



York Blind and Partially Sighted Society



Santa Sleigh by Ruby Holding Age 10

Newsletter

(November, December 2015, January 2016)

**York Blind and Partially Sighted Society, Rougier House, 5
Rougier Street, York, YO1 6HZ (Charity Number 1159188).**

**Equipment and Information Centre open Monday
to Friday 10am to 3pm**

Telephone 01904 636269

**This newsletter is available in 16 point bold print, on tape, CD,
in Braille, via e-mail or on our website: www.ybps.org**

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News Update from Diane Roworth, Chief Officer

Welcome to our Winter newsletter, the last one of 2015. Christmas is a matter of weeks away, so can I take this opportunity, on behalf of everyone at YBPSS, to wish you a really lovely Christmas and a very happy 2016. I hope you may be enticed to come and celebrate Christmas with us at our annual Christmas Lunch, this year being held at the Marriott Hotel. It's a lovely opportunity to catch up with friends and socialise with staff and volunteers. Or maybe you'd like to come to our annual Carol Singing in the Coppergate Centre? It is great fun, and usually raises around £1,000 in 2 hours.

We need around 30 people to make this a success, so

if you fancy singing carols or holding a collecting box (with mulled wine and mince pies at half time) please call to let us know you can come. Details of both these events are on page 11.

I know that there are many talented members of YBPSS; sight loss doesn't stop you being creative. And that has been ably demonstrated by Louisa Creed and 10 year old Ruby Holding, who have designed our new range of Christmas Cards now on sale. I'd really like to thank them for helping us in this way, and the The Pig and Pastry on Bishopthorpe Road for having them on sale in their café.

Jacqueline James is another talented member of YBPSS. She is a local artist, working with fabrics,

and would like to invite you to a workshop at YBPSS, where you can enjoy working with colour and felt, you can find out more on page 13.

A red hot topic in the news at the moment is welfare benefits. New changes are being planned, but others which were agreed some time ago are still working their way through. This is the case for Personal Independence Payment.

If you receive Disability Living Allowance, you will, at some point in the future, have to apply for Personal Independence Payment instead. If this applies to you, see page 17 for how we can support you if you need it.

Many readers will know that for a very long time, we have been campaigning to get A boards removed from the streets of York. The City of York Council will soon be consulting on proposals to licence A boards. Whilst a licencing scheme may seem to be the solution, there will be costs and real difficulties in

monitoring any licencing scheme.

We understand business owners feel A boards are essential, but believe that other advertising could be equally as effective.

If you would like to help us rid York streets of A Boards, please call your local councillor and tell them what a difficulty they can be. You can find the name and contact details of your local councillor by ringing the City Council helpline on 551550. If you do this, please let me know as it will strengthen our response.

On the staff front, we were sad to say goodbye to Harriet, our Volunteer Manager when she retired and moved to Shropshire. But we are now delighted to welcome Thelma Wingfield as our new Volunteer Manager. We are also delighted to welcome Karen Bentley, our new Optimeyes Project Worker. Karen has made a great start by assisting at our Finding Your Feet course. This was a huge success, giving an

opportunity for everyone to talk about the impact of sight loss on them, and find solutions to some of the everyday difficulties. We will be running these courses every six months, so if you would like to come to one, please let us know.

Winter can be lovely, but it can also be the hardest season of the year. Looking after yourself, keeping you and your home warm, saving money on heating bills and not becoming isolated because you can't go out, are just some of the things to think about. You will find suggestions for all of these topics, plus news of new computers from RNIB, a mobile phone app that can tell you what you are looking at, plus games for Christmas in this newsletter. The Fundraising News insert has a roundup of our wonderful fundraising events and details of our next Firewalk in February 2016.

