

SIGHT MATTERS

Optic Topics

Issue 38

Autumn 2022

Stiklings Circus Skills



Stiklings is an organisation that brings circus education and performance to people around the world. With sponsorship from the IOM Steam Packet for their travel, Sight Matters brought over Stiklings to help our members and others understand that blindness and visual impairments needn't be an impediment to learning new

challenges. Over 4 days 61 members enjoyed learning circus skills - from acrobatics to spinning fire wicks. At the end of the week the sessions culminated in a wonderful performance in the Freedom Field. Some comments received from members over the week were 'amazing', 'awesome', 'fun' & 'I feel powerful'. There was no cost to members for the sessions provided by Sight Matters. A big thank you to everyone involved and to Stiklings for helping our members to adapt, build confidence and overcome their fears. Thanks to Jonathan Burton for the photos.

If you are interested in sponsoring this activity or any other of our services please contact us.



Freedom Field Official Opening

We were delighted to officially open our new 'Freedom Field' at a formal celebration in August.

Proceedings began with a touching address from our Chief Executive Officer, Ian Cooil, who introduced some of our youngest members together with long associated service user members, including June, who became a service-user in 1939, and 101-year-old veteran, James Fenton, who had the great honour of cutting the ribbon.



(Pictured above, member James Fenton also below with Callum)



(Pictured above, member June Sanderson with Volunteer, Bill Welden)

The official opening was timed to coincide with the 85th anniversary of the Blind Persons' Welfare Act 1937. Ian Cooil said: 'It's been such a joy to see the Freedom Field embraced by service-users, and local residents particularly those with additional needs and others who now have the opportunity to benefit from this secure therapeutic space, and embrace the well documented benefits of being close to nature.'



Thanks to all those who attended for making it such a special day, Onchan Silver band for the entertainment and to Jonathon Burton for the lovely photos.



Coast to Coast Walk

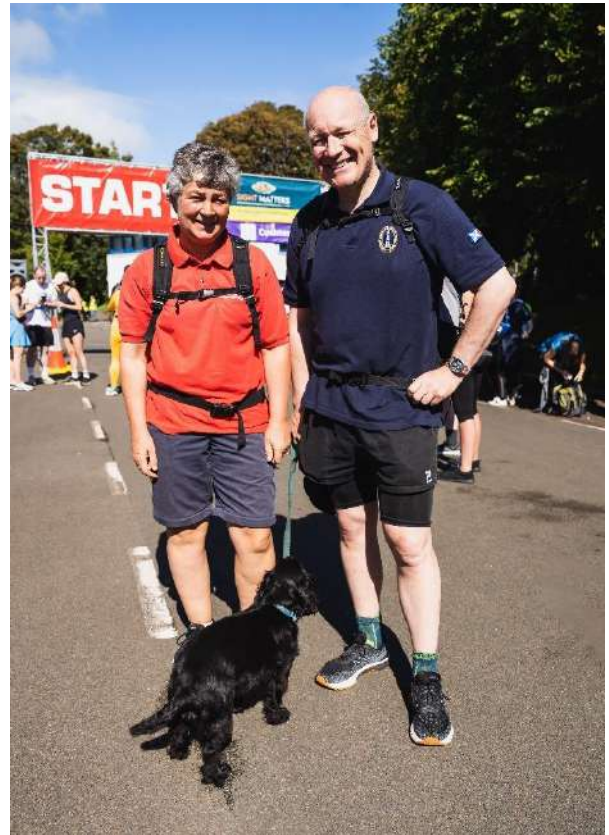


(pictured above Team Conister)

Over 470 people took part in this year's Coast to Coast. A big thank you to Conister Bank who sponsored this year's event.



We were delighted to see the Lt. Governor, Sir John Lorimer, his wife, Lady Phillipa Lorimer, and their dog Midge, take part this year (pictured below)



With money still coming in, the event looks likely to raise more than £5,000. Thanks to everyone involved with helping us to make this event so great!



Thank you

Seven-year old Callum (pictured below) walked from St John's to Peel on the Coast to Coast in aid of his infant brother, Aiden, who was born with a serious sight issue. He managed to raise over £1,100. What a great achievement Calum!



Roger, who is a member and on our Executive Committee, walked the gruelling 12 mile walk in the glaring sun shine. He managed to raise £100 for us. Thanks Roger and we hope your blisters weren't too bad!

