

Celebrations At Darsdale Home

Darsdale Home, part of Northamptonshire Association for the Blind (NAB), commemorated their 60th Birthday and opening of their new sensory garden on 21st May 2009, welcoming over 100 guests to the celebrations. Representatives of the various charitable trusts, companies and individuals who donated towards the cost of building the garden were among some of the many guests.

Darsdale Home was officially opened by Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Gloucester on the same day back in 1949, when the home employed five staff, caring for up to 18 residents. 60 years on, Darsdale now employs 41 staff caring for up to 30 visually impaired and dual sensory loss residents.

BBC Radio Northampton's Green Welly show presenters Johnnie Amos and Mark Dean cut the ribbon and officially opened the garden, much to the delight of the residents. Fundraising for the sensory garden began in March 2007 to raise the £50,000 needed and work began in September 2008. The original sunken garden has been transformed into a fully accessible



From left: Christine Stewart, Sue Henderson, Johnnie Amos and Mark Dean cutting the ribbon.

garden for all to enjoy, with plants being carefully selected for features such as scent, tactile foliage or rustling in the breeze. The garden also features a large summerhouse, gazebo, fountains and many comfortable oak benches.

Sue Henderson, Manager of Darsdale Home says "We are very grateful to everyone who donated money or raised funds for the project. A special thank-you is sent to Joe Boswell for taking our rough concept and transforming it into a fantastic design, not forgetting Addingtons for making this design reality. We also want to thank Waitrose of Rushden for providing the food for the event".

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More LARGE PRINT Books

A campaign is now underway to make large print books (and other formats) more available in high street bookshops. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), together with the Publishers Licensing Society (PLS) and BBC Audiobooks, set out in April to test the public demand for large print books by promoting the sale of over 50 new and bestselling titles by authors ranging from Josephine Cox to Jeremy Clarkson. The books are large-format paperbacks printed in 16-point Tiresias font and are being published under the "focus" logo. RNIB want to prove to the publishing/bookselling industry that there is a market for large print books; to encourage publishers to produce large print editions alongside the standard edition and bookshops to sell them. Ultimately, the aim is to enable people to order books from bookshops in whatever format they choose.

Change Of Venue

"SIGHT VILLAGE", the country's leading showcase of services and solutions for blind and partially sighted people, is on the move. The annual three-day exhibition, first launched by Queen Alexandra College in Birmingham 16 years ago, has outgrown the Clarendon Suites in Hagley Road. The well-known event will be relocating to the New Bingley Hall, Hockley Circus, Birmingham B18 5BE for 2009, running from 14 to 16 July. It's free entry and free parking, and within easy reach by bus or taxi of New Street Station.

DLA Victory

The DLA campaign that RNIB have led since 2006, along with the support of thousands of visually impaired people across the UK, including NAB representatives has been won.

NAB is delighted with the announcement that eligibility for the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance is to be extended to people with a severe visual impairment, from April 2011.

The announcement was made on 17th March by Jonathan Shaw MP, Minister for Disabled People, during the Report Stage of the Welfare Reform Bill. This decision by Government will mean around 26,000 people will benefit from an extra £29 per week. A huge thanks goes out to everyone involved with this campaign over the years.

Carers' Week 8th -14th June 2009

NAB and other organisations in the County will be celebrating National Carers' Week from 8th to 14th June this year. There are two free conferences for carers to attend being held at Kings Park Conference Centre (Moulton Park) on 10th June and at Kettering Leisure Village on 11th June. To find out more information or reserve your place, call 01604 237680.

NAB continues to hold regular social and support groups which can help carers'. The next Wellingborough MD group is on Wednesday 10th June at Tithe Barn from 2:00pm - 4:00pm. Then the Community Team will be on hand to demonstrate guiding techniques and give information to carers' at NAB's Summer Sight Day on Friday 12th June at Wardington Court, open from 10:30am -2:30pm.

More Help For Carers!!

NAB is looking forward to welcoming Gwyn Roberts this month in his new role as Carers Assessment and Support Worker (CASW) for sensory loss. Gwyn will be based both at Wardington Court and Ability Northants, but will spend the majority of his time visiting carers at home around the county.