On the subject of fundraising, we were all absolutely delighted to receive a lovely legacy from Marjorie Lambart. Marjorie

was a member of the Society for many years, and we are really grateful to her for remembering us in her will. Her very generous gift will be used towards the running costs of our Equipment and Information Centre, so that other people like Marjorie, can benefit from her thoughtfulness. We do appreciate every gift we receive, and are so grateful when people demonstrate their appreciation in this way.

So that is my news roundup for Winter 2015. Another new year lies ahead, and I am hopeful that it will be a very positive one, with new developments to benefit all blind and partially sighted people in York.

If you have any comments or suggestions to make, please contact me, Diane Roworth, Chief Officer on 01904 731121 or diane.roworth@ybpss.org

**News from the
Equipment and
Information Centre
By Deb and Deborah**

Large Print Calendars and Diaries are now available. Diaries range from small pocket sized to A5 and A4 desk diaries. Wall calendars vary slightly in size but are approximately 12" by 18" and all show a month to a view with space to write short notes.

We also have large print Address Books, Telephone Books various items of stationery and black felt tip pens in different thicknesses, to make your writing easier to see.

Toys and Games for adults and children. If you are looking for Christmas gifts to share with children, RNIB has several suggestions. These are useful for sighted and visually impaired parents and grandparents to share with sighted children, or vice versa.

Scented toys range from playdough (£3.99) to

coloured markers, pencils and crayons (£4.49 to £4.99). Each different colour has a different scent – can you tell the difference?

For younger children there are tactile and/or auditory puzzles that make sounds as you place the pieces in the correct slot £7.99/£9.99

There is a range of colouring books with images embossed with thick black lines, to make a tactile and easy to see picture. The title of each design is given in both large print and Braille and there are several to choose from £5.99 each.

Contact RNIB on 0303 123 9999 or visit their on-line shop www.shop.rnib.org.uk

Jigsaws for adults and children are available in 100, 250 and 500-piece designs from the Partially Sighted Society. The 250 and 500 piece designs are twice the standard size pieces, while the 100 piece designs are five times the standard, £6 to £9 each. We

can show you samples and order for you.

Large print Scrabble

With bold clear tiles in 16 point on larger tiles, and a bigger, colour board with a tactile grid of squares for the tiles to be held in place, this is the easiest scrabble yet. All you have to do is come up with the winning words!

Large print Scrabble £29.95
Braille Scrabble £29.95

Tactile wooden draughts and chess

Large raised black squares in a chequered design make it easy for you to feel your way around the board. The draught pieces stay in place thanks to drilled holes in each square that locks each piece in place. The pieces have a tactile circle on the top to help you identify which are your pieces.
£18.50

Also available with the same tactile features is chess £29.95.
(if you like playing games, why not join our games group?)

New Compact Fluorescent light bulbs

With the darker days drawing in you might like to try a new range of bulbs. These have standard bayonet and screw fittings and come in a range of 4 levels of brightness, each giving a whiter light and remaining cool when on. The 20 watt is equivalent in size to a standard bulb, the others increase in length width and size. The wattage is the approximate equivalent to a standard filament bulb.

20 watt = 100 watt £4.80
30 watt = 150 watts at £7.20
45 watt = 225 watt at £10.80
65 watt = 325 watt at £13.20

Easy to use Computer Keyboards

New from RNIB is a keyboard that combines standard keyboard functions with a row of multimedia 'hot' keys.

This keyboard has large print black lettering on bright yellow keys. It has a

standard QWERTY layout with two rows of number and function keys above the letters. It also has an extra row of nine multimedia keys, used to control audio or video tracks and email; for example, different buttons offer 'play' and 'pause' functions and navigate forwards and backwards through tracks. RNIB £25.95

We can demonstrate this and a range of other accessible keyboards and easy read stickers for the keyboard in the Equipment and Information Centre.

New Computer packages from RNIB

RNIB have launched a range of Fujitsu computers, with access software already installed.

You can choose from JAWS which will read out loud everything on screen, or you can choose MAGiC, which is magnification only.

