

Bournemouth Blind Society

Your local charity promoting the independence and well-being of blind & partially sighted people

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Queen Elizabeth II

It was with profound sadness that we received the news of the passing away of Her Majesty The Queen on Thursday 8th September 2022. Bournemouth Blind Society joins the nation and many other local charities in paying tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and honouring her extraordinary life and contribution to the nation.



Chief Executive Philip Tarrant says, 'As our longest-reigning monarch, we pay tribute to Her Majesty's long and unwavering service to the country. She was an inspiration and leaves behind an incredible legacy following a life of dedication.'

Some of our Members share their memories and tributes to the Queen in this edition of our Newsletter.

'Our Queen'

The tributes to and memories of Her Majesty The Queen by the Members attending our Social Groups over the last few weeks reflect admiration for a truly remarkable, much loved lady who has been a constant presence in most of our lives.

Several of our Members swore allegiance to the Queen and country when they joined the services and spoke of their huge respect for her. One man who completed his National Service referred to her as 'the Boss' and said 'I had so much time for her.'

Another Member, who was in the RAF, saw the Queen when he lined the route near the Cenotaph for state visits by the Kings of Greece and Belgium during the 1960's. 'They came past in open carriages, I still have photos of it at home. It was so sad when she passed away as it seemed so sudden.'

This gentleman's wife also saw the Queen during a walkabout in Hayes, Middlesex. 'She just seemed so very interested in everyone and all that was going on. She had the most beautiful skin and smile.'

A gentleman born in the same year as the Queen cheekily said, 'We grew up together really and I worked for her Dad when I was in the Army!'



One Member who was also in the RAF flew a Canberra in formation at the Queen's 1953 coronation. He went on to meet the Queen several times - at Windsor Great Park when attached to the Household Cavalry and at Buckingham Palace when he chatted to her when he was decorated with an OBE. 'She was very sharp, with piercing eyes, that hint of humour and a very cool head. She remembered every detail of what she had been told. I think her greatest value was that she was the glue that held the Commonwealth together.'

One lady told me about how she and her husband had gone up to London by coach to watch the coronation. 'We



went to Buckingham Palace with millions of others, it was such a fantastic atmosphere with masses of people, 5 or 6 deep, cheering and clapping. I think she was marvellous. Not many people had a TV before the Queen was crowned so the Royal family had seemed very distant, you just heard about them on the radio. She has brought the monarchy to life for us whereas the Royal family seemed to live in a different world before. She has been “real” and become much more “human.”

This lady went on to take her young children to see Her Majesty on two occasions. They can remember standing by the roadside and waving their flags, both on a holiday to Pwllheli in 1963 when the Queen was on a Royal visit to Wales and drove slowly past, and again in 1966 when the

Queen was in the local area, opening Shaftesbury House.

The lady continued, ‘I have now known five monarchs in my lifetime. I can remember Queen Mary and George V, Edward VIII who abdicated, then the Queen’s Mum and Dad, the Queen and now King Charles III. I think we all thought she’d be here forever, and now gosh, she’s gone and we can’t take it in.’

Another lady added, ‘She was so good for our country. I saw her once when she visited Bournemouth. I am feeling sad even though we had kind of expected it. It will be such a big change for the country. I was able to watch her coronation on TV in black and white. I remember all the horses and her sitting on the throne and promising to carry out her duties to the land. I think she’s been awfully good at doing that.’

Another Member said, ‘I think she did a hell of a lot for this country. I had great admiration for her so was very sad to hear of her passing.’

The Queen was held in deep affection by people of all ages.

Some younger Members and Staff at our Tuesday Café added their thoughts, ‘She was the only monarch I have ever known, she has just always been there, she was an absolute constant, reigning in a world of immense change;’ ‘She was very good at what she did;’ ‘She was a proper nice lady, bless her;’ ‘She had such a beautiful aura’ and ‘She seemed just like this special grandma to us all.’