The fabulous Halle, who is only 2 and a half, persuaded her family to walk the Coast to Coast for her great grandma who is one of our members or as Halle calls her 'Dora the Explorer' Halle raised £80 for us, which is brilliant and really appreciated.



(pictured above Roger Ingrey and pictured below Halle and her family)



Sandgate Chapel raises £250



(Pictured above, Pauline, Jane, Carolyn)

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Pauline, Jane, Carolyn and everyone else at Sandgate Methodist Chapel for organising such a wonderful fundraiser coffee morning for Sight Matters, raising over £250.

The 160-year-old chapel has undergone significant renovation work in recent years, and is looking absolutely fantastic inside and out.

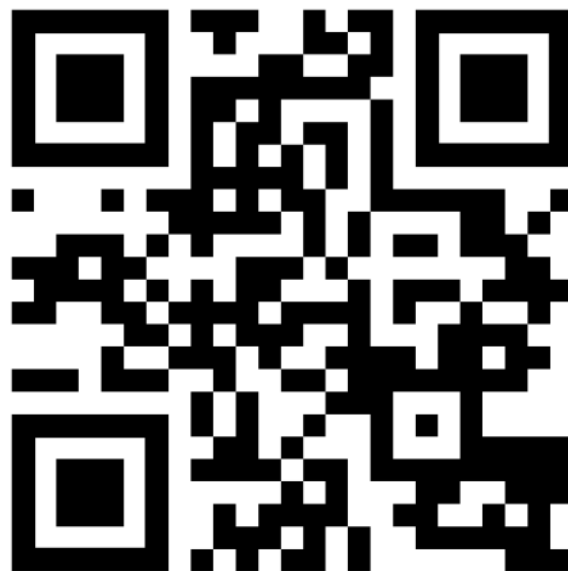
The chapel will be hosting more events in the coming months, so make sure you pop in to one of their upcoming events

Thanks for all your hard work, ladies. The cake was amazing.



QR Code

We are offering a more flexible way for you to donate with our QR Code. You can use your mobile phone or tablets to scan the QR code and donate.



How to use

1. Turn on your camera app
2. Frame the QR code
3. Click the pop up
- 4.

Do you need help?

Are you or do you know someone struggling to manage with the impact of sight loss and would like some help?

Did you know you don't have to be a member or be registered blind or partially sighted to get in touch with us?

To find out more information or just a chat, please contact Cathryn Bradley on **674727** or email **CBradley@mbws.org.im**

Reusable Water bottles



As a **UNESCO Biosphere Partner**, Sight Matters prioritises green and environmental initiatives. Recently, we've turned our focus to reducing single-use plastics, both day-to-day at Corrin Court and at our events.

As such, we recently produced some rather lovely Sight Matters branded reusable water bottles. Each staff member has been given a bottle so that they can stay hydrated at work without producing additional plastic waste.

Additionally, we sold these bottles at our recent **Coast to Coast** walk – a move which helped us reduce the number of single-use plastic bottles on the day by around, so long as our maths holds up, 200.

Moreover, thanks to sponsorship from the Free Masons, we were able to provide water refills at this year's Coast to Coast hydration stations. By opting for large water-cooler style storage units, walkers were able to refill their bottles quickly and easily – and in an environmentally-friendly way. Any plastic bottles that were used were collected by the team at Recycle

Collect, who kindly agreed to place recycle boxes along the route and even collected them on our behalf, ready to be reused. Thanks to all of this, this year's Coast to Coast was our greenest ever!

Alongside this work, Sight Matters recently hosted a Gardening for Wildlife event with fellow Biosphere partners, **Manx Wildlife Trust**. The event taught delegates how to garden with the local environment in mind, and showcased some of the design innovations we've included in Freedom Field (such as our Hedgehog Run and birdboxes) that are specifically designed to support local flora and fauna.

Over the coming months and years, we will continue to pursue environmental initiatives. The Isle of Man is a beautiful place, and we want to do our part to ensure it stays that way.

The Water bottles are priced at £5.00 plus postage. If you would like to purchase a Sight Matters water bottle please contact us.

Introducing Julie Cannon

I'm Julie Cannon and I am delighted to have just joined the Sight Matters team as an Inclusion Support Officer for Accessibility and Activities. I have worked as an Occupational Therapist for over 20 years predominantly in community teams in Nottinghamshire and I hope to utilise those skills and knowledge within this post. I was lured to return back to the

island just over 5 years ago to be closer to family and it has honestly felt as though I have never been away.