Gwyn writes "I will be looking forward to offering advice and assistance to people who care for friends or relatives with a visual impairment."

"Working also with Northamptonshire Carers and the County Council, I will ensure that carers have access to the services they are entitled to."

This new post is part of a new team setup in the county to provide carers' with a formal assessment of their own needs for support.

Community Law Service

Did you know Community Law Service (Northampton and County) (formerly Welfare Rights Advice Service) provides comprehensive advice and representation in the fields of welfare rights, debt and housing advice, family law and immigration. Established in 1983 Community Law Service is the largest independent advice provider in the East Midlands, providing specialist legal advice to residents of Northamptonshire in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies. For further information, call Community Law Service on 01604 621038 or go to www.communitylawservice.org.uk

Achievements

Motown Magic

Wardington Court hosted a successful fundraising evening on Saturday 25th April, raising over a £1,000 for NAB. Nearly 120 people filled the hall to celebrate 50 years of Motown Records and with good music and a licensed bar, everyone had a great night out.

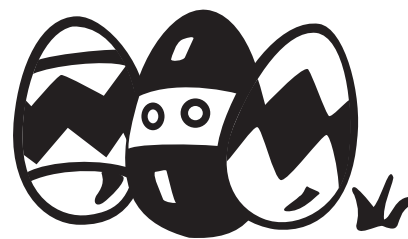
Thanks to Sugar & Spice

A big Thank-You is sent to all the members of the Sugar & Spice Club in Duston, Northampton for their fundraising activities in 2008.

At the club AGM in March they presented NAB, one of their nominated charities of the year, with a cheque for the sum of £1,000. A great effort and generous donation!

Well-done!

To all the groups, organisations and pubs which helped NAB with our annual Easter egg raffle this year. The giant chocolate Easter eggs raised more than £700, which is "eggcellent" news. Thanks to our supporters for all their hard work.



Charitable Trust Funds The Mobile Unit

The Edna Newill Charitable Trust has, once again, made a significant donation to fund the running costs of our Mobile Information Service for 12 months.

Many visually impaired people around the county will be familiar with our Mobile Information Unit. For over 10 years the unit has regularly visited various towns around the county to give advice, information and to demonstrate a variety of aids and adaptations to visually impaired people, their relatives, carers and friends.

Last year we were able to extend the number of sites the vehicle visits, thanks to support from the Edna Newill Charitable Trust. Their increased financial support this year will enable us to continue visiting the additional sites to service the needs of many hundreds of visually impaired people in the county who rely on our help. On behalf of all our visually impaired clients we would like to extend our sincere thanks to Brenda Cooper and Cynthia Kidd, Trustees of the Edna Newill Charitable Trust.

News From Darsdale

Staff and residents at Darsdale Home gave Deputy Manager Val Grant a good send-off in March. Val who is retiring, had completed 20 years of service at Darsdale and is sure to be missed. There was plenty of tea and cake passed round at her goodbye party on 26th March at Darsdale. Staff presented her with a crystal vase and flowers, whilst residents gave her a personalised handmade photo album as a keepsake. Another party took place the following evening, with a buffet and disco organised by colleagues, NAB General Secretary John Wood presented Val with a voucher on behalf of all NAB staff and trustees.

News From Wardington Court

Wardington Court's monthly tea dances continue; held on the 3rd Thursday of the month, they are proving popular. The dances are open to everyone and run from 1pm until 3pm with free admission. The Activity Centre has also enjoyed a varied events diary so far this year, with outings and trips to places such as Denby Pottery and the Royal Theatre.

Tough Times Continue!

Times continue to be difficult for charities in this time of recession. Our own financial year ended in March and it looks as if NAB will be showing a large deficit. One reason for this is a shortfall in donations and legacies, so anything you can do to help would be greatly appreciated. Thanks goes to those of you who sent in your small change, following our charity box appeal. Every little helps!

The new financial year got off to a better start in April, with two or three legacies being received or notified to us. Budgets have been put together for the year and once again things look difficult, particularly with our savings attracting very little interest.

We do have a vacant flat at the moment for a single visually impaired person. If you know of anybody who might be interested in accommodation in Kingsthorpe, Northampton please pass on this information. The number to ring is 01604 719193.