Caterina Husbands worked for our charity (then called BSVI) in 2004 when the Queen visited to officially reopen the renamed ‘Lighthouse’ in Poole after its refurbishment. As an employee of a local charity, Caterina was invited to attend.

She explains, ‘She asked me where I worked and if I was visually impaired myself, which I am. She was so lovely and sweet. She was teeny tiny. I remember the striking contrast between her immaculate white glove and my tanned skin as she shook my hand. She had this amazing brooch on.

We had all practised our curtseying beforehand and I was thinking, please don’t fall on the Queen! Of course I

didn’t! Her lady-in-waiting then chatted with me and said it’s a big deal if the Queen asks you a question and how lucky she felt to be working for the Queen. It was all a pretty special experience.’

Caterina now lives in Canada. The huge impact of the Queen’s passing is clearly being felt worldwide. Caterina confirms, ‘People here seem very sad about her loss.’



At the charity, we join the nation in remembering Her Majesty and send messages of support to any Members who may be struggling at this emotional time. We finish by echoing the now famous and poignant words uttered by Paddington Bear after the Platinum Jubilee tea sketch this June:

**“Thank you Ma’am,
for everything.”**

Martyn's Miles

He's home!

What an amazingly awesome achievement!

We are incredibly proud of our Volunteer bus driver Martyn Highmore, who has completed his 630 mile walk of the South West Coast path. A 'welcome party' that included his Mum, sisters and Chief Exec Philip met him at the finish point at Shell Bay on Friday 29th July.

Having had a few weeks to recover now, Martyn shared some of his experiences with us. 'The most difficult part was at the beginning when it was a lot steeper than I had expected and I was carrying more in my rucksack. I soon decided there were some things that I didn't need, (such as my torch as I was going to bed before dark and getting up in the light) so I re-evaluated, discarded some things and re-packed!

What really helped me too was when my sister arrived after a few weeks and stayed on the campsites. She did all the cooking, arranged where we would camp and organised everything at the sites. This meant that I could carry less



and just focus on the walking!

Martyn told me that one of his low points was when he was walking across fields near Boscastle and sunk into a bog up to his knees and couldn't get out for quite some time! Following a hosing down, he had to dry his boots under the hand dryer in the campsite toilets! Rain water leaking into his tent and soaking his sleeping bag wasn't too much fun either and led to him buying a second tent!

Those experiences obviously haven't put him off though. 'After two months of camping I still love it and want to get out there again', he says, 'When the weather is great, there's

really nothing better!’ Martyn continued, ‘I was lucky, I didn’t have that much bad weather though. When it started to get really hot, I just took the day off - when I was near Paignton I went off on an enjoyable train trip to Dartmouth and on another really hot day, I was lucky to be walking on a fairly flat part of the path near the railway line from Teignmouth to Dawlish Warren.’

I asked Martyn how he had coped physically on the walk. He said, ‘I was a bit afraid I may break myself physically but I didn’t really get many injuries, just one blister on my foot that didn’t really hurt. People commented on how much weight I had lost when I got back though. I did have to keep to quite a strict routine and not push myself too hard each day. I made myself stop for regular breaks for coffee at 11am, lunch at 1pm, tea at 3pm or I would have just kept going until I dropped. I think I ended up averaging about 14 miles per day.’

Another of Martyn’s memories involved wading through thigh high water in two estuaries - River Erme near Mothecombe and then the River Avon near

Bigbury-on-Sea.

Martyn enthused about some of the scenery he witnessed on the walk. He said, ‘I saw some really amazing views, you would go up a hill or round a bend and then see something quite stunning, like Burgh Island, which was an inspiration for a few of Agatha Christie’s novels.’



Once I got to Dorset it seemed more like slopes than hills whereas in North Devon it was a bit more of a struggle as the hills were so steep. I saw lots of other walkers on the way; many were doing just one or two weeks of the route rather than the whole thing and some were doing it for stress relief and mental wellbeing.’

Martyn told me a random story about how on one day in southern Cornwall he bumped into his old boss and then two days later, he met him again when he walked around a corner and saw him sitting on

a rock, eating his sandwiches!

