

Sutton Vision
Enabling and Empowering

CONTACT

Winter / Christmas Issue 61



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Contents

Editorial	1
Quote for the Quarter	1
Chairman's Christmas Message	2
Test Your Knowledge Christmas Quiz!	3
Christmas Posting Dates	3
Would You Like Some Company On Christmas Day?	4
Tech Talk	4
Eye Drops	5
Unassisted Blind Marathon Runner	6
New Social and Peer Support Groups	6
Synapptic Tablet	7
Holidays For People Who Are Visually Impaired	7/8
Hospital Eye Clinic Experience	9
Test Your Knowledge Christmas Quiz - Answers!	10
Brooklands Museum Opening Ceremony	10
V I Leisure Group	11
3rd Cheam Scout Cubs	12
Regular Dates	13
Useful Telephone Numbers	14

Editorial

On behalf of Sutton Vision, we wish all our readers a peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year.

It's possible a number of us wrote New Year Resolutions, at the beginning of 2017. As we reflect on the past 12 months – how many did we manage to keep? How many mistakes did we make! How many hiccups did we overcome?!

As we approach 2018 with its many challenges for individuals (and Sutton Vision as an organisation), we have a wonderful opportunity to make a fresh start with renewed vigour.

Brad Paisley once wrote:

"Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365 page book.
Write a good one."

Comments and contributions from Sutton Vision members and local partners are always welcome and may be sent to our Editor, at editor@suttonvision.org.uk. We are always interested to hear what you think of the newsletter, its contents, and to receive ideas about articles for inclusion.

Please note: the deadline for the Spring edition of Contact is Thursday 8th March.

Quote for the Quarter

The past is history, the future a mystery.
Today is a gift, that's why it's called the 'present'!

Chairman's Christmas Message

Just before settling down to ponder what to write in this year's Christmas message, I had been listening to my computer reading out the 4th edition of SV's Volunteer Newsletter, ably edited by Amanda Larter our Volunteer Coordinator. It then occurred to me that a Christmas Message would provide a golden opportunity to express just how much our volunteers are appreciated by the Sutton Vision Board of Trustees. All our Trustees firmly believe that we can never thank our volunteers enough, because without them our organisation could not exist.

The Trustees themselves, of course, are volunteers, but it is the volunteers working directly with our service users, very often on a one to one basis, that can make so much difference to people who, through no fault of their own, are restricted and frustrated by a disability. So often a small gesture of support for such people can be considered insignificant or even unnecessary by some fully fit members of society but, in reality, it can be of great help and a source of pleasure much appreciated by people with sight loss, impaired mobility and a feeling of loneliness. In fact, appropriate support for such people can bring about the restoration of self-confidence and the creation of a much improved life style. I therefore applaud and thank all our volunteers who so generously give of their time and experience in supporting our service users. Working in harmony with our very experienced and caring staff, they make Sutton Vision a successful and effective charity for visually impaired people. Well done, and thank you once again.

I and my fellow Trustees send our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to our staff, volunteers and service users.

Eric Kennedy



Test Your Knowledge!

1. Which Christmas item was invented by Tom Smith in 1847?
2. Which Christmas Carol contains the lyric: "Glory shone around"?
3. Which nickname for Hollywood sounds Christmassy?
4. If you were born on Christmas Day what would be your Zodiac sign?
5. According to the song, what is given on the 7th day of Christmas and what were they doing?
6. What's the Christian penitential season from end of November to Christmas?
7. A word for wine that has been heated?
8. Which country gives a Christmas tree to Britain every year?
9. Who is Aladdin's mother?
10. Which Christmas Carol was sung by soldiers on both sides of the trenches during the Christmas Eve ceasefire of 1914?

Answers on page 10

Questions obtained from www.paulsquiz.com

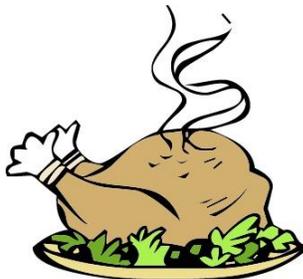
Christmas Posting Dates

To ensure your cards arrive in time for Christmas the last recommended posting dates issued by the Post Office are:



1st class – Thursday 21st December, 2nd class – Wednesday 20th December.