Our charity shop at 297 Wellingborough Road, Northampton is seeking good quality non-clothing items to sell. If you have anything you are able to donate please take it directly to the shop.

Summer Sight Day 2009

Friday 12th June is a date for your diary, as Wardington Court hosts another of NAB's popular focus events, Summer Sight Day.

The Sight Day, which is free to attend and will run from 10:30am to 2:30pm, offers visually impaired people and their carers' or family the chance to find out about NAB and other services, meet the team and have a look around.

Humanware, Sight & Sound and the RNIB will also be exhibiting some of the latest aids and gadgets and our Resource Room and Mobile Unit which will be open.

Sight Centre Coming Soon!

Exciting news, Northamptonshire Association for the Blind is to open its first Sight Centre in Kettering this June.

For many years now, NAB has been working towards the opening of a community-based centre. This new Sight Centre is part of a 12 month project by NAB in Kettering and if successful, could become permanent.

The Sight Centre will have specialist aids and equipment for you to try and buy, with staff on hand to demonstrate. We will offer support and information about the services that are available to you and your family or carers, plus lots more!

The new Kettering Sight Centre will be located at the top of the Wadcroft car park at the side of the old Woolworths store - near Shop Mobility.

As this is a new service, we will be looking for support from volunteers both visually impaired and sighted to help us in the Kettering Sight Centre. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call Anne on 01604 791333.

The Kettering Sight Centre will initially be open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:30am until 2:30pm. An official opening of the new Sight Centre will take place on Wednesday 1st July at 11am but if you would like to be one of the first visitors, why not come along to our preview day on Monday 29th June, 10:30am -2:30pm.

Branch News

Kettering

The Kettering Branch continues to host a regular luncheon club, which meets on the last Wednesday of every month at St Clements Court, Highfield Road, Kettering. Members are treated to a mouth watering lunch, along with hot drinks and the opportunity to take part in the raffle. The club organises entertainment for after the meal. Whether it be a speaker or a quiz, a good time is enjoyed by all!

Towcester

Towcester Branch welcomed its new Chair person, Bridget Harrhy recently. Bridget has taken over the role, having been a volunteer with the branch for over 17 years. The branch is looking forward to listening to interesting speakers in the coming months, on an array of subjects from religion to memories. A summer lunch out is planned for July 20th, venue to be decided.

Oundle

Oundle Branch enjoyed getting together at the Shuckburgh Arms in Southwick on 20th February, with all enjoying a delicious meal. The Branch held its AGM in April, where activities for the coming year were discussed. Members are looking forward to visiting a garden centre and cream tea in May and the annual strawberry tea at Woodnewton in July.

Brackley

Brackley Branch members met in March, where they listened to a talk by a local policeman. The branch meets from 2-4pm on the third Monday of every month at the Town Hall in Brackley. For more information contact David Johnson on 01280 702361. Members are looking forward to an outing to Waterperry Gardens, near Oxford on July 6th.

Rushden

In April, members of the Rushden Branch enjoyed a wonderful Easter Party. Entertainment was provided by the choir and violin group from Alfred Street School pupils. VIPs received a gift of a plant or a Genoa cake, much to their delight. Rushden Branch Committee members held their AGM on 27th April, discussing a flag day in June and the annual summer outing to be a coach tour followed by afternoon tea.

Wellingborough

Wellingborough Branch were overjoyed with raising £520 at their coffee morning in Earls Barton, at the end of January. The Branch will enjoy a trip to Beckworth Emporium for afternoon tea in June. Committee members will be out with their collection boxes on July 9th and 10th at Sainsbury's, Wellingborough.

Your Viewpoint

Flying High!

Barbara Whitehead and George Adeseko will be hoping to raise as much sponsorship as possible over the coming months, as they prepare to do a charity skydive this September. The pair want to raise money for Wardington Court and ask for your help.

If you would like to sponsor either Barbara or George, please contact Alan Williams on 01604 719193 or go to our website.

