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01 December 2016

Welcome to our third Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) newsletter of 2016. We have a wide range of services and events on offer over the next few months, some of which are detailed below. Our office number for any queries or to book an event is **029 2039 8900**. Or you can keep up-to-date via our website at [www.cibi.co.uk](http://www.cibi.co.uk), Facebook page [www.facebook.com/CardiffInstitutefortheBlind](http://www.facebook.com/CardiffInstitutefortheBlind) and Twitter @CardiffBlind

May we take this opportunity to wish all of our service-users, volunteers and supporters a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

## Confidence building and daily living skills sessions

We will be holding sessions throughout the year at Jones Court to help people with sight loss and anyone who supports them. We will offer practical skills, hints and tips and cover topics such as money matters, transport, technology, shopping and health & wellbeing. Guest speakers will be invited to talk at each session.

Forthcoming sessions:

**Friday, 27 January 2017 - Making the most of your sight**

Brief outline of the day:

* Looking after your sight
* Low vision assessment checks and aids
* Products that can help
* Overview and demonstration of ‘Eccentric Viewing’

**Friday, 24 February 2017 - Connect to your community**

Brief outline of the day:

* Local and national services for blind and partially sighted people
* Accessing community services i.e. transport, other third sector, fire brigade home safety checks, etc
* An introduction to leisure, health and wellbeing
* How to connect with other people with sight loss

**Friday 31 March 2017 – Money matters and shopping**

Brief outline of the day:

* Benefits and tax allowance
* Getting the most out of banking
* Using assistive products; coin holders, signature guides, etc
* Utilities and other services
* Tips on making shopping easier

If you are interested in attending, please contact the office on 02920 398900.

## Audio Described Tours at the National Museum, Cardiff

Blind and partially sighted visitors to National Museum Cardiff can now attend a guided audio described tour of the collections free of charge. The tours will run every other month on a Thursday for 90 minutes, will focus on a different theme each time and will usually include touching elements. Guided assistance from Museum staff is available but limited, so booking is essential. For further information or to book your space please contact 029 2057 3315.

## Focus on eye conditions: Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

* Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) usually affects people over 60, but can happen earlier. It is the most common cause of sight loss in the developed world. In the UK over 600,000 people are affected.

**Dry AMD**

* Dry AMD causes a gradual deterioration of the macula, usually, over many years, as the retinal cells die off and are not regenerated. The name ‘dry’ does not mean the person has dry eyes just that the condition is not ‘wet’ AMD. Around 10 to 15% of people with dry AMD go on to develop wet AMD. If you have dry AMD and notice a sudden change in your vision, it is important that you contact your optometrist, or hospital eye specialist, urgently. If you have AMD in one eye, the other eye may also be affected within a few years.

**Wet AMD**

* In wet AMD abnormal blood vessels grow into the macula and leak blood or fluid which leads to scarring of the macula and rapid loss of central vision. Wet AMD can develop very suddenly. It can now be treated if caught quickly. Fast referral to a hospital specialist is essential.

**Symptoms**

* Macular degeneration affects different people in different ways. You may not notice any change in your vision during the early stages, especially if you have AMD in only one eye. However, as macular cells deteriorate, your ability to see clearly will change:
* Straight lines such as door frames and lampposts may appear distorted or bent
* Vision may become blurry or develop gaps
* Objects in front of you may change shape, size, colour or seem to move or disappear
* Dark spots, such as a smudge on glasses, could appear in the centre of your vision
* Colours can fade
* You may find bright light glaring and uncomfortable
* You may find it difficult to adapt from dark to light environments
* Words might disappear when you are reading
* AMD is painless, so if you have eye pain seek urgent medical advice.

## Visual hallucinations

Some people with sight loss experience visual hallucinations, known as **Charles Bonnet Syndrome**. Many worry unnecessarily that there is something wrong with their mind.  It is important to understand that the hallucinations are a natural experience and not a sign of mental illness.

