

York Blind and Partially Sighted Society



Sculpture Group Visit Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Summer Newsletter

(June, July, August 2017)

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 USB, CD,
in Braille, via e-mail or on our website: www.ybpss.org

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News Update from Diane Roworth, Chief Officer

Welcome to our summer newsletter.

I love this time of year as it brings with it a different set of interests and activities to consider with the change of weather. Gardening, going out for walks, planning holidays and outings, and making the most of the light nights all feature highly.

This newsletter follows that theme, as well as focusing on what's going on at YBPSS, in York and further afield.

A highlight for all of us here over the last few months, has been the many responses to my letter asking for your support. The compliments you have paid are as important to us

as the money that has been donated. You have made donations of £6,005 in cash and a further £4,120 in regular donations. We are all really appreciative of your support – it means a lot to us – thank you.

April 2017 has brought with it 3 major changes, each one of which may impact differently.

The first is that York has declared itself to be the first Human Rights City in the UK. The declaration is a reflection of the support for human rights and values of equality, fairness, dignity and justice that exists in the city. Members of the public are encouraged to visit the YHRCN website and pledge their support for the declaration. It will be interesting to see how this unfolds in future and

whether disabled peoples' rights to be treated fairly gain higher prominence.

The second historic event was the merging of Action for Blind People with RNIB. For many years Action has been part of the RNIB Group, but from 1st April they are now one single organisation, so the name of Action for Blind People will disappear. Plans for harmonising and delivering services are well underway, but for the moment, it seems business as usual.

The third event to highlight is the new way of providing services for people in York with a sensory impairment.

From 1st April the City of York Council has contracted out its sensory impairment services to YorSensory (Wilberforce Trust). This is quite a change as it means one organisation is now providing for all sensory needs - see page 6 for further details.

Those of you over 50 may have recently received (or may soon receive) a

questionnaire asking for your views on a variety of issues.

We will be posting these out on behalf of the City Council, to everyone on our mailing list, so it should be in a format that you can read. If not, please contact us.

This survey was designed by a number of different organisations, and aims to help us all understand more about the needs, wants and desires of people over 50 living in York.

Please complete it if you can, or if you would like some help to complete it, contact us, or the city of York Council on 551550.

I hope to be able to report on the results of the survey in a future newsletter.

June is a busy month for awareness weeks, and we've linked some of our articles to those weeks.

Volunteers Week (page 11), Recycle Awareness Week (page 12), and Macular

Week (page 14) are those we've focused on here. On the theme of summer, we have ideas for days out, holidays and walks, an invitation to come and help design a Street Charter for York on 5th June, and news from our new Mobile Technology Peer Support group and Macular Group.

I'll finish this news round up by welcoming Yvonne our new ECLO for Scarborough and Bridlington and Catherine, our new Volunteer Manager to YBPSS. I know they are both doing a fantastic job already.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter, and get great enjoyment from the summer months. As always, your thoughts, comments and suggestions are welcome, in person, by phone (731121) or via email diane.roworth@ybpss.org.

Diane Roworth, Chief Officer

P.S. Our AGM will be Tuesday 12th September 2017. Everyone welcome.

New in the Equipment and Information Centre By Deb and Deborah

Lights, scales, sunglasses, Sight Village and Yorsensory

Travel Bright portable lamp

Sometimes it may be helpful to have a little extra light to hand, especially when you are away from home. This lamp is a Z-shaped light that folds down to the size of a smart phone and weighs only 150g. It is lit by 18 daylight LED bulbs and the amount of light is variable, from 70 to 850 lux. It will switch off automatically when closed. It's maximum height is 26cm, and it can be brought down as low as 10cm above the page. Powered by a rechargeable battery (usb connection) a full charge gives 3 hours use. (£34.50)

Nimble on-finger cutting tool

The Nimble is a simple cutting tool with a rubber casing that fits onto your

index finger just like a thimble. Tactile 'guide' markers on the inside of the casing help you position it correctly on your finger. You can then direct the tiny ceramic blade with a simple swiping motion, allowing you to cut through paper, card or plastic without fear of cutting yourself. This has been recommended by a member. (£8.95)

Cocoons Eye Shields

Enjoy the health benefits of sunshine without damaging your eyes, by wearing good sunglasses.