My role is a new post to develop social and inclusive activities for members over the age of 18. I'm open to ideas and would value members input. Please feel free to contact me by phone, email or even in person if you are up at the centre. The members I have had the pleasure of meeting in my first week have been so welcoming and I look forward to meeting you all.
Email-jcannon@sightmatters.im

'You Matter' Course

We will be running our 'You Matter' course again early in 2023. This 7-week course has been designed for people newly diagnosed with sight loss

or for their families to help provide information to enhance your independence.

If you feel this course could be of benefit to you, please contact us. The course is free of charge

Welcoming Warm Hub



The rising energy costs are a concern to us all and we have previously published what external support is available through the energy companies, Government Departments and other charities. To support our members, we are going to trial a Weekly Warm Hub at the centre starting on **Monday 31st October, 2022**, for a month. It's a simple principle – the centre is open, the lights and heating are on, if you're responsible for your own fuel bills, we'll welcome you, and if you live with a family member them too.

The Function Room will be available on a **Monday between 10am and 3pm** and run by a volunteer. Hot drinks and biscuits will be available and the TV will be on.

Transport will **not be** provided to and from the centre and the team here will be doing their normal day to day

business but will be on hand to help, if there's something you need. If there's a need for the Warm Hub to continue, we'll look to continue with it after the trial period.

Events

Italian Night



We will be holding an Italian Themed Fundraising Night on 21st October. As well as food, there will also be a quiz, music and a raffle. Booking is essential - £15 for two courses. £18 for three, bring your own drinks. Menu choices required at time of booking

Starter

Minestrone soup (V) **or** Melon and parma ham

Mains

Mushroom risotto **or** Lasagne

Dessert

Tiramisu **or** Gelato

For bookings call 674727 or email events@sightmatters.im

Authors Breakfast

Our annual Authors Breakfast will be held at the Comis Hotel on Monday 28th November at 9.30am. Our speaker this year is David Elyan. Local author, David, will be sharing stories from his life -

An avid book & art collector, he was a Director of the Bankside Gallery in London and Chairman of the Friends of the Royal Academy of Music, where he met Princess Diana. He has also been a Trustee of the Royal Albert Hall for 22 years. Tickets are £25 to include a full breakfast buffet. To book or more information call 674727 or email events@sightmatters.im

Christmas Coffee Morning



Our Fundraising Group are holding their popular Christmas Coffee Morning on Thursday 17th November, 10.30am at Corrin Court. It's a great opportunity, not only to get together for coffee and chat, but also to get some gifts for Christmas as well as some lovely cakes! Entry is £2 and includes refreshments

Anyone wanting to donate cakes, raffle prizes or Christmas items, please bring them into Corrin Court or The VIP Store and mark them for the attention of Debbie

A Christmas Celebration



We are holding our Christmas Celebration on Friday 9th December at 2pm. We will have a choir and readings as well as refreshments. This is a special afternoon in the Sight Matters calendar. This is a free event open to all, please reserve your space by calling 674727 and speaking to Stacy or Debbie. Transport can be provided but may be limited

November is Will writing month



Sight Matters and Island law firm Callin Wild have teamed up for 'Will Writing Month', a joint initiative to encourage people in the Isle of Man to make a Will.

Throughout November, anyone that quotes **Sight Matters** when using Callin Wild's legal services to make a Will, will receive a special discount. The rate will be reduced to £200 for an individual and to £300 for a couple, with 50% of each processed Will donated to the Sight Matters.

Callin Wild is a respected full-service legal practice offering expertise in all areas of general practice.

It has developed the new initiative alongside Sight Matters to highlight the importance of having a Will and to get more local people to make steps to create one; while also raising money for the Society, which looks after the interests of more than 500 blind and visually impaired people in the Isle of Man.

Marc Furness, Advocate and Notary Public at Callin Wild, says it is a common misconception that only older people need to make a Will, but this couldn't be further from the truth. He explained: 'A Will not only empowers you to decide exactly what happens to your money, property and personal possessions after your death, it is also one of the most important documents a parent can create to ensure their children are cared for by the people they wish if they were to pass away. 'Without a Will there are countless difficulties that may arise. If you are

not married or in a civil partnership for example, your partner, irrespective of how long you have been together, will not inherit your assets automatically and could well receive nothing without having to make a time consuming and costly claim against your estate. A simple and straightforward Will can prevent any of these difficulties from arising and ensure that your partner gets what you wish them to receive. 'Callin Wild has set up the 'Will Writing Month' in partnership with Sight Matters, with the goal to encourage more local people to think carefully about their future and what might happen if they were to die. As uncomfortable as it might be to think about, it is so important to have this documentation in place, as without it, the division of your assets is out of your hands.

