if you come to the centre you may be asked to leave. If you need to use the IT suite during this time, please let us know in advance. For more information about the Living with Sight Loss sessions please see the ‘Things to Look Out For’ section below.

Established Regular Services

- **Knitting group – weekly**
- **Over50s Social Club - weekly**
- **Talking news - distributed fortnightly**
- **TaiChi - weekly**
- **Technology Assistance by appointment**
- **General drop-in services by appointment**
- **Fish and chip social – monthly**
- **Low Vision Clinic – monthly**
- **Yoga – monthly (dates in the attached calendar)**

Just to reiterate what was mentioned in the last edition; if you are attending any of our classes – even if you’ve been attending the same class for years – we need you to confirm your attendance by phone or email at least a day before the classes please. We need to know who will be attending in advance for a few reasons; 1. So the tutors know how many people to expect for their classes and can adapt the sessions accordingly; 2. So classes are not oversubscribed; 3. So we have an accurate attendance record; 4. So that we can cancel a class and save the tutors a wasted journey to the centre should numbers be too low.

Things to look out for:

Wandsworth Vision Social

Where: Nando's 116-118 Balham High Road SW12 9AA.

When: Tuesday February 5th

Time: 1pm – 3pm

As you're (hopefully) aware we have resumed our monthly socials based on your feedback. Since October we have organised two socials, both of which were well attended. The socials are a great opportunity to catch up for a natter over a nice meal, particularly for those of you who can't always make it to the centre.

If you would like to attend, **please phone or email the centre by Tuesday 29th January**. It's very important that you let us know if you will be attending **in advance** so we are able to book a table to accommodate the right number of people. **We will not be registering anyone after this date.** As always, if you require help getting to Nando's you can meet staff at the Centre at 12:40pm. We won't be waiting for latecomers so it's in your best interest to arrive on time!

Living with Sight Loss – Feb 2019

Where: Balham Resource Centre

When: Tuesday 26th & Wednesday 27th February

Time: Tuesday 10am-4pm; Wednesday 10am-3pm **Please note the centre will be partially closed on these days**

In the previous edition of our newsletter we mentioned how successful the Living with Sight Loss course that took place in September had been. If you were unable to attend, then there will be another opportunity as we will be running the course again in February.

Living with sight loss (LWSL) is a two-day informal course providing information, support and practical advice for people adjusting to sight loss. LWSL gives people a safe and non-judgmental space to discuss the effects of sight loss and covers areas such as:

- Welfare rights
- Getting out and about
- Tips and gadgets for everyday living
- Assistive technology – including tablets and phones
- Eye health

- Leisure, hobbies and interests.
- Other helpful organizations and services.

The sessions will be taking place at Balham Resource Centre and attendees are welcome to bring a trusted friend; family member or carer. For more information and to register your interest please call **0208 675 4246** or email brc@pocklington-trust.org.uk

Volunteer with Wandsworth Vision

We appreciate that you're all busy people but if you have a little time to spare and enjoy interacting with others then why not volunteer with us? There's no reason why you can't use the service *and* volunteer. You can volunteer for as little as one hour a week at the centre or on an ad-hoc basis. *We'd also like to hear from people who have any particular skills or talents that they are willing to share on a voluntary basis so if you, or someone you know would like to volunteer with us then please let us know or email volunteering@pocklington-trust.org.uk.*

Fish & Chips

A quick note about the monthly Fish & Chips lunch. As you know the cost of a fish and chips meal is £5 however, if you would like a pie in place of fish or fish that isn't the 'fish of the day' then you will need to make up the difference please as these are slightly more expensive. Generally speaking the fish of the day is usually Cod or Wolffish and is usually around £6-£7 without chips and pies are usually £5 without chips.

External Events & Activities

Please note the events below are not organised or run by Wandsworth Vision so please register your interest or any queries you may have using the contact details in this section.

LVIF

The 2019 meeting dates for the London Visual Impairment Forum (LVIF) are as follows:

Friday 29th March

Friday 28th June

Friday 27th September

Friday 13th December

If you would like to attend any of these meetings, join the LVIF mailing list or receive the bulletins please email Liam O'Carroll at lvif@londonvision.org or call **07970 231583**

Christmas Tours of Parliament

The Palace of Westminster is open for tours this Christmas.

This festive season, have a change of scenery with a tour of the Houses of Parliament! They are open for guided or audio tours between 22 December 2018 and 5 January 2019.

Book online or call 020 7219 4114.