New Reading Group In Northampton

A new "Sound Reads" reading group for visually impaired people has formed in Northampton, based at Hunsbury Library. The new group has met a number of times since it began in March, meeting once-a-month on Monday mornings from 10.30am - 12pm.

The group is made up of several members so far, some of whom are writers as well as readers. All enjoy listening to audio books. John Clarke, the Community Connection Librarian responsible for the group says "Members have a wide range of literary preferences which makes meetings interesting and enjoyable".

The new group has plans to invite a narrator along to talk about the art of reading for audio books, as well as local authors in the future. The new reading group has agreed to help NAB with a listening book review for future editions of Viewpoint, so look out next time to find out what they have been listening to.

If you would like to attend the Northampton Sound Reads group meetings, please contact John Clarke at Weston Favell Library on 01604 403100 or e-mail westlib@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Gadget Corner - Radio Controlled Talking Clock

Find it a struggle changing the time on your clocks at home? The new Communiclock could be the solution! Evolved from the Cube Clock, this easy-to-use talking clock is radio controlled, so date and time are automatically updated for you. The Communiclock (£21.23 ex VAT) has good colour contrast and a large button to press and also offers an alarm function. The clock operates using four AA batteries (supplied), but a mains adaptor can be purchased separately. You can buy this useful gadget from our Resource Room at Wardington Court, the Mobile Unit or direct from the RNIB.

Radio Station For VIP's!

For those of you who enjoy listening to the radio, have you checked out RNIB's very own station, Insight Radio. Created for blind and partially sighted listeners, the station offers everything from daily newspapers, movie reviews, TV, events, and job guides plus lots more. They also have hints and tips on everything from cookery, DIY, gardening and reports on problems faced by the blind and partially sighted community.

Insight Radio broadcasts to the UK, Europe and the World and is available on SKY channel 0188, freesat channel 777 and online at www.insightradio.co.uk.

How About A Bit Of Sharp Shooting?

The Deanshanger Air Rifle Shooting Club is looking for new members and now could be your chance to take up a new interest. The visually impaired shooting club meets most Monday afternoons at Deanshanger Community Centre, where members enjoy shooting using their hearing to guide the pellets as opposed to their sight. Mike Gurney, club founder, would love to welcome you a long to the Deanshanger Club or an additional club in Northampton at Wardington Court that is currently being considered. Please call Mike on 01908 571347 or email michael@kazeja.plus.com

New Tactile Maps And Audio Trails

British Waterways has produced two new tactile maps and audio trails for visually impaired visitors to the Grand Union Canal. These useful resources have been developed with advice taken from visually impaired people locally and are available at two popular canal-side destinations in the Midlands – Stoke Bruerne near Northampton and Hatton Locks near Warwick.

Whilst tactile maps reveal the lay out and features of each site to the user, audio trails provide the listener with lively commentary around the historic waterways, speaking of canal heritage and present day use. Visitors to these sites can use the maps and audio trails together or independently, whatever suits you best! Cassette players and tapes are available free of charge from the Stoke Bruerne museum shop and the Hatton Locks café. The audio trails can also be downloaded from British Waterway's website for use with your own audio equipment, go to www.waterscape.com

NAB Services

Guidelines

The current waiting time for registration in Northamptonshire seems to be having a knock-on effect on the number of calls to NAB's Community Services Team.

With the time between hospital certification and the resulting home assessment visit by Northamptonshire County Council's Sensory Impairment Unit now taking anything up to five months, requests for advice and assistance are on the rise.

Jenny Richardson, who runs NAB's Guidelines Information Service, has a very busy schedule of home visits right around the county. She says "Services generally are under pressure at the moment.

The Guidelines service has always been able to respond very quickly but a backlog is beginning to build and I hope people will bear with us. We do understand people's concerns and difficulties and are working hard to respond as promptly as possible."

Starting Soon- Yoga Classes

Wardington Court will be opening its doors to run a series of yoga classes for visually impaired people shortly. Whether you want to try something new or would like to take part in an activity both you and a friend can enjoy, this is for you. Classes will start on Wednesday 3rd June, from 7.30pm-8.30pm, costing £5 each per session. Please ring Laura on 01604 791333 to find out more or reserve your place.

