

VIEWPOINT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 7
CHRISTMAS EDITION



DECEMBER 2017

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Welcome to the Christmas edition of our Viewpoint newsletter. What a year the Society has had. We have increased the number of people we support in the local area to 838 and we have continued to provide excellent care for 42 residents at Ostley House. While doing this we have introduced a number of new ideas while maintaining the services we know people really need from us.

In the year we opened our new Vision Support Centre and have since received £1,200 from Furness Lions and £1,500 from Cumbria Community Council to help us equip it.

In the New Year, we will be beginning with a new consultation because we want to hear from YOU. It is important to everything we do that visually impaired people have the opportunity to tell us what they feel about our services. Perhaps share new ideas.

As a charity we have to continually raise our own funds and recently Paul Ogden became our new Fundraising Officer. For those that don't know Paul he has been volunteering with us for a number of years and we are excited that he is taking the post.

We have a difficult problem at the moment. We have been unsuccessful in finding a place for our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer (ECLO) in the eye clinic at Furness General Hospital, as there is no room on the ward. We may be able to fund this position but we are struggling find room on the ward. We will continue to try everything we can think of to get an ECLO situated with the eye clinic staff.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Carl Hodge.

OUR VISION SUPPORT TEAM

I can't believe it has been three months since we opened the Vision Support Centre. The Centre has proved to be a good venue for our groups and the central location seems to suit most. For the past two months the Low Vision Clinic has also been held here and we are now able to offer this facility every month. The feedback has been extremely favourable with regards to the location and informal atmosphere. Those who attended were able to look at all the aids available and try the different lamps in our lighting area. We would not have been able to do this at Furness General. Also, everybody was offered a cup of tea and a biscuit!

We held our Stepping Forward course in October where we discussed benefits, mobility, eye conditions, aids and equipment, the importance of contrast and magnification and any problems people are facing with regards to their loss of vision. The next course will be in February or March so if you feel it is something that may benefit you please get in touch.

The dark nights are now approaching and it is even more important that everybody has the appropriate lighting. Different lights suit different eye conditions so if you would like to try our lamps and bulbs please come to the Centre and Lynda will be only too pleased to demonstrate them.

We have recently had two of our clients who have had problems with their stair lifts. If the stair lift isn't insured or had regular servicing it can sometimes be difficult getting a firm to come out to repair it. On these two occasions we

contacted Careability 01914159777. It may be handy to have this phone number in case of emergency.

We're starting a new support group for people who have Charles Bonnet Syndrome. The condition causes visual hallucinations and can be quite distressing for people. If you think you might be experiencing these symptoms we can help. You can contact us at the Vision Support Centre on 01229 440556.

The new support group is held at the Ulverston Methodist Church rooms 4 times a year where you can get information and advice and meet other people who live with the condition.

Well, Christmas is fast approaching and we are busy planning our Christmas parties. In the last Newsletter it stated that the Millom Party would be 8th December. It will now be on 15th December and we have the children from St. James School entertaining us.