Introducing the Monthly Mingle

In the words of Bob Hoskins in the old BT advert, 'It's good to talk!'. With this in mind, we would like your feedback about a potential 'Monthly Mingles' that we are interested in introducing.

What is it?

Not everyone is able to make it to the resource centre meaning that they often miss out on the social interactions that can sometimes be so important. To address this, we are thinking about hosting monthly get togethers – or ‘Monthly Mingles’ across Wandsworth. Here are a few examples of what these meet ups could include:

- A bookclub – members agree on a book to read then come together to discuss it
- Guest speakers
- Information sessions

Ultimately though, these sessions are informal, and the direction of these meet ups will be based on what you would like (within reason of course!). If you’d just like to chat to each other over coffee and cake, this is absolutely fine.

Where will they be?

The locations of these meetings is dependent on feedback from you. For example; if it turns out that the majority of people who are interested live in Putney, Balham and Tooting then the meetings will take place in each of those areas for period of three months each, so, a meeting once or twice a month for three months in Putney; once or twice a month for three months in Balham and then once or twice a month in Tooting. Of course, we will need to ensure we have a venue in each of the areas of interest so initially the meetings will probably take place at the local library in each area as we understand that for most people, the local library is well known and

relatively easy to get to. There will need to be a minimum of 5 attendees from any given area in order for a group to be set up there.

If you would like to register your interest or have any questions or suggestions please contact Karice on: **020 8675 4246** or email: Karice.baker-quow@pocklington-trust.org.uk

Charles Bonnet Syndrome Information Day

Friday 16th November was Charles Bonnet Syndrome Information Day. It was well attended and full of useful and eye-opening information. In addition to Judith Potts, Founder of [Esme's Umbrella](#), speakers also included a host of eye health specialists as well as personal accounts of living with CBS by retired Social Worker Elizabeth Baio and Disability Rights Campaigner Dr Amit Patel. Attendees included people with CBS; rehab workers, people from the charity sector and much more, and the focus was on how professionals can best advise and support patients with CBS.

What made this event particularly useful was that rather than a gathering of professionals talking *about* patients it provided an opportunity for patients and professionals to engage in conversations. Topics included how best to ensure that both parties can work together to raise awareness amongst professionals; the importance of ensuring

that both professionals and patients are able to access the correct information about CBS and current research in to the condition.

What is Charles Bonnet Syndrome?

Charles Bonnet Syndrome effects people who have lost all or a significant amount of sight and causes them to experience visual hallucinations. These hallucinations are purely the result of sight loss and are not attributed to dementia or problems with mental health. “There are two main types of hallucinations people with CBS will experience, the first is simple repeated patterns or shapes and the second is complex hallucinations of people, objects and landscapes. The hallucinations do not involve hearing things or feeling things that are not there and people are usually aware that what they are seeing is not real” (Understanding Charles Bonnet Syndrome, RNIB).

If you or someone you know would like to speak to someone about CBS you can call the **Esme’s Umbrella Helpline on: 0207 391 3299** or **Retina UK on: 0845 132 2354**

Attention bookworms!

If you love reading, then you may be interested in the Dolphin EasyReader App. Dolphin contacted us recently to tell us about the app and their promise that it will remain FREE but before we get in to that...

What is Dolphin EasyReader?

Easy Reader is “the world’s most accessible reading app” and is designed for people with dyslexia, low vision or blindness. Dolphin EasyReader allows users to browse and download books from the world’s largest collection of accessible book and newspaper services and is compatible with VoiceOver and TalkBack.

You can access RNIB Overdrive, RNIB Bookshare and others providing you already have an account with these libraries. In short, Dolphin is basically “Just one app to access all of your favourite libraries”. Additional features include the option to add a human sounding voice to text only books and, for those with some useful sight there is also the option to access text as large as you need with no limits or restrictions. The app is completely free and is available on both Android and iOS. Here’s what Dolphin has to say about their EasyReader app:

“Last year, we launched our [EasyReader accessible reading app](#), for people with blindness, low vision and dyslexia. Available for download from the iOS App Store or Google Play, EasyReader empowers readers with a vision or print impairment to browse and read books and papers from 20+ digital libraries.

Apparently, EasyReader's premium quality has raised some questions about whether it will always continue to be a free app. We confirm that **EasyReader for iOS and Android** will always be free to individual users and will continue to support the DAISY and EPUB formats.

With ongoing support from our partner libraries, we are committed to free EasyReader app usage by library members of library content. We often receive new requests from libraries all over the world - you can find a full list on the [library page of the website](#).

You can read more from Noel Duffy, our CEO, about the sustainability of free EasyReader in [this article in the DAISY Planet](#).