'We do, unfortunately, see how quickly things can turn hostile after the death of a family member without a Will in place, and would encourage everyone to think seriously about where they want their assets to go and put this in writing, by making a Will.'

Fundraising & Marketing Officer for Sight Matters, Peter Marshall added: 'Writing a Will is something we encourage all of our members to do as we have seen first-hand how things can turn sour, which can be upsetting for everyone involved.

'We are pleased to be launching this important initiative alongside Callin Wild, and the donations received will help us greatly in continuing to provide the vital services we offer to the Island's blind and visually impaired community.'

To find out more and to receive the special discount as part of 'Will Writing Month', contact Callin Wild by calling (01624) 623195 or emailing gkneale@callinwild.com. The campaign runs from 1st – 30th November 2022

Recipe book



The Sight Matters fundraising team, are currently working towards producing a cookbook and are wondered if they could tempt you into sending a recipe for inclusion in our new book?

It could be a recipe for anything at all – your favourite family meal, a dish you have recreated after a memorable holiday meal, or simply something you always enjoy cooking. So, it could be a recipe for a drink, a meal, or just your favourite way to garnish your beans on toast! You don't need to send us a newly created recipe but simply the way that you lovingly create a dish (even a simple or well-known one with your own personal "twist"). For instance, when making Cottage Pie do you use a secret

ingredient like, say, Worcestershire Sauce? Or, when making chocolate mousse, do you prefer to use a mix of milk and dark chocolate? Just tell us all about it in a recipe!

Recipes included and printed in our wonderful new cookbook will include the name of the sender, unless you specifically request for your name not to be shown, in which case your recipe will be attributed to 'anonymous' or to a nickname you can suggest to us

It would be really good if you could write a couple of lines about why you like the recipe which you are sending. Such as "my son always liked this after his exams", "our family always eat this at Easter", "my granddaughter's favourite". Any little comment of an anecdotal nature that we can include in the book with your recipe would be very welcome.

We really hope that you will be able to find a few minutes to write a recipe to send to us for inclusion in our book. You can always send more than one recipe!

For more information on how to include a recipe, call 674727 or email pauline@sightmatters.im

Awareness Week

Vision awareness week will this year be held week commencing 10th October to coincide with World Sight Day on 13th October. We will be running a series of social media articles regarding eye health. We will also be holding our Bright for Sight Day on Friday 14th

October so encourage people to dress bright for sight to stave off the winter blues and raise funds for Sight Matters

The VIP Store



We are loving our new branding on our Charity shop the VIP Store. If you've not yet been in, go and take a look and let us know what you think.

The shop opening hours are: Monday – Saturday 10.30am – 4pm

Younger members Activities Club

The younger members recently took part in a 'touch, smell and guess' session involving fruit and vegetables afterwards they used the fruit and vegetables to create natural colours and then tie-dyed T shirts to take home.





bills. You do not need to be a member to join us for our meetings as everyone is most welcome.

Finally, I fly to Liverpool and St Pauls for my next regular eye injection, just before the big move to Liverpool's new central hospital takes place. As you will all be aware many of the hospitals are relocating to this New Hospital and amalgamating some of their specific departments into a single operation. This is planned to start on September 28th, and it is hoped everything is completed by the end of October. No doubt there will be some disruption to the usual appointment venues and procedures so I intend to gather as much information as I can in order to help anyone who wishes to call me if travelling for medical treatment during the transition. Please do not hesitate to call me on 813774 or Mob 491234 if I can be of any assistance on this matter.

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On behalf of all our members we would like to congratulate everyone at Sight Matters involved in the construction and opening of the new "Freedom Field." Gill and I attended the opening and had a wonderful time. As I agreed with the Manx Radio's presenter on the day it is a really great on Island asset, and one that no doubt took much vision and determination to bring to life. "Congratulations."