Exclusive to RNIB this fully accessible range of talking laptops and desktops have

the software preinstalled as well as the Microsoft Office home and student edition. So it is ready to go as soon as you unpack it.

The range includes a 15.6" laptop with JAWS £849.01 and with MAGiC £699.03.

The desktop computer with 19" monitor with JAWS is £1,169.03 and with MAGiC is £1,018.97.

There is also a 13.3" notebook available with JAWS £1,428.98 and with MAGiC £1,278.98.

All prices are excluding VAT so are applicable to visually impaired people.

If you would like more information about these computers, contact RNIB on 0303 123 9999.

Keep up with local and national news
York Talking Newspaper
York Mobile Library
RNIB Newsagent

York Talking News is a free 90 minute audio magazine recorded onto a

memory stick. It is delivered by post at the beginning of each month in a re-useable plastic wallet.

With 45 minutes of local news, followed by a further 45 minutes of entertaining general information it is a good way of keeping in touch with the York community.

When you have finished listening you simply put the memory stick back in the wallet, turn the address card over and pop it back into the post for free.

The memory stick is easy to use with a simple player known as a boombox.

York Talking News can provide a free player on long term loan to you if you don't already have one.

We have examples of the player and the newspaper if you would like to come and listen and try it out.

A user says, "Thank you for all these recordings about York and the surrounding villages. I look forward to receiving them each month.

You choose such interesting pieces to read"

If you would like to try this out, call Ann Jackson from York Talking News on 01904 760140 and she will send you a sample, or we can set this up for you.

York Home Library Service

Do you like to read, but can't get out to the library? The Royal Voluntary Service is working in partnership with York Libraries to offer a Home Library Service free of charge, for anyone unable to get to the library due to ill health or disability.

The service is provided by RVS volunteers and if you would like to use it you will be matched with a volunteer who will visit you in your home on a regular basis. The volunteer will be your link to the library service, bringing you the books you want to read.

Books are available in large print and audio formats and you can tell your volunteer which authors or style of

books you would like to read and they will get them for you.

For more information please contact Sarah Wallis at the Royal Voluntary Service on 07469 378205.

Big Print newspaper, TV and radio guide

This is the UK's only national weekly large print newspaper delivered direct to your home.

There is a comprehensive round up of national and international news, special features, showbiz, sport, music and theatre, recipes, gardening tips and puzzles.

It comes with a comprehensive 48 page TV and radio guide.

Subscription works out at about £2.00 per week, with a quarterly subscription costing £25.00.

There is also a Big Print Freeview guide containing the top 10 freeview channel listings. An annual subscription costs £50.00.

The RNIB newsagent offers more than 230 popular and best-selling publications in a wide range of formats.

You can have audio CD and USB memory stick delivered to your door.

You can read online if you use a computer, tablet or accessible mobile phone.

Or you can have DAISY CD, and in some cases Braille.

Choose from all the major daily and weekend papers. Full text is available electronically with selected highlights available on CD.

Top selling magazines such as Hello, Gardeners World, Yours, Which? Private Eye and specialist publications such as Steam Today, Astronomy Now etc are available.

Prices vary. Weekly current affairs are around £100 per year, and monthly popular titles are £50.00 per year.

If you would like to try a free issue of any

publication, ring RNIB on 0303 123 9999 for a sample.

**Christmas at YBPSS
Christmas Lunch
Christmas Cards
Carol Singing
Pantomime**

YBPSS will close for Christmas at 5.00 on Wednesday 23rd December, and re-open on Monday 5th December. For urgent assistance during the holiday period, please call York City Council 555111 or 0845 0349417 outside office hours.

Christmas lunch at The Marriott Hotel, Tuesday 15th December, 12 for 12.30, £15 per person.

Come and join us for our Annual Christmas Lunch in the lovely surroundings of the Marriott Hotel, Tadcaster Road, York.

The party starts at 12.00 as we are greeted with a glass of Bucks Fizz or fruit juice. This will be followed at

12.30 by a two course lunch.