Up to half of all people with macular degeneration are thought to experience visual hallucinations at some time. They are more likely to occur if both eyes are affected by sight loss. Charles Bonnet hallucinations can be simple unformed flashes of light, colours or shapes. However, many people see geometrical grids and lattices. Some people also report seeing landscaped gardens or vistas, animals, people, or other vivid images.

The Macular Society sponsored research by Dr Dominic Ffytche of the Institute of Psychiatry in London into non-drug treatments for visual hallucinations. Dr Ffytche recommends using eye movements to lessen hallucination impact and length. Eye movements activate visual parts of the brain in people with macular disease even if they have little remaining vision. These movements may stop certain types of hallucinations, particularly the grids, checkerboards, lattices and colours.

**For further information contact:**

CIB: 029 2039 8900

Macular Society on 0300 303 0111

RNIB Helpline: 0303 123 9999

## Skills for seeing

Macular conditions, such as age-related macular degeneration or juvenile macular dystrophies, cause loss of central vision. Skills for seeing training can help you to use your vision more effectively. Learning new ways of seeing can help with reading, taking care of yourself, getting about and watching TV. Macular Society train volunteers to teach two techniques, which can help you use your vision more effectively.

The first technique, eccentric viewing, involves identifying and using the healthiest parts of your vision. Many people often adopt this technique as they adjust to their sight loss.

The second technique is steady eye strategy, which involves learning a new way to read text. These techniques do not work for everyone. However, learning them will not damage your vision and when they do work, many people say they feel more confident and have more control over their lives.

For more information about skills for seeing and for free one-to-one coaching in these techniques, which are usually held in our Activity Room at Jones Court call CIB on 029 2039 8900 or contact the Macular Society helpline on 0300 30 30 111 or email help@macularsociety.org

## Products

We have a wide range of products and gadgets to help with everyday living at our Resource Centre in Jones Court. Why not pop in, our staff and volunteers will be more than happy to show you around, you can have a coffee and they might even find you a biscuit!



* **Featured product:**
1. **Calendars and diaries**

We have a selection of large print 2017

calendars and diaries in stock, prices

start from £4.49. All have big bold print

on high quality paper ensuring you

can read dates and notes.

## Get Digitally Included with Online Today

Online Today is a free service from RNIB Cymru and is available across Wales for people with sight loss.

It can help you understand the benefits of being online; including how to stay in touch with family and friends by using e-mail and Skype; how save money by getting better internet deals and how to use the inbuilt accessibility features on Smartphones, tablets, laptops and e-readers.

## Apps we can’t live without

A smart phone or tablet is nothing without apps. There are hundreds of them available and no matter what your interests, there is one for you. Here is a free one that can support people with sensory loss:

## TapTapSee

TapTapSee uses the camera on your tablet or Smartphone to identify objects in photos. Simply take a picture by double tapping the screen and the app will give you a description of the items in the picture. If you have the phones' screen reader turned on it will read the description aloud.

Want to know more?

Call 029 2082 8518 or e-mail Onlinetodaycymru@rnib.org.uk

## Managing Better

A partnership service between Care & Repair Cymru, RNIB Cymru and Action on Hearing Loss Cymru has been launched. The new service called Managing Better is aimed at people aged over 50 with a sensory impairment, and has specialist caseworkers based in offices across Wales. They're able to make home calls to assess and improve older peoples' living environments - for example, repairs and maintenance, safety, security, heating, lighting, improvements and adaptations to help keep them safe, warm and independent at home and prevent unplanned admissions to care.

For further information contact 0300 111 3333.

## RNIB Talking Books

RNIB Talking Books service is now absolutely free. Giving you access to over 23,000 fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children you can choose to receive your books on DAISY CD (one book per disc) or USB stick (three books per stick) depending on your personal taste. Talking Books are also available by digital download. For more information please contact the office or you can call RNIB Helpline direct on 0303 123 9999.

## Focus on: Marilyn Campbell, CIB volunteer

Marilyn, who is registered blind, has been a CIB service-user for over 10 years. She first came to CIB for computer training and once her confidence grew she joined our Discussion Group and then became a volunteer. One of her roles involves talking to groups of people who have recently been affected by some loss of sight, where she shares her advice on the things that make daily life safer and easier. This includes a whole range of subjects, from applying make up to global travelling.