Finally, EasyReader was recently confirmed as the most accessible reading app for iOS, Android and Windows by EpubTest.Org - you can find out more in our [news item](#).

For more information contact Sales or Support at Dolphin's head office, in the United Kingdom: Tel: +44 (0) 1905 754 577 or Email: info@yourdolphin.com

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In the News...

[Tactile Excel sheets and Graphics to boost job prospects for blind people](#)

Horizon, Steve Gillman, 20th November 2018

Touchscreens and digital graphics are everywhere, but for people who are visually impaired, they can be a major hurdle to using modern technology. But this is set to change, thanks to tactile technology that automatically converts complex digital graphics into braille and stick-on smartphone buttons that make apps navigable by touch.

There are [30 million](#) blind or partially sighted people in Europe and only one in four of these individuals are working. Even those in employment still have to rely on support or assistive technology to carry out their daily tasks.

‘Blind people are almost kept apart from society because they can’t interact or lead a normal life like everybody else,’ said Klaus-Peter Hars, managing director of Inventivio, a German IT company developing assistive technology solutions. ‘That is a loss for the individual, but also for society – so much knowledge, experience and capabilities are just not put to work.’

Hars and his team have developed a device called [Tactonom](#), an A4-sized touch pad that turns digital graphics into a tactile display and enables blind people to access complex digital information like tables, graphics, maps, diagrams and apps.

‘The problem with the internet revolution is that information has become more and more graphic,’ said Hars. ‘That’s a killer for blind people because they need (different) technology to help them access that.’

In about three to five seconds, Tactonom uses complex software to translate digital information into braille text, which is a touch-based language that uses a series of raised dots to represent words or images. The pad has 10,591 tactile points and uses a camera to track the blind person’s fingers so it can arrange graphical information around in them in a coherent manner. There is also a voice assistant to read aloud particularly complex parts which cannot be displayed by braille because of size limits of the pad.

[This visually impaired woman has designed a buggy that lets blind parents know if there are obstacles ahead](#)

Amy Packham, 18th April 2018

This story is from April 2018 but we wanted to include it not only because it’s such a great idea but also because Ramona is a former Wandsworth Vision member!

A visually-impaired woman has designed a buggy that will make parents who have sight problems aware of obstacles in their path through technology normally used in self-driving cars.

Ramona Williams, 34, from Fulham, London, has had her design turned into a physical buggy by students at Imperial College, London. Williams has a series of eye conditions including congenital toxoplasmosis, which has impaired her vision since birth. She says she wouldn't feel comfortable using a pushchair as she would have to hold her cane folded up under her hands-on top of the handle bar.

"I want the option to have children, but I know there are barriers to that, including travel," she said. "When I have tried to navigate my nephews and nieces in a buggy with a cane I realised how inaccessible it was to use both."

Williams found out about an innovation session being run at Imperial College's new White City campus through her local council and went along. She explained her idea for a buggy that people with sight loss would be able to use and it was chosen for a design engineering student project. She met with the students to discuss her invention and was pleased at how keen they were to take themselves out of their comfort zone in order to understand the boundaries faced by those with limited vision.

The team of second year biomedical engineering students has worked with Ramona since October 2017 to bring her idea to reality. The buggy has sensors on the front and a bracket at the foot of the buggy for holding the user's smartphone through which it is able to gain information about the ground ahead of the buggy.

By installing an app designed by the team, the smartphone can recognise various landmarks such as braille bumps, corners, and drop-offs, via its camera. The app then sends signals to vibration motors in the handlebar. Through different types of vibrations, the designers have created a touch-based language for communicating to the user when they are approaching hazards.

The buggy also has a bracket for holding the user's cane, and a bright yellow 'Visually Impaired Parent' sign on its front to inform oncoming traffic and people.

Healthy & Safe Cookery Classes

Cooking can be both a joy and a hassle, particularly when sight loss is involved so if you would like some handy tips and quick, easy and healthy recipes then why not join our health and safety cookery group? It's great for beginners and, since most of the food is cooked using a steamer it's perfect for those who are not yet comfortable using a conventional oven or cooker. Classes take place every two weeks on Friday mornings from

10:30 – 12:30 and are led by the lovely Barbara. The cost is £4 per class. A few weeks ago, the class made mashed eggs and crackers with pumpkin and carrot salad; perfect for lunch or a light dinner. The recipe is below if you'd like to give it a try!