The menu choices are turkey with winter vegetables, cod in almond and caper sauce or a pumpkin and sage gnocchi for the main course and for dessert the choice is Christmas pudding with brandy sauce or chocolate celebration made up of chocolate and almond tart, warm white chocolate blondie and chocolate and Baileys parfait, rounded off with tea, coffee and mince pies.

There will be a raffle and our usual 'in house' entertainment.

Partners are welcome, and if you would like to sit on a table with people you know, please let us know. Ring Deb or Barbara to book your place on 636269.

Christmas Cards

We are delighted that our new cards have been designed by members of the Society.

Ruby Holding (age 10) has produced a wonderful image of Santa's sleigh full of enticing looking presents. Louisa Creed has kindly allowed us to use three of her beautiful images, originally produced as rag rugs. One shows a robin on a wintry branch, another is a snowy scene in York's Rowntree Park and the third a winter scene in Swaledale.

All cards are £3.50 for a pack of ten, apart from the Swaledale picture, which is sold singly at £1.00 and all profits come to YBPSS.

Carol Singing in Coppergate

Come and join us on 5th December at 11am in the Coppergate Centre to sing carols and collect money for YBPSS. Large print carol sheets provided plus mince pies and mulled wine. Call Julia or Barbara on 636269 if you can come.

Dick Whittington and his Meerkat

Thursday January 21st at 7.30pm

While the York Theatre Royal undergoes a £4.1 million redevelopment, the pantomime will take place in the Signal Box Theatre at the Railway Museum. There will be all the usual cast plus the same stunning sets, toe-tapping music & magical spectacle we're all used to.

Audio description will be available but we don't know yet whether or not there will be a touch tour.

Seats are £12.50 for members & escorts (that is half the normal price). Let Ann Mattam know as soon as possible if you would like to reserve seats as tickets are limited. Please pay for your tickets by December 16th to ensure your places.

Activities

Coffee Morning

Twiddle Muffs

Art Gallery Visit

Eye Healthy lunch

Painting with Wool

Chat and Information

Sharing with morning

coffee or afternoon tea

Are you fairly new to YBPSS, or maybe you've been a member for a while but never got involved with anything? Why not come to meet others experiencing changes in their vision, and find out about the services available to you from YBPSS and elsewhere.

Because it's Christmas, we'll also provide sherry and mince pies. Dates are Wednesday the 2nd of December 1-3pm and Friday the 4th of December 10-12noon.

These are free sessions, and we can provide help with transport costs if you need it. To book your place and for further information please ring Karen Bentley on 01904 731124.

Twiddle Muffs

Members & volunteers at Knit'n'Natter have knitted over 60 Twiddlemuffs (see photo). They are designed for people with dementia to wear & fiddle with the

buttons, bows & braid to keep their fingers occupied.

We have sent them to Scarborough & York hospitals to be used by dementia patients on the Care of the Elderly wards. They take their muff home when they leave hospital. We are also selling muffs for £5 if you know someone who would benefit.



Another project is knitting squares to make blankets for the Torch Trust. This is a Christian organisation with a worldwide vision for people with sight loss. The blankets are for Malawi, a country where river blindness is widespread.

If you would like to join the Knit'n'Natter group we meet twice a month on Tuesdays. The next meetings are

November 24th & December 8th at 10.30am.

We would be grateful for any donations of double knitting wool, buttons & beads to continue our work. Please bring them to Rougier House or ring Ann on 01904 731123 if you want collection.

The Usher Group – for people with sight and hearing loss.

The next meeting at YBPSS is on Thursday 28th November. It is an opportunity for people with sight and hearing loss to socialise with the support of sign language interpreters. Members come from across North Yorkshire, and new members are very welcome. Contact Deb on 636269.

Incense & Icons Sensory Tour – York Art Gallery Sunday December 6th 12.30 to 1.15pm

This is your chance to see the refurbished art gallery free (no admission charge

or YMT card necessary on this occasion).