Marilyn is now a Campaigns Volunteer and regularly speaks to groups and organisations on behalf of CIB and RNIB, giving them a personal insight about living with sight loss and also information about the services and support available for blind and partially sighted people.

Her most recent venture has been with University of Cardiff School of Optometry working with Professor James Morgan. She has delivered talks to over 100 medical students on loss of sight and living with sight loss also talking about the many services of CIB and RNIB.

Please let us know if you are interested in volunteering.

**A chance to enjoy cycling in Cardiff's beautiful parks**

Are you interested in cycling or do you know someone who is?  Pedal Power is a charity based in Cardiff that encourages and enables children and adults of all ages and abilities to experience the benefits of cycling. They now have trained volunteers to accompany cyclists on tandem bikes. For further information contact:

Pedal Power on 029 2039 0713 or CIB on 029 2039 8900.

## A place to meet, make friends and have fun

We have many clubs and groups that you can get involved in such as gardening, walking and singing. A full list is attached. If you think you would like to attend any or all of the groups, please contact the office and we will give you more information and tell you how you can get involved. Many people say the groups are real lifeline, where they make new friends, try new activities or do some of the things they used to do before it became difficult because of a deterioration in the sight. These groups offer a great opportunity for meeting and talking to other blind and partially sighted people, building confidence and independence and most importantly having a lot of fun!

## Useful telephone numbers:

CIB 029 2039 8900

RNIB Helpline 0303 123 9999

Smell Gas? Wales & West Utilities 0800 111 999

Power cut? Western Power Distribution 0800 6783 105

Care & Repair, Managing Better 0300 111 3333

Cardiff Institute for the Blind (CIB) is part of the RNIB Group of charities. In order to provide you with the best and most efficient service, we need to use some personal information about you so that we can deliver services to you.

We do not share or trade customer data outside of the RNIB Group unless required by a legal duty. If we need to refer you to another organisation as part of the service you are receiving from us, we will confirm with you each time that you are happy to release your information. The RNIB Data Protection Policy is available on request.

**Clubs and Groups**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Weekly Meetings** |  |  |  |
| GROUP | DATE | START | FINISH | LOCATION |
| Thursday Club | Thursday | 10.30am | 2.30pm | St Andrews Church, Wellfield Road/Pen-y-Lan Road |
| Gardening Club | Friday | 10.30am | 12.30pm | Rhydypennau Allotments Lake Rd North/Garden Centres |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Fortnightly Meetings** |  |  |  |
| GROUP | DATE | START | FINISH | LOCATION |
| Singing Group | 1st & 3rd Tuesday | 2.00pm | 4.00pm | Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1BR |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Monthly Meetings** |  |  |  |
| GROUP | DATE | START | FINISH | LOCATION |
| Conversation Club | 2nd Monday | 10.00am  | 12.00pm | Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1BR |
| Macular Group | Last Friday | 10.30am | 12.30pm | Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1BR |
| Music Appreciation | 2nd Wed | 2pm | 3.30pm | Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1BR |
| Shand Pioneer's | Last Thursday | 6.30pm | 9.30pm | The Croft, Crofts Street & Outings |
| Woman's Hour | Last Tuesday | 10.30am | 3.00pm | Various locations  |
| The CIB Ramblers | 1st week of the month | Alternate Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday | Interesting walks across South Wales - varied lengths and terrains |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Quarterly Meeting** |  |  |  |
| GROUP | DATE | START | FINISH | LOCATION |
| Poetry Club | 1st Wednesday of March, June, September & December | 2.00pm | 3.30pm | Jones Court, Womanby Street, Cardiff CF10 1BR |
| Theatre Group | Dependent on Audio Described performances - usually at Wales Millennium Centre |
| Glaucoma Support  | Contact the office for further information |
| Paws for a Chat | For Guide Dogs and their owners - contact the office for further information |

**Further information on any of the groups or above information, please contact 029 2039 8900.**