Would You Like Some Company On Christmas Day?



Once again, the Churches Together in Wallington and Beddington will be hosting their very popular Christmas Day Lunch. The lunch will be held at St. Patrick's Church, Park Hill Road, Wallington SM6 0RU. For further details please contact Frances Drake on 020 8647 2688 or francesmdrake@aol.com. If you require transport please contact George Dow on 020 8669 0608 or georgedow51@btinternet.com

Tech Talk

Staff, volunteers and clients recently took part in a demo of Amazon Echo/Alexa and the Amazon Fire tablet, which has Alexa built in.

Participants gained practical advice, information and really useful tips on the devices and apps designed for people with sight loss.

Thank you to Chris from the Technology team at Thomas Pocklington Trust for leading the session.

We hope you will join us for more demo events on smart devices and apps with Sutton Vision in the New Year. The next date for your diary is Thursday 22nd February; please call 020 8409 7166 to register your interest.

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Eye Drops

You may use regular prescription eye drops for conditions such as glaucoma or you may be using them short term, however, it is important that you administer them correctly.



The RNIB suggest following the steps:

Step 1: Wash and dry your hands. Do this thoroughly with a clean towel before you start. This helps reduce the chances of infection.

Step 2: Gently shake the bottle. Open the lid of the dropper and place it on its side and not downwards on the table. Do not touch the tip of the eye drop bottle with your finger or make contact with your eye, lashes or skin. This is to keep it clean and reduce the chances of infection.

Step 3: Put your head back or if this is difficult for you to do then lie down. Look up to the ceiling and pull your lower lid down making a 'pocket'. Squeeze the bottle releasing a drop into the lower eye lid. You may wish to rest your hand. For example, holding the eye drop bottle against your forehead can help steady your hand and stop you from catching your eye with the dropper. You could also rest the bottle on the bridge of your nose.

Step 4: Close your eyelid gently. Use your finger and press gently on the inner corner of your eye closest to your nose for a slow count of 30. This will reduce the taste of the medication in your throat and prevent it from entering the rest of your body.

Step 5: Wash and dry your hands. This helps to reduce the chances of infection.

It is possible to purchase eye drop dispensers from the RNIB [www.http://shop.rnib.org.uk](http://shop.rnib.org.uk) or enquire at your local pharmacy.

Unassisted Blind Marathon Runner

Simon Wheatcroft was just 17 years old when he was registered as blind and by the time he reached 27 he couldn't see at all.

On Sunday 5th November Simon became the first blind competitor to run unassisted in the New York City Marathon using ground-breaking technology that he helped develop. The most challenging part of blind running is the lack of ability to look ahead and see bumps in the road or kerbs and the inability to see others around you.

The modern technology consists of an armband which emits vibrations to guide him, warn him when other runners are getting close or when there are obstacles ahead. It connects with a smartphone via Bluetooth using information from apps. Pulses kept Simon running within a virtual corridor about 20 feet wide and helped him turn right and left using different signals.

He also wore an ultrasonic sensor on his chest which alerted him to runners crossing his path. Simon was using new technology never tested in a race before.

He crossed the finish line in 5 hours 17 minutes and 40 seconds.

New Social and Peer Support Groups

In 2018 Sutton Vision would like to expand their social and peer support groups, if you are interested in the following please call the Sutton Vision Team 020 8409 7166 to register your interest.

Scrabble Group
Art & Craft Group
Talking Sport lunch group
Art Therapy/Counselling

Synapptic Tablet

Are you aware of Synapptic software? It is an all in one software package for people who are visually impaired. It runs on Android Smartphones and Tablet computers.

Synapptic software offers easy to follow menus, voice control, clear speech feedback and large high-contrast text, making the tablet easy to use. Other features are voice dictation and hands-free control with voice commands, you don't need to type your messages just dictate them.

You can stay connected with the latest news and up to date with friends and family in a simple and accessible way.



We are pleased to let you know that Blind Veterans UK have kindly loaned Sutton Vision a pre-loaded Synapptic Tablet to enable us to offer training to you.