The Cocoons range of eye shields can be worn on their own or over glasses, and are proving popular with customers. They have soft, flexible frames which are virtually unbreakable with lenses in four colours: hazelnut, boysenberry, lemon and orange. There are a range of sizes and shapes to suit most faces. come and try them, or any of our other eye shades. (£21)

Salter MaxView Bathroom Scales



These scales have the largest digital display of any on the market – each digit is nearly 4" high.

They can display your body weight, body fat% and many other features to help you stay healthy.

They are easy to use – no need to switch on, simply stand on the scales, wait until you hear the beep and/or see the light, and then step off. Your weight will be displayed for several seconds, giving you plenty of time to get closer to the display if you need to. The other readings will appear one after the other, ending with the time, if you want them to. There is a 12 user memory.

They come with a 15 year guarantee and you can purchase them directly from

Salter. They are currently priced at £29.99 (normally £49.99) but postage is free. www.salterhousewares.co.uk and they are listed under the name Salter MaxView Body Fat Analyser.

We have a set to try at our Equipment Centre.

**Sight Village
Birmingham
July 18th & 19th.**

If you want to see the latest equipment all in one place, visit a Sight Village event. The Birmingham event is the largest one, where exhibitors from throughout the world take part. Entry is free and it is held at Queen Alexander College.

From reception you can book a sighted guide if you need help navigating the exhibition, and pick up a catalogue in large print braille or audio. If you would like to see who the exhibitors are, get instructions to the venue or ask questions, you can email Queen Alexander college on sv@gac.ac.uk or call 0121 428 5041.

The Manchester Sight Village is 27th September.

YorSensory Services

Anyone with a sight, hearing or combined sight and hearing loss can visit the YorSensory Equipment Centre at Huntington or call them for help and support. The Centre is open 5 days a week, and manned by volunteers who can demonstrate equipment.

YorSensory staff will also undertake the assessments of people newly registered with a sensory impairment, be that a sight, hearing or combined loss.

These services are provided by YorSensory under contract to the City of York Council. You can contact the YorSensory Team on 202292 or visit them at 49 North Moor Road, York.

We (YBPSS) will continue to provide our full range of services including our Equipment and Information Centre in Rougier Street, Volunteer Visiting Service and many different groups and activities. Our

continued fundraising will ensure we can raise the necessary funds to do this.

Volunteers Wanted for Vision Research

The University of York Neuroimaging Centre are looking for volunteers to participate in vision research, says Holly Brown.

“We are interested in how the brain processes visual information, particularly in individuals with vision loss. We are looking for people who fit the following criteria:”

Aged 18+

Central vision loss e.g.

Macular Degeneration

In good general health

What is involved?

1 MRI scan to get images of the brain’s structure

1 MRI scan to see how the brain responds when looking at images

For more information please contact Holly Brown

holly.brown@york.ac.uk,

Tel 01904 567613

Good Neighbours in Haxby, Huntington and New Easwick

Haxby Helpers

Haxby Helpers have been offering a helping hand since 1986. During that time they have helped on over 10,000 occasions. Their volunteers can take people into the village to visit the shops or shop for them, pick up necessary prescriptions or make social calls for people in need of a chat. They are always ready to help and it is a free service.

If you live in their area and would like some help, call the co-ordinator Jenny Gibbons on 750266.

Huntington Good Neighbours Association

This volunteer scheme can help in cases of emergency or on a short-term basis with such things as visiting, shopping, transport and house-hold jobs.

Contact Brian Freeborn, 347 Huntington Road, YO31 9HJ or call 01904 637009.

**Designing a Street
Charter for York
5th June 2.00 to 3.30pm**

A few of us from the YBPSS Social Inclusion Group have been working with Maqsood Sheikh from RNIB to prepare a draft Streets Charter for York. This short document will form the basis of an agreement between City of York Council and blind and partially sighted people. It will mention the work already being done on 'A' boards and controlled crossings and probably include sections on shared spaces and overhanging branches and shrubbery.

The idea behind the Charter is to gain agreement to promote good street design for visually impaired people. If it is good for VIP's, then it will be good for everyone!

At the meeting we hope to agree the draft text, decide who are the best people on the Council to approach, how to approach them, and how to publicise the Charter when it has been agreed.