The Team would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Maggie Nelson

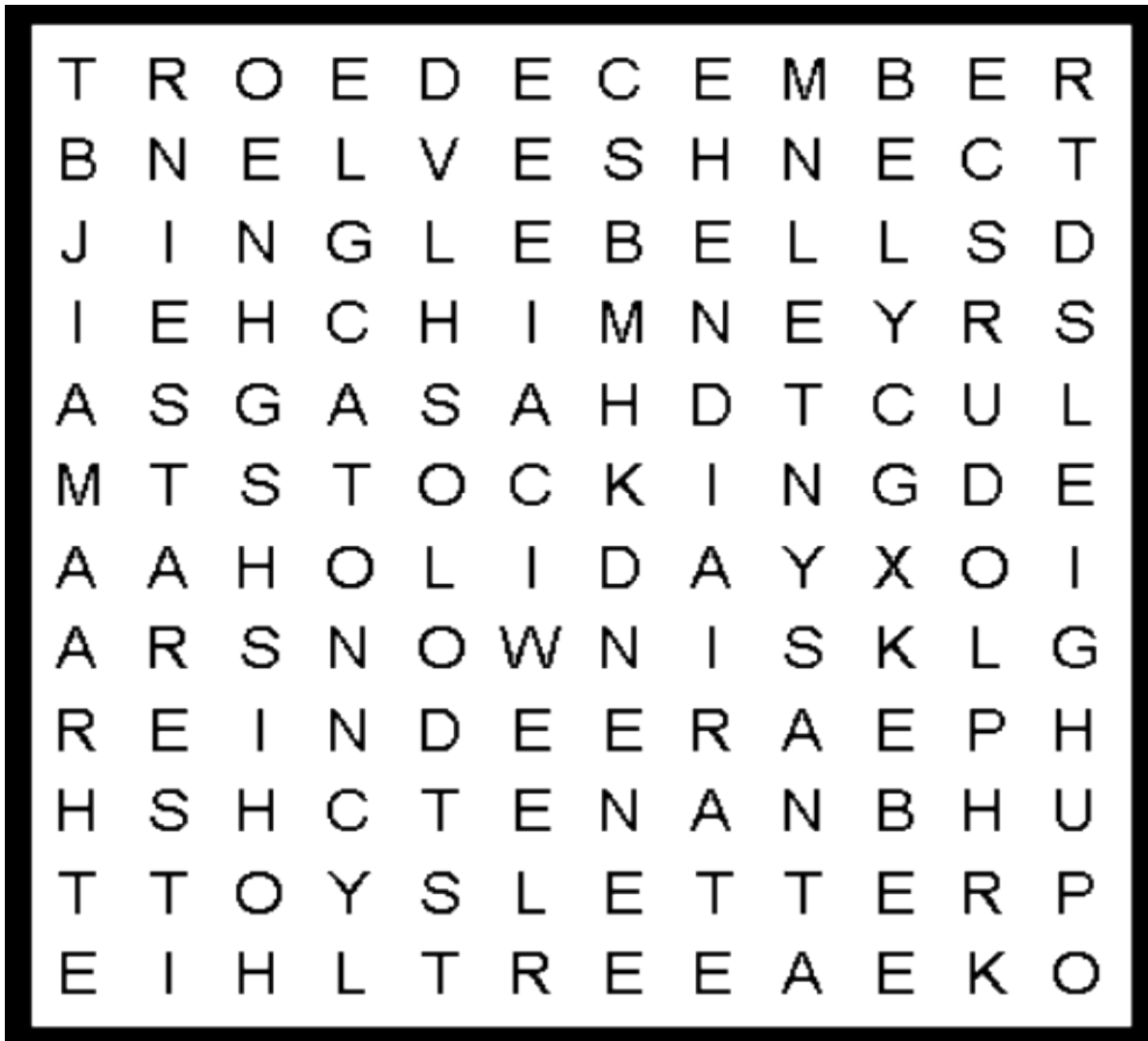
CHRISTMAS COFFEE AFTERNOON

Get in the festive spirit and come along to our Christmas Coffee Afternoon on Tuesday 12th December. There will be a choir and coffee/tea and mince pies. Have a look around our fully equipped resource centre while you are here we look forward to seeing you.

SOMETHING FOR THE KIDS
CHRISTMAS COLOUR IN



JUST FOR FUN CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



FIND THESE WORDS IN THE GRID ABOVE

CHIMNEY

HOLIDAY

TREE

ELVES

DECEMBER

REINDEER

SNOW

JINGLE BELLS

SLEIGH

SANTA

STOCKING

TOYS

RUDOLPH

RUDOLPH

LETTER

STAR

VISION SUPPORT CENTRE

Why not come and have a look at our new lighting area and try our range of excellent lamps in a comfortable armchair, just like home.

Also on display there are L.E.D bulbs for sale or to try in our lighting area. Please call in when passing.

Ideal Gifts for Christmas

For sale in the Centre we have a wide range of products to help with everyday living, which include talking watches, clocks, a selection of big button phones, Breville one cup kettles and other kitchen products. We also have a range of handheld magnifiers and electric magnifiers, all at a reasonable price so call into the centre and we will demonstrate how to use them for you.

2018 Large Print Calendars and Diaries now in Stock

£5.95 - £5.50



VOLUNTEERING

We need volunteers!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Do you want to gain new skills, support other people and really make a big difference?

We have several volunteering opportunities available and we would be extremely grateful for just as little as an hour of your time on a regular basis.