Use all your senses to explore the historic paintings on display in this session. We will adjourn to the art gallery café afterwards for those who wish.

Discussion Time

**Wednesday November 25th
10.30 am – 12 noon**

Have some views to air? Join our discussion group & talk about the issues that interest you including visual impairment matters, what's in the news (local & national) and how times have changed.

Painting with Wool with Jacqueline

**James Wed 9th December
10.30-12.30**

York-based, partially sighted textile artist, Jacqueline James, is running a felt making workshop at YBPSS. Participants will use coloured and processed fleece to “paint with wool” to make their own tactile and felted fabric. Layers of

fleece are laid out, wetted and rolled to produce felt material. No previous experience is necessary.

The workshop will last 2 hours and all the necessary equipment and materials needed for making felt will be provided. £2 per person for materials.

**‘Eye-Healthy’ Lunch -
Wednesday January
13th at 12.30pm.**

**Ready for respite from
festive fare?**

Come and enjoy an ‘eye-healthy’ lunch and some friendly company at Rougier House. Learn more about nutrition which can help to protect your eyes as well as general health. Look at cooking aids for VIPs and take home some recipes. Cost - £2.50

If you’d like to join any of these activities, please let Ann Mattam know on 01904 731123 as soon as possible. Please leave a message if necessary.

New bus concession for early hospital appointments New route for the Dial and Ride Service

If you need to travel to York Hospital before 9am for an early appointment, you can now use your bus pass. York Hospital, in conjunction with York Older People’s Assembly, have negotiated an arrangement with local bus companies that will allow Senior Citizens and anyone holding a York Bus Pass to travel free before 9 am if they have an early appointment at York Hospital.

If you want to take advantage of this, you must produce your appointment letter and your bus pass when boarding the bus.

First York, Transdev (including Unibus and Coastliner), EYMS and Reliance service number 19 are all taking part and Connexions bus service will offer concessions before 9 a.m. across the network at the child fare rate.

Bus passes offer different concessions, depending on the one you hold.

A blind persons bus pass (only available to people registered blind/severely sight impaired) gives free travel at any time of day.

A York Bus Pass – available to eligible older people and disabled people, including people who are partially sighted/sight impaired offers free travel after 9am.

If you need someone with you when you travel you can apply to have a companion entitlement to allow someone to travel with you free of charge.

Bus passes can be used for free local travel across the country, but local arrangements apply so do ask when boarding the bus.

Dial and Ride – the bus that picks you up from home

If you have difficulty using buses, the Dial and Ride service can pick you up from your own home and take you to pre-determined

destinations in the city of York. It operates to a specific timetable, and must be booked in advance – but it does make it possible to easily get to your destination and back without having to worry.

A new timetable is in operation from Monday 5th October, and the expanded service will run to the Vangarde Shopping Park from every area of the City.

Vangarde Shopping Park is where Marks and Spencer, John Lewis and Next are situated, alongside a selection of restaurants.

Wheldrake and Bishopthorpe now have a more extensive service and all areas will have a greater choice of destinations including Monks Cross, the City Centre, Clifton Moor and Foss Bank.

People with a Blind Persons bus pass travel free, other bus pass holders pay £2.75 for a return journey, £1.50 for a single journey.

Buses are accessible, and will pick you up and return you to your home address.

For more information on timetables in print or audio formats, please ring Dial and Ride on 551441.

Or you can download a timetable by visiting www.travelyork.info/journey-planning/mobility-and-accessibility/dial-and-ride

Travel York also contains information about all bus services including other schemes such as York Wheels (an alternative to taxis) Shopmobility (use of wheelchairs and motorised scooters in the city centre) and Blue Badge parking (people registered blind are entitled to a Blue Badge).

Update from September AGM by Jim Wallace

We had a very successful AGM at Bedern Hall in September, and the following trustees were elected to serve for the coming year.