Please come and join us, and if you can call Caroline Robertson on 731124 to let her know you are coming so we know how many people to expect.

Thank you. Eleanor Tew

**Summertime – make the most of it.
2 for 1 at National Trust and English Heritage
Walks around York**

There is a huge array of places of interest in and around York and summer can be a wonderful time to visit. Here are some that offer facilities for visually impaired people.

The National Trust owns two houses in York: the Treasurer's House opposite York Minster and Goddards, the Terry family home on Tadcaster Road. They also run a large number of other sites across Yorkshire including Beningborough Hall, Nunnington Hall, Fountains Abbey and Brimham Rocks.

Visually impaired visitors pay the normal admission

price, but can bring a carer for free on request.

To save having to ask for the concession each time, you can get an 'Access for All Admit One' card, which allows you to take a companion with you (free of charge) to any National Trust property. Call 01793 817634 to apply.

Most National Trust properties provide Braille and large print guides, while some also highlight objects that may be touched, along with relevant sounds and smells to heighten the visiting experience. They aim to offer adapted toilets in all properties, and many also provide wheelchairs for loan. You can find information about the facilities and services available at specific NT properties in Yorkshire by going to:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/documents/yorkshire.pdf>

If you are a National Trust member, the NT magazine is available on CD from RNIB. To sign up, contact

RNIB on 01733 375370 or email businesslink@rnib.org.uk with your National Trust membership number.

York Cold War Bunker and Clifford's Tower

English Heritage runs the York Cold War Bunker and Clifford's Tower in York, as well as a number of other sites around Yorkshire.

All English Heritage properties allow disabled visitors to bring up to two companions for free, and they will provide a letter of authority if required – call them on 0370 333 1182 to arrange this.

Access to the Cold War Bunker is by guided tour lasting around an hour. Clifford's Tower in the centre of York has a tactile model with Braille captions in the courtyard. For more information call 0370 333 1181.

Best Foot Forward, York Health Walks

Walking has many positive benefits, it can help your

heart and lungs work better, lower blood pressure, keep your weight down, keep joints, muscles and bones strong and increase 'good' cholesterol.

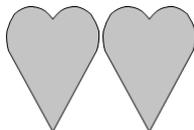
With Walking For York, you can take part in a free short walk to help you get active at a pace that works for you. It's a great way to stretch your legs, explore what's on your doorstep and make new friends.

You don't need to book, but if you need a sighted guide, you may need to bring your own.

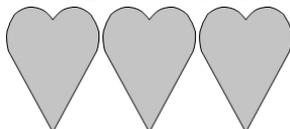
Walks are graded



A short walk of up to 30 minutes



Medium walk of 45 to 60 minutes



Longer walk of 75 to 90 minutes over mixed terrain

Each walk is on a different day of the week and starts in a different place, for

example on Thursday at 2pm there is a 'one heart' walk starting at York Art Gallery. Every Monday there is a '3 heart' walk from Rawcliffe Bar Park and Ride with the moderate walk starting at 10.30 and the fast walk starting at 11am.

For further information, contact York Health Walk co-ordinators Kay on 01904 693235 kayork@btinternet.com or Jenny on 01904 289618 Jenymich53@gmail.com

Holiday Choices for VIP's Vision Hotels TravelEyes

Vision Hotels

These two hotels are geared up to provide great holidays for blind and partially sighted people. They have indoor heated swimming pools, organised excursions and plenty of opportunity to relax knowing that professional staff will look after you.

Their prices include dinner, bed and breakfast and there are often special deals to be

had if you book in advance. For example, in May, they were offering 5 nights for £269/£299 per person.

The hotels are currently up for sale, with potential new purchaser being keen to provide the same quality service, so the message is very definitely – business as usual!

So much so that they are already advertising Tinsel and Turkey festive breaks!

Prices include dinner bed and breakfast with nightly entertainment, and are £159 to £220 depending on the hotel and whether it is 4 or five nights.

If you would like regular information from either hotel, please contact them.

Clifden Hotel Teignmouth,
Devon 01626 770052
Windermere Manor Hotel,
Lake District, 01539 445801

TravelEyes

TravelEyes provide holidays for visually impaired and sighted people to enjoy together,

and they pay particular attention to emphasising the sensory elements of each holiday.