Transcription Services

Did you know that Northamptonshire Association for the Blind can provide you or your organisation with a comprehensive transcription service? Our Transcription Services, which have been running now for over 10 years, provide information and skills needed to ensure that blind and partially sighted people are kept in touch.

NAB has the resources to transcribe any document or information into alternative formats which are easier for visually impaired people to access. These formats include Braille, CD, audio cassette and large print. NAB helps individuals with various transcription needs, as well as a wide range of different organisations. If you would like to find out more about NAB's Transcription Service, please contact Stephen Pascoe on 01604 719193 or email stephen@nab.org.uk

Remember Us In Your Will

Remembering Northamptonshire Association for the Blind in your Will is the best way to ensure that we can continue with our valuable work, offering a wide range of services for visually impaired people, their carers or relatives.

There are also tax advantages for leaving a bequest to a charity. You can leave us a specific sum of money, a share of what is left after you have provided for family and friends, an item of value such as jewellery, land or even stocks and shares.

If you would like to make a Will, or amend an existing one, we strongly recommend you contact a solicitor. If you don't know a solicitor we can put you in touch with one who specialises in this type of work. With a Will you can then rest assured that your family, friends and charitable organisations like us will benefit from your last wishes. Call Alan Williams on 01604 719193 for further help.

Computer Groups

A great evening get-together marked the approaching end of term for "students" of Northampton College's Computer Training Groups for Visually Impaired People.

Around 40 blind and partially sighted people have attended the weekly groups which started in September last year, and their annual dinner held in the College's restaurant was a celebration of their achievements and the friendships they have formed.

The groups, of no more than eight people, have been running in association with NAB for many years now, and provide a supportive environment for computer novices, improvers and those seeking qualification. Another group is now in its second year at Daventry College, and going from strength to strength.

In Corby, NAB has worked closely with Northamptonshire County Council's Adult Learning Service to establish a seven-week course for visually impaired people in Basic IT Skills for Independent Living. The second course ended in May, with learners achieving keyboard skills, and a basic knowledge of email, website and word processing.

Groups restart in September and anyone interested can get their names on the waiting lists now, by ringing NAB Community Team on 01604 716044.

Contact Us

Telephone: 01604 719193 Email: admin@nab.org.uk

Community Team Telephone: 01604 716044 Email: exservs@nab.org.uk

Website: www.nab.org.uk

Dates For Your Diary

June

- 10th Wellingborough Macular Disease Support Group. Tithe Barn. 2:00pm -4:00pm.
- 12th Summer Sight Day at Wardington Court, Welford Road, Northampton. 10:30am – 2:30pm Demonstration of aids and gadgets available and information for visually impaired people and their carers or family.
- 16th Trip to Emberton Park. Price £10.50 including lunch. Contact Anne or Laura on 01604 791333.
- 24th Summer BBQ at Wardington Court from 7:30pm. Tickets £6, transport £4 if required. Contact Anne or Laura on 01604 791333.
- 29th Preview day at Kettering Sight Centre, 10.30am - 2.30pm

July

- 1st Official opening of Kettering Sight Centre, 10:30am-2:30pm. Then open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday onwards.
- 8th MD Members Summer Party. Wardington Court, Welford Road, Northampton. 12:30pm – 3:30pm.

July

- 9th Trip to Irchester Country Park. Price £10.50 including lunch. Call Anne or Laura on 01604 791333.
- 27th Daventry Macular Disease Support Group. The Abbey Centre. 2:00pm - 4:00pm.

August

- 3rd Kettering Macular Disease Support Group. The Corn Market Hall. 10:00am - 12Noon.
- 8th Ferret Racing night at Wardington Court, from 7.30pm. Tickets £5 adults, £2.50 children, licensed bar available.

September

- 9th Wellingborough Macular Disease Support Group. Tithe Barn. 2:00pm -4:00pm.

October

- 14th Northampton Macular Disease Support Group. Holy Sepulchre Church rooms. 2:00pm - 4:00pm.
- 26th Daventry Macular Disease Support Group. The Abbey Centre. 2:00pm - 4:00pm.

Please note, Wardington Court will close at 2pm on Friday 17th July and re-open on Monday 3rd August.