We have the following volunteering roles available:

- **Social Groups – these are run on a weekly/monthly basis and we urgently need volunteers to help run activities.**
- **Telephone Befriending – Can you give an hour of your time to telephone a visually impaired person for a chat?**
- **Home Befriending – Could you spend an hour visiting someone in their own home for a chat?**
- **Administration support – Do you have office skills that we could utilise?**
- **Walking Group – Could you help to guide a visually impaired person on a short walk?**
- **Fundraising – Could you help us raise funds to enable us to continue to provide our services?**
- **Driver – Could you help us to transport the people we support to events etc? We would pay your mileage.**

There are other opportunities available. If this is of interest, please get in touch today. Please call Elaine on 01229 440556.

Thank you!

GROUPS AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

TUESDAY GROUP: - 2.15pm – 4.15pm at the Vision Support Centre, 67/69 Cavendish Street, Barrow in Furness, LA14 1QD.

THURSDAY GROUP: -2.15pm – 4.15pm at Station View, Holker Street, Barrow in Furness, LA14 5SF

ULVERSTON GROUP: - 1.30pm – 3.30pm at Neville Street Methodist Church, Ulverston – Next Groups 18th October & 15th November with Christmas Luncheon on 20th December

BARROW LUNCHEON GROUP: - Takes place on the last Wednesday of every month. Venues to be advised

DUAL SENSORY LOSS SUPPORT GROUP: - Takes place the 2nd Monday of every month at the Vision Support Centre, 67/69 Cavendish Street, Barrow in Furness, LA14 1QD

CHARLES BONNET SUPPORT GROUP: - For people who are experiencing visual hallucinations as a result of their sight loss. Will take place on the 8th November 1.30pm – 3.30pm

MILLOM GROUP: - 1.00pm – 3.00pm at the Salvation Army Citadel, Nelson Street, Millom every Friday

GRANGE GROUP: - 2.00pm – 4.00pm at Abbot Hall Hotel, Grange over Sands, 1st Wednesday of every month

If anyone would like any further information regarding the above groups please contact the office on 01229 440556 or email info@barrowblindsociety

THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTMAS CAROL

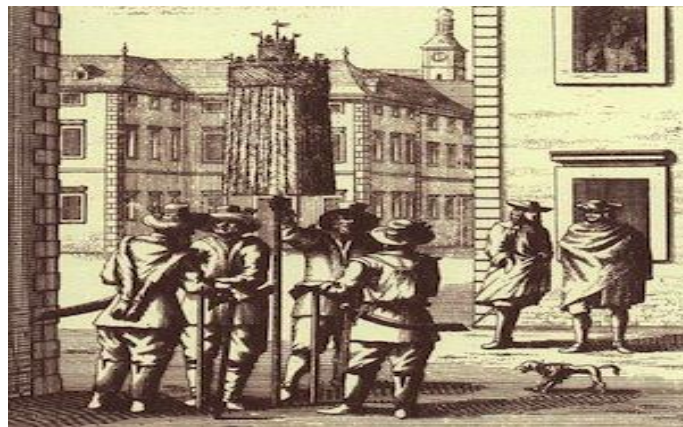
Carols were first sung in Europe thousands of years ago, but these were not Christmas Carols. They were pagan songs, sung at the Winter Solstice celebrations as people danced round stone circles (The word carol originally meant to dance to something). The Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year, usually taking place around the 22nd December. The word Carol actually means dance or a song of praise and joy! Carols used to be written and sung during all four seasons, but only the tradition of singing them at Christmas has really survived.

Early Christians took over the pagan solstice celebrations for Christmas and gave people Christian songs to sing instead of pagan ones. In 129, a Roman Bishop said that a song called "Angel's Hymn" should be sung at a Christmas service in Rome. Another famous early Christmas Hymn was written in 760, by Comas of Jerusalem, for the Greek Orthodox Church. Soon after this many composers all over Europe started to write 'Christmas carols'. However, not many people liked them as they were all written and sung in Latin, a language that the normal people couldn't understand. By the time of the Middle Ages (the 1200s), most people had lost interest in celebrating Christmas altogether.

This was changed by St. Francis of Assisi when, in 1223, he started his Nativity Plays in Italy. The people in the plays sang songs or 'canticles' that told the story during the plays. Sometimes, the choruses of these new carols were in Latin; but normally they were all in a language that the people watching the play could understand and join in!

The new carols spread to France, Spain, Germany and other European countries.