To get information, audio podcasts and YouTube articles that demonstrate how they make their holidays a real experience, visit their website. The latest TravelEyes podcast includes Dan Raymond and Philip Adams discussing the upcoming River cruise down the Rhine and the spectacular tour of Indonesia. It includes a soundscape from the recent trip to Swaziland, giving you a great chance to hear snippets from a local Easter service and native drumming and singing.

Call 0113 887 4275
or visit

www.traveleyes-international.com

**Volunteers Week
1 – 7 June
Hello from Catherine**

Hello, I am Catherine the new Volunteer Manager.

I only started on 7th March and it has been a hectic but brilliant few weeks. I have been working with my colleagues Caroline, who manages activity volunteers, and Carolyn, who manages fundraising volunteers. As well as recruiting and training volunteers, I am responsible for managing the Home Visiting service and I've already met a few clients and hope to get round to meet more. I have 18 clients waiting for a volunteer so the next few months is shaping up to be very busy. We have trained a new group of Visitors and will be running another course later in the year.

I've worked in the voluntary sector for 9 years and over that time seen the brilliant work volunteers carry out. I'm really enjoying working at YBPSS and everyone I've met has made me feel very welcome. If you have any questions about volunteering or the Home Visiting service please contact me on VolunteerManager@YBPSS.org or by telephone 01904

731122. I work 9am to 4pm Tuesday to Friday.

Volunteers Week

YBPSS began its life back in 1979, when it was started by a group of volunteers. We have come a very long way since then!

During volunteers week we like to celebrate the fantastic contribution our volunteers make, and to thank them for all the time, skills and enthusiasm they bring. This year we are organising two very different events. A tour of St Nicks and a Poetry and Pizza evening where we hope to create a poem that will be displayed in the society premises.

We hope we have contacted all volunteers, but if you haven't received your invite, do get in touch with me.

**Recycle Awareness Week
18-24 June
CCTV Magnifiers at YBPSS
Recycle unwanted furniture**

We have 2 desktop CCTV magnifiers that have been donated to us by our

members and they are available to take away in return for a donation. If you find it difficult to read ordinary print, a CCTV magnifier gives you many different options. You can vary the magnification to increase the print size to one you can read, or look at photographs – even change a plug! We have two:-

Eclipse CCTV with 17” monitor.

This CCTV has multiple functions that include high contrast, full Auto-focus, 3x to 30x magnification and you can add a line marker to make it easier to see where you are on the page. The original price was £1599.

SmartView 360

This is compact and has a rotating camera attached to an integrated 19” monitor. You can use it for reading print or looking at photographs, but also, by rotating the camera you can use it for shaving or applying make-up and styling hair. The camera is easy to position to where

you need to see - either in front of the monitor or to the side. You can use it as a desktop, with magnification from 2.6x to 57x, for viewing distance objects with magnification of 0.6x to 27x and to view yourself, with a magnification of 1x to 4x, original price £1,915.

Please come and try them if you are interested.

Recycle your unwanted furniture

York Community Furniture Store has been recycling furniture for over 25 years.

They take donations of furniture and white goods which are suitable for reuse and make them available at low cost to people who need them. Over the years, thousands of local households have been helped to furnish their homes.

Donated furniture can be collected free of charge, so if you would like to give some of your furniture a new home, call them on 01904 426444.

You can also buy items from the Furniture Store which is located at The Raylor Centre, James Street, York.

**Macular Week
26th June to 2nd July
YBPSS Macular Group**

Macular degeneration is the most common cause of sight loss in people over 65. It affects central vision, and can make recognising faces and reading extremely difficult.

The Macular Society is encouraging a wider understanding of this condition, by running Macular Week each year.

This year the theme of the week will be smoking and sight loss.

Many people are aware that smoking causes lung cancer, but not many realise that it can also cause blindness. Smokers are up to four times more likely than non-smokers to develop AMD (age-related macular degeneration).

So, please help to spread the word, and encourage anyone you know who smokes to think about the possible impact.

YBPSS Macular Group

This long established group is run by people with MD, for people with MD. It's an opportunity to share your experiences with others, hear different speakers, socialise and make new friends. It meets every two months at YBPSS and the next two meetings are 12th June and 14th August

Meetings start at 10:30. If you are interested but nervous about coming for the first time, get in touch with us on 636269 and we will arrange for a member of the group to contact you in advance.