If you would like to know more please contact Vanessa on 020 8409 7166 or vanessavalentine@suttonvision.org.uk

Holidays for people who are Visually Impaired

With the winter months ahead are you turning your thoughts to a holiday next year at home or abroad?

There are a number of companies that can assist with your planning and some offer sighted guides to accompany you as you travel. Here are some you might like to consider, alternatively you can Google more – other search engines are available!

Seable Accessible Holidays for the Visually Impaired

“Our holidays are for individuals, couples, families or groups of friends. We offer a local chaperone services that will assist you during the entire holiday.”

Telephone 020 7749 4866 e-mail emma@seable.co.uk or visit their website www.seable.co.uk

Vision Hotels

“At Vision Hotels, the understanding of the needs of visually impaired people is at the core of all of the services and activities that our hotels provide, creating the perfect foundation to enable visually impaired hotel visitors to relax and have choice, to tailor their holiday around what they want to do and not what they are able to do.”

Telephone 0845 603 0051 e-mail info@visionhotels.co.uk or visit their website www.visionhotels.co.uk

Traveleyes Groups

“Our groups provide a safe, comfortable and fun way for any VI or sighted person to travel solo. Our groups are normally between 14 and 20 people and around half of the group are VI and half are fully sighted. We place a real emphasis on sensory experiences on our trips. We include lots of tastings and sensory excursions, such as vineyards, street markets and gardens and we dine together in the evenings.”

Telephone 0113 834 6094 or visit their website www.traveleyes-international.com



Hospital Eye Clinic Experience

Research has shown that there is often not enough time to explain a diagnosis, treatment plan, procedure or the longer term implications of sight loss. People often leave hospital without any information or advice on how to cope on a practical or emotional level.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) are running a campaign to install non-medical specialist support workers in eye units across the country. These specialists are known as Eye Clinic Liaison Officers (ECLO) or Sight Loss Advisers (SLA). They are key in supporting patients to understand the impact of their diagnosis and provide them with emotional and practical support.



Ann Ryan

Sutton Vision, in partnership with Epsom and St Helier Trust, are pleased to have an ECLO based at the eye unit of St Helier Hospital.

Ann Ryan (pictured) is on hand to offer advice, guidance and support patients before, during and after appointments. Ann can be contacted on 07920 650 613 or 020 8296 2000 (Ext 8718) or alternatively you can contact the Sutton Vision team on 020 8409 7166.

We are interested in hearing about your experiences at St Helier Hospital Eye Unit, good or bad, to enable us to continue offering positive support and information. Please contact us on: **020 8409 7166** or via e-mail: info@suttonvision.org.uk.



Test Your Knowledge - Answers

1. Christmas cracker
2. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night
3. Tinseltown
4. Capricorn
5. Seven swans a-swimming
6. Advent
7. Mulled
8. Norway
9. Widow Twankey
10. Silent Night



Brooklands Museum Opening Ceremony

On Monday 13th November my partner, Delma, and I represented Sutton Vision at Brooklands Museum. It was the official opening of their new Aircraft Factory Exhibition, by HRH Prince Michael of Kent. I wrote a piece in Contact last year about how Sutton Vision took part in Brooklands consultations on signs as they wanted to make the exhibition as accessible as possible.

The first purpose built motor racing circuit in the world opened at Brooklands in 1907 and parts of the circuit and its famous banked corners are still there. With the outbreak of World War 2 the site was taken over for aircraft production which continued there until the early 1970's by which time it had produced more than 18,000 aircraft. No single site in Europe has produced as many.

The new permanent exhibition shows how aircraft were built and gives people the opportunity to try their hand at some of the tasks involved. It is housed in part of a war time hanger, a Grade 2 listed building which, with the help of a £5.5m Lottery Heritage grant, has been dismantled, re-furbished and re-built.

Although officially open there is still some work to be done but so far, as a visually impaired person, I was impressed by their efforts. The information panels in front of aircraft on display are perhaps a bit small but again, using good contrasting colours with tactile outline drawings of the aircraft. The overall lighting level is a little low but it is supposed to represent the reality of an old factory.