The earliest carol, like this, was written in 1410. Sadly only a very small fragment of it still exists. The carol was about Mary and Jesus meeting different people in Bethlehem. Most Carols from this time and the Elizabethan period are untrue stories, very loosely based on the Christmas story, about the holy family and were seen as entertaining rather than religious songs. They were usually sung in homes rather than in churches! Traveling singers or Minstrels started singing these carols and the words were changed for the local people wherever they were traveling. One carols that changed like this is I Saw Three Ships



When Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans came to power in England in 1647, the celebration of Christmas and singing carols was stopped. However, the carols survived as people still sang them in secret. Carols remained mainly unsung until Victorian times, when two men called William Sandys and Davis Gilbert collected lots of old Christmas music from villages in England.

Before carol singing in public became popular, there were sometimes official carol singers called 'Waits'. These were

bands of people led by important local leaders (such as council leaders) who had the only power in the towns and villages to take money from the public (if others did this, they were sometimes charged as beggars!). They were called 'Waits' because they only sang on Christmas Eve (This was sometimes known as 'watchnight' or 'waitnight' because of the shepherds were watching their sheep when the angels appeared to them.), when the Christmas celebrations began.

Also, at this time, many orchestras and choirs were being set up in the cities of England and people wanted Christmas songs to sing, so carols once again became popular. Many new carols, such as Good King Wenceslas, were also written in the Victorian period.

New carol services were created and became popular, as did the custom of singing carols in the streets. Both of these customs are still popular today! One of the most popular types of Carols services are Carols by Candlelight services. At this service, the church is only lit by candlelight and it feels very Christmassy! Carols by Candlelight services are held in countries all over the world.



REALLY BAD CHRISTMAS JOKES

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?
Claustrophobia!

Why does Santa have three gardens?
So he can 'ho ho ho'!

Why did Santa's helper see the doctor?
Because he had a low "elf" esteem!

What kind of motorbike does Santa ride?
A Holly Davidson!

What do you call a cat in the desert?
Sandy Claws!

Who delivers presents to cats?
Santa Paws!

What do you call Father Christmas at the beach?
Sandy Clause!

What do you get if you cross Santa with a detective?
Santa Clues!

What did the sea Say to Santa?
Nothing! It just waved!



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Dear Friends

My name is Paul Ogden many of you know me through our social activities, some simply by having a telephone chat each week.

I have been a full time volunteer for approximately three year's now. I have enjoyed this time a lot. Some of you might already know that our community fundraiser Mr Crawford Blyth has now left us. I am pleased to announce that I have taken over as the Community Fundraiser; I would like to thank everybody at the Vision Support Centre for giving me fantastic support in this roll. If there were medals to be won you would all be awarded one, a massive thank you to each and every one of you.

My first task is to find a VOLUNTEER DRIVER to transport 4 people to various local towns for street/ store collections. So please if any of you know anybody who would like to drive us, Please ring the centre on 01229 440556 WE WILL PAY £0.45 PENCE PER MILE FUEL COSTS. We also have many other volunteer positions available come and see for yourself. It really is a friendly family atmosphere, so please all keep safe and take care and thank you.

Kind Regards

Paul Ogden

OSTLEY HOUSE

At Ostley House we are continuously looking for ways we can improve our service provision or provide additional services for our local community.

As there are currently 850,000 estimated people to be living with dementia in the UK and 209,600 new cases of dementia a year in the UK we decided this area is where we could best help our local community.

Early in 2018 we will be opening a Day Care Centre for people with a dementia. This will be run from our Dennis Noall Activities Centre, located at the front of Ostley House.

We will be providing a safe and stimulating environment for up to 10 individuals Monday to Friday from 08.30 until 5.30pm.

By providing this service we are hoping to improve the quality of life of people with a dementia and those who care for them. Providing appropriate sensory stimulation For Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia has been shown in recent studies to decrease agitation and restlessness, as well as improve sleep. These symptoms are very common in most forms of dementia, and certainly in people with Alzheimer's, so sensory stimulation translates as improved quality of life for the patient as well as for the caregiver. Following on from the Day Services we continue to progress with our plans for a dementia village, this will be the first of its type within our local area and a concept we are very excited about. We hope to provide you with further information on this project as it develops.

**BARROW & DISTRICTS SOCIETY FOR THE
BLIND**

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BARROW-IN-FURNESS

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