Jim Wallace – Interim Chair and Hon. Treasurer “I am Finance Director of a group of bus companies. I have been a trustee for two years and my wife Jane volunteers for the Society”

Danielle Walker-Palmour – Vice Chair. “I am the director of a national charity based in York where I have lived for 17 years. I have been a Society trustee for 3 years, I am visually impaired and a keen runner and rower.”

Jean Haywood – Hon. Secretary – “I became involved with the Society when my husband was registered as partially sighted. I am also secretary of York U3A, and 2 other local groups.”

Jean Weston – Deputy Treasurer. “I was the Finance and Administration Officer at Age UK York before I retired in 2014. I have been a trustee since 2011 and Treasurer from 2011 to 2015”

Kristian Cavanagh – “I am a local solicitor and have

been a trustee for just over a year”

Mike Melling –“I am a semi-retired Electrical Engineer. I have been a Trustee for 5 years and particularly enjoy hands-on involvement with Fundraising”

Bob Shead – “I am visually impaired, and have been associated with the Society for 25 years. I was Chairman for four years. I take part in several of the Society's activities, and have made many friends”.

Evelyn Shead – “I am visually impaired and joined the Society in 1990. Soon after I was invited to become a trustee. I attend a number of the Society's activities, and have made many friends in 25 years.”

Anne Smith – “I have been a member of the society since 1979. My main interest is in fundraising and helping to support the Society to provide vital services to blind and partially sighted people in York.”

Eleanor Tew – “I am blind and moved to York two

years ago. I have been a trustee for a year and am chair of the Social Inclusion Group which works to improve access to streets, buses and public buildings.”

We continue to look for additional trustees, particularly with Fundraising, Human Resource, Health Service or general business experience. We aim to ensure that half of our trustees are people with personal experience of visual impairment and we currently comply with this. If you know anyone that has skills and expertise that could benefit YBPSS, please email me at jim.wallace@transdevplc.co.uk

Help with Personal Independence Payment claims

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is gradually being replaced with Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Existing claimants born after 8th April 1948 and aged

between 16 and 64 will continue to receive DLA for the time being, but will, eventually, have to apply for PIP instead. The DWP has not said when, so it may be many months away, but everyone will have to apply at some point.

If you receive a claim form, we strongly suggest that you get specialist advice before completing it.

Or why not come to a PIP Tea Party at YBPSS and enjoy tea and biscuits while finding out more about PIP and how to complete the form.

The PIP Tea Parties will take place at Rougier House and there will be a variety of dates to choose from.

Please contact us on 636269 if you would like details of agencies who can help you complete the form, or if you would like to come to a PIP Tea Party. We will contact you when we have dates available.

Winter Preparation

**Help Winter Proof Energy Bills by comparing prices
NHS advice to help you stay well this winter
Wiltshire Farm Foods home delivery**

Citizens Advice in North Yorkshire are calling on people to swot up on switching energy supplier and, where possible, help an older relative or neighbour find a better deal. Saving money on your fuel bills could encourage you to keep the heating on for longer, helping you to stay warm and well.

An easy way to find out if you have the best deal possible is to visit BeAnEnergyShopper.com. The website lists all the approved energy comparison sites, any of whom can make it very easy for you to get a better deal.

One site I have used recently is uSwitch which offers free, impartial advice, accredited by Ofgem. All you need is your postcode

and an energy bill, or you can simply tell them about your energy habits, and they will give you a quote.

Having got the quote they will do the switch for you. It is as simple as that. And you have 14 days to cancel if you change your mind.

I (Diane) found that uSwitch also has the cheapest EOn tariff, which you cannot get by calling EOn direct. It saved me £22 per month compared to what Eon were offering me direct.

They can also help compare broadband and telephone prices for you. Visit the website above, or if you prefer to talk to someone, call uSwitch on

0800 051 5493

uSwitch is only one of the many comparison sites available.