We intend going back in the spring to do the full tour. The museum has made a real effort to make it more accessible to all and I applaud them for that. Brooklands has a lovely collection of old vehicles and aircraft from Sopwith Camel to Concorde. The staff and volunteers are all helpful and knowledgeable. In the summer months you can ride in a vintage car along part of the old circuit. Great fun! It is definitely a museum I recommend. Their website has lots of information about the new exhibition and the rest of the museum, to find out more go to www.brooklandsmuseum.com. By Adrian Andrews

VI Leisure Group

Over the years a number of VI people and friends have met on a regular basis at various venues in the Borough for social groups and activities. The VILG organises its own programme and acts as the point of contact for participants. Although Sutton Vision supports and encourages the VILG and their activities, those partaking should be aware that any events organised directly by the VILG are independent of Sutton Vision and are the responsibility of the VILG only. If you are interested in finding out more please contact Sue Christie on 07891 783291 or e-mail susanchristie48@outlook.com

3rd Cheam Scout Cubs



During October we had the opportunity to talk to the young cubs who meet at their headquarters at Stonecot Hill about the problems experienced by people who have a visual impairment.

We arranged two evenings for them one with activities to complete giving them ideas of how difficult tasks can be such as finding their way round and when something may be in the way. This was done by using Simi specs and blindfolds pairing them off in twos and then on their own with Micks canes. They really participated well in these exercises and took it seriously.

They took time looking at aids which can be used such as magnifying glasses, special technology which enlarges items and came up with ideas themselves which they felt might help.

We talked about the value of having a guide dog and they asked lots of questions regarding having one for assistance.

On the second evening we asked Tracy and Urwin her great guide dog to join us. As you can imagine this went down very well with the boys and girls and they asked Tracy lots of question possible that adults may not ask, they do not feel embarrassed at this age. Urwin was the star of the evening he loved being with them and they were able to come up and stroke him at the end receiving a sticker from Guide Dogs. They then went on to have their pictures taken with us three and Urwin and you will see from the one chosen they enjoyed having us with them.

By Shirley & Michael Mitchell



Regular Dates

For information on any of these activities please call Sutton Vision on 020 8409 7166

Event	Date	Venue
Music Group	3 rd Thursday of each month 11.30 a.m. -1.30 pm	SCILL Centre, Robin Hood Lane, Sutton
Social Eyes	1 st and 3rd Thursday each month 2.00 – 4.00 p.m	SCILL Centre, Robin Hood Lane, Sutton
Friendly Club	Alternate Wednesdays 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.	Thomas Wall Centre, Benhill Ave, Sutton
Hello! Club	Every Thursday 10.00 a.m -12.00 noon	Christchurch & St Philip, Cheam Common Road, Worcester Park
Sutton Macular Group Monthly Meeting	2 nd Monday of the month 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon	Friends Meeting House Cedar Road, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Waterstones	1 st Friday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Book Club	4 th Monday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Waterstones Book Shop, High Street, Sutton
VI Leisure Group Lunch Prince of Wales Pub	3 rd Tuesday of each month from 12.00 noon	The Prince of Wales, 28 Malden Road, Cheam,
VI Leisure Group Eve. The Hope Pub	1 st Monday of each month from 7.00 p.m.	The Hope Pub, 48 West Street, Carshalton
VI Leisure Group Coffee Morning Wallington	2 nd Wednesday of each month from 10.30 a.m.	Garden Café, Wallington Library



Useful Telephone Numbers

The following list of useful numbers includes an emergency number for the London Borough of Sutton and St Helier Hospital Eye Unit.

Advice Link Partnership Sutton (ALPS)	020 8254 2616
Age UK (Sutton)	020 8770 4090
Friendly Club	020 8669 4106
London Borough of Sutton	020 8770 5000
L B of Sutton Referral Point	020 8770 4565
Macular Society (National)	01264 350 551
Macular Society (Sutton)	07970 525 143
RNIB Helpline	0303 123 9999
St Helier Hosp Eye Unit	020 8296 3817
St Helier Hosp Eye Unit EMERGENCY	020 8296 3817
Sight Loss Advisor Ann Ryan	020 8296 2000 (Ex 8718) 07920 650 613
Sutton Carers Centre	020 8296 5611
Sutton Talking Newspaper	020 3759 6679