Martyn explained, 'The coast path is so strange at times because where some parts have fallen into the sea, it pushes you further inland. It's like that at Lyme Regis and Charmouth, where I was so grateful to meet up with our Volunteers Keith and Marion and enjoy a welcome coffee break at their caravan.'



Martyn continued, 'The path is very close to the sea at some points and you are looking straight down at it so it can get dangerous when it's blowy! The path is very different in places, sometimes it is quite narrow, hidden by vegetation and in other places it's like a wider concrete cycle path.'

Martyn admitted that the fact he was doing a sponsored walk for our charity kept him motivated to carry on! He says

he would still like to do further walks, maybe those of about 100 miles distances though! However, a 500 mile walk in northern Spain interests him!

We sincerely thank Martyn for allowing the charity to benefit from his incredible adventure. To date, we have received over **£3,000** in sponsorship money. We thank all sponsors for their incredible generosity.

We also give a special thank you to Martyn's sister, Annette, who provided such valuable support. What a team!

If anyone else would like to add to Martyn's total, please contact Philip (**01202 546644**) or bring cash or a cheque into the office. Thank you.

Fundraising Thanks

As a small charity, we rely heavily on generous donations (both from individuals and organisations) to continue to provide our well appreciated services.

We thank the Holdenhurst Charity for their donation of £2,000 and The Wood Barn for £493 raised from the sales of wood carvings.

Resource Centre

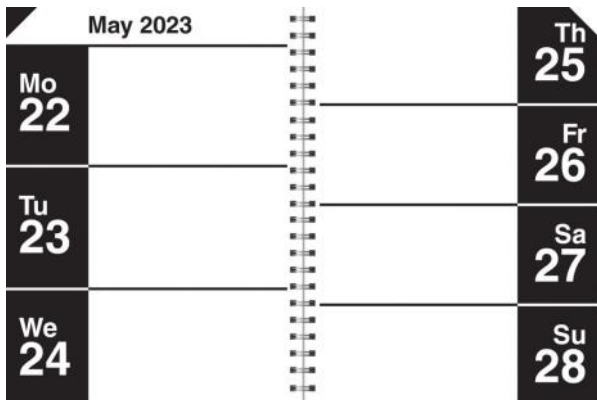
Yes, it is that time of year again! The Resource Centre is now stocking up on Diaries and Calendars for **2023**.

Prices for Diaries this year are:

A6 Pocket Diary - £6.30

A5 Midi Diary - £8.30

A4 Desk Diary - £10.30



We will have limited stocks of the diaries in the Resource Centre but can always order items for you. Please call us on **01202 546644** if you wish us to do this.

We are also producing our Bournemouth Blind Society

large print calendars again and these will cost **£5**.



We have ordered some other products that you may also find useful:

A5 Large Print Address Book - £9.60

A5 Telephone Book - £9.60

A4 Telephone Book - £11

Our **Resource Centre** is open **Monday - Friday, from 10am - 1pm.**

Appointments are not strictly necessary, but it is worth phoning before you visit, to ensure that a member of staff will be available to deal with demonstrations of any specific equipment that may assist you with your sight loss.

Trustee Retirement



Terry Wood announced his retirement from the Board of Trustees in July, due to health issues. He said, 'I have been privileged to be a Trustee since 2000 and honoured to serve as Chair of Trustees until my stroke in 2004 made holding that post no longer feasible.'

I would like to place on record my thanks to all my fellow Trustees over the past 22 years and to the dedication of both Staff and Volunteers who provide essential services to the blind and partially sighted in the area. I know that the Society will continue to thrive and work across the larger BCP area, helping those they work with to live full and rewarding lives.'

The current Chair of Trustees Madeleine Avis thanked Terry for his dedicated service to the Charity for so many years,

saying 'You have seen the Society grow, change its name, struggle to raise funds and cope with the ever increasing demands of both legislation and the Charity Commission.'

We wish Terry good luck in his retirement and, using his own favourite phrase, hope that he will 'Keep Smiling!'