NHS Advice to help you stay well this winter

Winter can be a difficult time for anyone who has a

long term health condition or is in the older age range.

The NHS recommend 5 things to do:-

- 1) make sure you get a flu jab
- 2) Keep your home at least 18 degrees C if you can
- 3) Take advantage of financial schemes and discounts to help you pay for heating
- 4) Visit your local pharmacist as soon as you start to feel unwell
- 5) Keep active, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so

If you feel unwell, but are not sure if you should go to Accident and Emergency, call 111 for advice.

111 is available 24 hours a day for advice on health problems that are not life threatening.

Eat hot nutritious food

Wiltshire Farm Foods offer a wide variety of meals which can be heated in a microwave or conventional oven.

You can choose from meat, vegetarian, gluten free and other specific diets, with main courses and puddings. You can order by telephone on 0800 077 3100 and the friendly advisors can help you make your choice.

Prices start around £2.95 for main meals and 95p for puddings and meals are delivered straight to your door.

Use your phone rather than leave home

There is no need to feel isolated or lonely in your own home, as there are many ways in which you can enjoy the company of other people simply by using your telephone.

The following services operate on free phone numbers and offer a variety of ways of keeping in touch.

Telebefriending from RNIB

Would you like to talk to someone in a similar

situation to you? RNIB offer a completely free service which people from all walks of life and all different ages can take part in.

Telebefriending is made up of groups of up to 6 people who discuss different topics; such as daily life and current affairs. People often share practical information and encouragement about living with sight loss. One user said “We all have sight loss. It is easy to talk because we understand each other”.

To access this service call 020 73912218.

The Macular Society Telephone Befriending

If you need someone to talk to who has Macular Degeneration, like you, then this service can offer a friendly listening ear. You can choose what you want to talk about, favourite hobbies, TV, the weather or even macular disease.

For more information call free on 0300 3030 111

Call in Time service from Age UK

If you live alone and would like a regular call, Age UK have 2 different services.

The Friendship Call is once a week and you can chat for around 20 minutes.

A Good Day Call is a short call several times a week, at a time that best suits you to provide a little reassurance when you need it most.

To set up either of these, call 0800 434 6105.

Members Column
Tap Tap See by Greg
My tandem skydive by Elizabeth

Anybody heard of Tap Tap See? the RNIB man asked, and no-one had. He held up his phone, tapped it, the camera flashed, it had a think then said “a group of people around a conference table, note pads and equipment.”

Not usually lost for words, it was a while before I could speak. I'd only had my iPhone for two weeks and hadn't yet figured out how to make a call.

I downloaded Tap Tap See and tried it out – it recognised a bowl of dogfood and my Guide Dog eating it, saying “a black Labrador retriever” even noting the breed! It tells me not only that the content of the tin is beans, but also who put them in there!

It knows what colour a car is, how many doors it has, and so far nothing has beaten it!

iPhone users, it's a free app, so why don't you try it for yourself?

It was 1st August, Yorkshire Day and at 6 am, I was ready to travel to Lincolnshire for my Sky Dive. The preliminaries over, getting weighed and signing in, there was a wait for my turn. I have a fear of heights but to my surprise I was quite composed. Friends said I was very brave or mad and one friend

said “You are very brave **BECAUSE** you are mad.” Another friend said “Have you made out your will?”

The time arrived for me to be dressed in a pilot’s suit, woolly hat and gloves, goggles and harness. I was introduced to my experienced instructor to whom I would be strapped for the duration of the dive. He held my hand as we approached the bus which carried us to the aeroplane. The falling out of the plane is a blur - I had previously thought I would be relieved when the parachute opened, but I can’t remember if I was or not. There had been a report of a man committing suicide by not opening his chute and another of two chutes tangling together. However, I got assurance all was well when my companion behind me gave me a thumbs up.

Looking below me, there was a patchwork of fields in Spalding - how attractive it would look in May with its ribbons of coloured of tulip fields.