Mashed eggs and crackers with pumpkin and carrot salad

Serves 2

You will need:

- A steamer
- A grater
- A vegetable peeler

Ingredients:

- 4 Eggs
- 1 carrot
- Sliced pumpkin – these can be bought washed and cut from most supermarkets
- 4 crackers or crispreads – we recommend good quality crackers/crispbreads such as cracked black pepper crackers available from most supermarkets or emmental cheese and pumpkin seed crispbread available from specialist health food shops

- Quinoa
- The juice of half a lime
- 1tbsp of olive oil
- Salt

Method

1. Peel, wash and grate the carrot. Add a small cap full of olive oil, and the lime juice, mix and set aside.
2. Boil or steam the eggs (If using a three-tier steamer place the eggs on the bottom tier as they will cook faster)
3. Steam the pumpkin (if using a three-tier steamer place the pumpkin on the middle tier)
4. Wash the quinoa by placing it in a sieve and running it under cold water for a few minutes. Once washed, place the Quinoa in the steamer (if using a three-tier steamer place the Quinoa at the top) and cover with water (approx. 2 parts water to one-part Quinoa)
5. Once the eggs have boiled, allow them to cool then peel them, place them in a bowl and, using a fork mash the eggs in to a paste. (You may want to add a drizzle of olive oil to help create the 'pasty' consistency). Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. Spread the egg on to each cracker and top with a pinch of parsley
7. Serve with the quinoa, (with added add salt and pepper to taste) carrots and pumpkin.

Calendar of Social Events & Activities

The below table includes only the activities run at the Balham Resource Centre (BRC) or which have been organised to take place elsewhere by Wandsworth Vision.

BRC re-opens on Monday 7th January 2019

Activity/Event	Venue	Date	Time Start	Time End	Cost £	Frequency	Notes
Art Class	BRC	Monday 7 th January	2pm	4pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 10 th January	2PM	4PM	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 10 th January	3PM	5PM	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 14 th January	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance

Art Class	BRC	Monday 14 th January	1:30	3:30pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Yoga	BRC	TBC	10:30	11:30	Free	Monthly but dates may vary	Wear comfortable clothes, suitable for light exercise. Register in advance.
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 17 th January	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50p for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 17 th January	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1 hour sessions
Low Vision Clinic	BRC	Thursday 17 th January	11am	3pm	Free	Monthly	By pre-arranged half hour appointments
knitting Club	BRC	Monday 21 st January	10:30	12:30	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 21 st January	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 for Winter semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 24 th January	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only

TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 24 th January	3pm	5pm	Free	enrolment only	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 28 th January	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 28 th January	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 31 st January	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 31 st January	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Knitting Group	BRC	Monday 4th February	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 4 th February	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 each per semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
BRC Social	Nando's 116-118 Balham High Road SW12 9AA.	Tuesday 5 th February	1pm	3pm	Attendees to pay for their own meals & drinks	One-off social	Register in Advance

Yoga	BRC	TBC	10:30am	11:30am	Free	Monthly but dates can vary	Wear comfortable clothing, suitable for light exercise. Register in advance.
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 7 th February	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshment	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 7 th February	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	2 consecutive 1-hour sessions
Healthy & Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 8 th February	10:30am	12:30pm	£4 per class	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 11 th February	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 11 th February	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Over-50s Social	BRC	Thursday 14 th February	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 14 th February	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	Two separate consecutive one-hour classes

Dance	BRC	Friday 15 th February	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 18 th February	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Low Vision Clinic	BRC	Thursday 21 st February	11am	3pm	Free	Monthly	By pre-arranged half-hour appointments
Over-50s social	BRC	Thursday 21 st February	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
TaiChi	BRC	Thursday 21 st February	3pm	5pm	Free	Weekly	Two consecutive one-hour sessions
Healthy & Safe Cookery	BRC	Friday 22 nd February	10:30am	12:30pm	£4 per class	Fortnightly	Register in advance
Knitting Club	BRC	Monday 25 th February	10:30am	12:30pm	Free	Weekly	Register in advance
Art Class	BRC	Monday 25 th February	1:30pm	3:30pm	£20 per person for this semester	Weekly	By enrolment only
Living with Sight Loss Pt 1	BRC	Tuesday 26 th February	10am	4pm	Free	One-off session	Register in advance

Living with Sight Loss Pt 2	BRC	Wednesday 27 th February	10am	3pm	Free	One-off session	Register in advance
Over 50s Social Group	BRC	Thursday 28 th February	2pm	4pm	£5 for transport, 50P for refreshments	Weekly	Transport for Wandsworth residents only
Fish & Chips	BRC	Thursday 28 th February	2pm	4pm	£5	Monthly	Register in advance