Quiz Night



Our next Quiz Night will be on **Saturday 26th November** at **7.30pm** in Rooper Hall.

If you, your family and friends would like to join us, please phone **01202 546644** to book. The price for this event is **£12.50** (including Fish & Chips and an ice-cream). A cash Bar and Raffle will run through the evening.

We look forward to welcoming you to this fun event where teams of 6-8 people enjoy friendly competition and try to pit their wits against the Quiz Master.

Achievements

We always like to share news of the achievements of our Members.

Tuesday Café regular visitor John Blake, who is one of our younger Members, works as a volunteer gardener one day each week at the Rossmore Library. He was presented with a 'Rossmore Gardening Hero' badge and medal by a local Councillor.



Rob Sholton-Douglas-Vernon, cricket player for the Dorset Dolphins VI Cricket team, was presented with a trophy for his 'Champagne Moment' at the Blind Cricket Development Festival Weekend in Leicester. Rob, a B1 (totally blind) player, was awarded this trophy for hitting the ball over the boundary and scoring 6 runs.

Congratulations to both John and Rob for their fantastic achievements.

Walking Group

This season's Walking Group outings will finish at the end of September, with our visit to Poole Quay and Baiter.

We thank all of our Volunteers: Linda, Adrian, Tony, Kathy and Romy for accompanying the walkers this year.

We have all enjoyed some good exercise and interesting chats over refreshments at various cafes!



We have also been blessed with fine weather. We keep our fingers crossed as I write this article as we have been soaked at Baiter on past occasions. The heavens open as we get to the furthest point away from the minibus, where there is no shelter around. One Member has already said, 'Waterproofs at the ready!'

We will resume our walks next Spring.

Christmas Raffle

On no, we are mentioning that 'Christmas' word already! We are launching our Christmas Raffle in early November and sending out a book of 5 Raffle tickets to every Member.



Each ticket will cost **£1** and give you the chance of winning a cash prize. (1st prize: £100; 2nd prize: £50; 3rd prize: £25).

Please help us by purchasing tickets and selling them to your family and friends. This is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year and your generosity and support is always very appreciated.

Details of this year's Christmas celebrations at the Centre will be published separately.

Christmas Concert



A great opportunity to get into the festive spirit! The Wessex

Chorus have kindly agreed to perform a Christmas concert for us in our Rooper Hall on **Saturday 3rd December at 6.30pm.**

Join us to hear and sing along to some festive favourites, both traditional and modern.

Entry will be **£8** and seats can be reserved at the office.

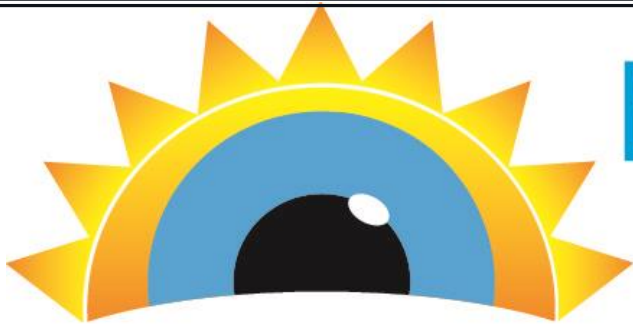
Light refreshments will be sold during the evening.

CLAC

We have again been invited to take part in the **Christchurch Living Advent Calendar**, organised by the Christchurch Rotary Club.

We have been allocated the window of **Thursday 22nd December** at the Christchurch Library, where a 'surprise' performance from a local entertainment group will take place, together with some light refreshments and a chance to participate in our Raffle.

This event will allow us to raise money for the charity and also boost our profile within the local community. We will update you with further details next time.



Bournemouth Blind Society

**supporting blind and partially sighted people to
remain independent and part of the community**

**Sight & Hearing Resource Centre
(open Mon to Fri 10am - 1pm)**

Community Support

Emotional Support

Befriending

Daily Activities

Walking Group

Assistive Technology Tuition

Visual Awareness Training

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