**Eye Clinic Support at
Scarborough and
Bridlington Hospitals**

Yvonne Gilling has joined YBPSS as our Eye Clinic Liaison Officer in the Scarborough and Bridlington hospitals. She

will join Vanessa, our York ECLO in delivering a Trust wide service.

Hello, my name is Yvonne and I'm really excited about this new role. I've met many patients in York Hospital who have told me how my counterpart Vanessa has helped them continue to live a fulfilling life, and I'm really hoping I can help patients along the East Coast and in Ryedale to do the same. I am still finding my feet, but I am sure that I'm going to enjoy meeting patients who might benefit from the service. Please feel free to stop by if you ever need anything in my area!

Members Column Royal Albert Hall Box tickets for £15.

My first visit to the Royal Albert Hall was to see Cirque du Soleil. To have an acrobatic display in the fine surroundings of the Albert Hall was truly breathtaking. Not long afterwards, I was fortunate to hear Prom No. 4, Ravels Bolero by the Munich Philharmonic

orchestra. I was blown away as the acoustics were superb and I had to keep pinching myself as I could not believe that I was a part of the Proms!

I first read about RNIB's box at the Royal Albert Hall in one of YBPSS newsletters. Having applied, I was added to the mailing list and I receive listings of all events that are on offer.

There are five seats in the box and guides may accompany you. The box can be reached via a lift or stairs and there are plenty of staff on hand to assist.

I register my interest in the published events via email and if successful I will be contacted by the RNIB Music Advisory Service.

You are given plenty of notice which allows time to book train tickets and hotel accommodation if required.

Tickets are £15 each and paid for a month prior to the event. It is RNIB Music Advisory Service policy to offer newcomers first

choice of tickets, after that it's first come first served.

I was extremely lucky to be able to attend Cirque du Soleil and the Proms – two events which were absolutely fabulous, all thanks to the RNIB.

RNIB are keen for this service to be made known to all, and I hope that it will be well supported.

Contact RNIB Music Advisory Service
020 7391 2063
royalalberthall@rnibnews.org.uk

Emotional Support Services can help when others can't

It is not unusual for people living with sight loss to feel 'on their own', angry or upset, or unwilling to take up help when it is offered. This can happen when sight loss is first diagnosed, or anytime afterwards.

Sometimes an event such as losing someone close to you or having a bad

experience can make those feelings worse.

There are ways in which you can get help through these tricky times, using a counselling service is one of them. The following options are all free and available to individuals and family members. RNIB and the Macular Society also provide telephone support, contact us for more details.

YBPSS Talking Space

Talking Space is a counselling service offered by YBPSS. Our two Counsellors-in-training are Janet and Sarah.

They offer a warm, safe and supportive space on Thursday and Friday at YBPSS.

Talking Space offers one to one counselling that can help you to explore any range of issues you feel you are facing. Everything you bring is confidential. The counselling offered is Person-centred; meaning all of the work you do together is led by you and focusing on what you would like to

explore about you, your situation or any difficulties you are facing. You are the expert on you.

Your first appointment will be an initial consultation to talk about your reason for seeking counselling and explain how the service works and answer any questions you may have. You will decide whether you feel counselling is right for you and, if you are happy to continue, agree future sessions.

If you are uncertain about anything involved or would just like to find out a bit more information, then please contact Deb or Deborah in YBPSS Equipment and Information Centre, who will be happy to help, and can put you in touch with Janet or Sarah.

The service is completely confidential and has achieved great results for many clients.

Blind Veterans UK

The Listening, Advice and Counselling Service is available to any beneficiary

born after 1st January 1950 or their carer or family member. They can help with loneliness, depression, bereavement, anxiety and relationships. Call them on 0800 328 1437

Aged Veterans Counselling

Offers a similar service to Blind Veterans, but is specifically for veterans over 65, their families and carers. Call them on 0300 0120 247

**YBPSS Mobile
Technology Group
People with sight loss
supporting each other**

Written by Harry Bell, group member.

The YBPSS Mobile Technology Support Group has been set up as a peer support group providing advice, encouragement and training in using mobile technology as blind and partially-sighted people.