I hoped I would not disgrace myself when we reached the ground but it was a soft landing.

Thanks to Diane and Lance for taking me there and my daughter Vivien for driving me home. And for all my supporters who raised £750 for York Blind and Partially Sighted Society.

Elizabeth is 87 and partially sighted. If you are inspired, our next tandem skydive is in 2016, contact us if you fancy having a go.

Fundraising news

We have been lucky enough to receive some lovely donations in memory of members of YBPSS. Friends and family donated a total of £830 in memory of for Ted Keen, Elizabeth Hamilton, Joyce North, and Dorothy Rush. We are always grateful that people choose to remember us at such a sad time. Thank you. We have £193 in donations from Elizabeth Jelley, Helen Snowden, Sylvia Karn, Catherine Conlin Heworth

Methodist Church and Asda Layerthorpe.

Many people make a regular donation to us each month, and as always, we really appreciate every single gift that helps us reach our £130,000 fundraising target.

For further fundraising news, please see the insert with this newsletter.

Audio Description at York Theatres

The following performances are audio described with a free touch tour of the set, costumes and props, 1 hour before the show. Users get reduced price tickets - York Theatre Royal offer half price tickets for you and an escort and the Grand Opera House offer a variety of reduced price tickets - do check each time you book. Headsets and touch tours should be booked 48 hours in advance.

**York Theatre Royal at the National Railway Museum
Booking Office 623568**

Dick Whittington (and his Meerkat)

Berwick Kaler brings his madcap pantomime to the Signalbox Theatre at the National Railway Museum. Thursday 21st January at 7.30pm and Saturday 23rd January at 2.30pm.

**Grand Opera House
Booking office (Access tickets) 678703**

The Importance of Being Earnest, Oscar Wilde's witty masterpiece is full of plot twists and misadventure as two bachelors pursue two eligible ladies. Saturday 21st November at 2.30.

**Priscilla Queen of the Desert
Starring Jason Donovan, this feel-good hit sensation features a fabulous soundtrack and outrageous costumes. A.D. Saturday 5th December 2.30.**

**Jack and the Beanstalk
What will happen when Jack takes his cow to market and sells it for five magic beans?? Saturday 2nd January at 6.30 and Sunday 3rd January at 2.00.**

Diary Dates

Y indicates event takes place at YBPSS offices

<u>November</u>		
Tues 16	Y	Singing Group 10-12 then monthly
Thurs 19	Y	Exercise Group 10-12 then weekly
Tues 24	Y	Knit 'n' natter Group 10-12 then fortnightly
Sat 21		The Importance of Being Earnest, Grand Opera House, 2.30
Wed 25	Y	Discussion Time 10.30-12.00
Thurs 26	Y	Usher Group 12.30
<u>December</u>		
Tues 1	Y	Book Group 10-12 then monthly
Wed 2	Y	Afternoon Tea and Information 1-3.00
Wed 2	Y	Games Group 10-12 then monthly
Fri 4	Y	Morning Coffee and Information 10.00-12.00
Sat 5		Carol Singing in Coppergate
Sat 5		Priscilla Queen of the Desert, Grand Opera House, 2.30
Sun 6		York Art Gallery Tour 12.30
Wed 9	Y	Painting With Wool 10.30-12.30
Mon 14	Y	M.D. Group Meeting 10.00
Tues 15		YBPSS Christmas Lunch, Marriott Hotel 12.00 for 12.30
Wed 23		YBPSS closes at 5pm, re-opens Monday 4th
<u>January</u>		
Sat 2		Jack and the Beanstalk, Grand Opera House, 6.30
Sun 3		Jack and the Beanstalk, Grand Opera House, 2.00
Wed 13	Y	Healthy Lunch 12.30
Thurs 21		Dick Whittington, Signalbox Theatre, 7.30
Sat 23		Dick Whittington, Signalbox Theatre, 2.30