We the MMSG hold our next members meeting at Sight Matters on Friday the 15th of October starting at 1100hrs. Penny Creighton MBE is to give us a really informative talk on nutrition including which foods are better for us as we get older. We also have planned for later this year or early next for a speaker on personal alarm systems, and someone from Government to advise on how to best cope with the rising cost of energy and household

Recipe

Easy slow cooker Chilli



This slow cooker chilli is made using beef mince and simple store cupboard ingredients. It will keep well in the fridge for a couple of days and freezes beautifully – serve with rice, tacos or warmed tortilla wraps, alongside soured cream or grated cheese and a squeeze of fresh lime, if you like

Ingredients

500g/1lb 2oz [beef mince](#)
1 medium [onion](#), finely chopped
1 tsp hot [smoked paprika](#)
1 tsp ground [cumin](#)
1 tsp ground [coriander](#)
½–1 tsp [dried chilli](#) flakes, or to taste
400g tin [chopped tomatoes](#)
275ml/9½fl oz hot [beef stock](#), made with 1 [beef stock](#) cube
3 tbsp [tomato purée](#)
400g tin red [kidney beans](#), drained and rinsed
salt and freshly ground [black pepper](#)

rice, [soured cream](#), coriander and lime wedges, to serve (optional)

Method

Put the mince and onion in a large non-stick frying pan and fry together over a medium-high heat for about 4 minutes, stirring and squishing against the side of the pan with a couple of wooden spoons to break up the mince as much as possible.

Add the spices and cook for 1 minute more – this quick fry will really add to the depth of flavour. Tip the spiced mince into the slow cooker and add the tomatoes, stock, tomato purée and beans. Season with salt and lots of freshly ground black pepper.

Cover the slow cooker with its lid and cook on high for 4–5 hours or low for 6–8 hours.

When ready, serve the chilli alongside your choice of freshly cooked rice, a dollop of soured cream, some coriander and a squeeze of fresh lime
www.bbc.co.uk

Our Services



Transport

We currently have four Society vehicles, two minibuses, a people carrier and one car. We are therefore able to offer help to many of our members to attend our centre and to travel to and from the various functions and events we hold

throughout the year.

Audio Library

We have a range of mp3 stick audio books. We are supported in the delivery of these audio library books by the IOM Post Office who deliver the books and our weekly news sticks as items free for delivery to visually impaired and blind people.

Outreach visits

A member of our team can arrange to visit you at home/hospital to assist with supporting your needs.

Specialist Equipment

We have a range of assistive technology to help visually impaired and blind people; some of the simplest items like talking clocks, make the biggest difference in helping people with sight difficulties to live more accessible lives

Weekly News

Our well used weekly news service provides an invaluable source of information to in excess of 100 people who rely on hearing the local news brought to them in detail on MP3 sticks; we issue players to all who require this fabulous service.

Social Activities

We run a series of activities designed to enhance the lives of the local blind and visually impaired community, and we have new and exciting ideas being brought forward regularly, some of which provide real challenges to the staff and volunteers who provide our services. We hold luncheon clubs in our centre on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These consist of a three course meal with a menu second to none and we can cater for all dietary and most other menu preferences.

Visual Impairment Awareness training

We run courses designed to assist organisations who may occasionally deal with blind and visually impaired clients. We can bring the training to businesses and provide them with a chance to strengthen their customer service for this vulnerable group of people.

Events

We regularly run events for the Society. These vary from week to week and we have adopted a no holds barred approach to the entertainment provided!

Buddy Service

We provide a carefully matched volunteer Buddy service for some of those of our members who prefer to have occasional one to one assistance in their own homes

Charitable status

We are a charity totally reliant on the contributions and donations of our many wonderful supporters; in particular we are grateful to the people of the Island who continue to give generously to our work. Much of our work is supported and delivered by our fabulous teams of volunteers. Membership is free to anyone living with challenges to their vision and most of our services are provided without charge.



Please feel free to visit our Centre and review our operations. We welcome constructive feedback and thoughts and ideas on how we can further improve our services. We are pleased to offer 'walk and talk' tours of our facilities to organisations of all types. Sometimes it can be very difficult to find out what help is available. We have a wide range of services and support to offer the best help possible.

We are here to discuss any issues that affect the lives of people with serious sight loss.

Call us confidentially on 674727



SIGHT MATTERS

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☎ (01624) 674727 | ✉ enquiries@sightmatters.im | www.sightmatters.im

Sight Matters is a trading name under Manx Blind Welfare Society Registered Charity No. 132.

If you would like this letter in large print, please contact our office on 674727.