We met for the first time as a peer support group on 04/05/17 after initial help to

form and launch. The aim is to meet on the first Thursday of each month between 12 o'clock and 2 for a working lunch and between meetings to keep email contact with each other to seek and provide news, help, tips and ideas.

The group has set up a Google email group with 2 Administrators.

The more experienced members will volunteer to lead practical work at each monthly meeting on some topic related to using mobile phones or tablets as people with limited or no sight. This will include voice-over gestures and similar for android, editing text, using dictation and apps such as Word, Notes, Pages, Podcasts and GPS navigation apps.

If you would like to know more about how you can use a mobile phone, tablet computer iPad or other device, then come and talk to people who use them.

Contact Caroline on 01904 731124 about this group or if you would also like to

know more about our new Craft Group, Knitting, Audio Book Group, Boccia or would like a copy of our program of activities for June, July and August.

Fundraising – see our Fundraising newsletter for more news.

St Crux was a great day which raised £775. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped make this a success. Our next one will be in September.

Thanks also to volunteers who collected at Deans Garden Centre, raising over £500 in two days.

Our next major event will be the Dragon Boat Race on the river Ouse on Sunday 9th July.

If you have ideas for future events, could give a little time to help, or know people who might like to do an event or activity on our behalf, please call Carolyn Blain, Community Fundraising Assistant on 731129.

A final thank you goes to the friends and family members who have so generously given in memoriam donations of £1,024 since our last newsletter. These were in loving memory of Walter Watling, Donald Baker, Ruth Seville and Doris Hutchinson. We really appreciate those gifts given at such a sad time.

It's the generosity of our supporters that keeps us going – thank you all.

Audio Description at York Theatres

Cinemas and theatres in York offer audio description services for visually impaired people. Most newly released films are audio described, and the following live theatre performances will be described.

A free touch tour is available prior to the performance, and you should book this, and your headset 48 hours in advance if possible.

Concession tickets are available for you and an escort – often this works out as 2 tickets for the price of 1. You may have to ask for the 'blind' concession.

York Theatre Royal
Booking Office 623568.

Everything is Possible
A story about York suffragettes with a cast of 150 people, Thurs. 29th June at 7.30 and Sat. 1st July at 2pm.

Grand Opera House
Booking office (Access tickets) 678703

La Cage Aux Folles
A vibrant and hilarious production. Can Georges cover up his life with a dazzling drag artist so his son can marry the love of his life? Saturday 3rd June 2.30 and 7.30pm.

If you have any queries regarding Grand Opera House shows or to book touch tours, email meganconway@theambassadors.com or call 01904 678700. Leave a message if not answered.

Diary Dates

Y indicates event takes place at YBPSS offices

<u>June</u>		Event
Sat 3 rd		La Cage Aux Folles, Grand Opera House 2.30 and 7.30
Mon 5 th	Y	Street Charter Meeting 2-3.30
Tues 6 th	Y	Book Group 10.30-12 then monthly
Wed 7 th	Y	Walking Group 1.30 Booking Essential
Thurs 8 th	Y	Exercise 10.30-12 then weekly
Thurs 8 th		Collection York City Centre
Fri 9 th	Y	Boccia 10.30-12 then fortnightly
Mon 12 th	Y	M.D. Support Group 10-12
Tues 13 th	Y	Knitting 10.30-12 then fortnightly
Tues 13 th	Y	Craft Group 10-12 then fortnightly
Mon 19 th		Hospital Stall
Mon 19 th	Y	Socialeyes 11.30 then monthly
Tues 20 th	Y	Singing 10.30-12 then monthly
Wed 21 st	Y	Games 10.30-12 then monthly
Wed 21 st	Y	Sculpture Group 1-3
Wed 28 th	Y	Discussion Group 10.30-12 then monthly
Thurs 29 th		Everything Is Possible, Theatre Royal 7.30
<u>July</u>		
Sat 1 st		Everything Is Possible, Theatre Royal 2pm
Thurs 6 th	Y	Mobile Technology Support Group 12-2
Sun 9 th		Dragon Boat Race
<u>August</u>		
Thurs 6 th	Y	Mobile Technology Support Group 12-2
Sun 6 th		Jane Tomlinson 10k Run
Mon 14 th	Y	M.D. Support Group 10-12