



# SIGHT MATTERS

## Optic Topics

Issue No 131  
Spring 2024

**A newsletter for blind & visually  
impaired people**

Sight Matters (Manx Blind Welfare Society)  
Corrin Court, Heywood Ave, Onchan,  
Isle of Man, IM3 3AP  
Telephone: (01624) **674727**  
Email: **enquiries@sightmatters.im**

**[www.SightMatters.im](http://www.SightMatters.im)**  
**[www.facebook.com/SightMattersIOM](https://www.facebook.com/SightMattersIOM)**

**Manx Registered Charity No. 132**



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## **Twenty-One for Twenty-One**

This April, we mark 21 incredible years at Corrin Court, our cherished headquarters. Join us in our Twenty-One for Twenty-One campaign, aiming to raise £21,000 in 2024 for our SUN-Raiser initiative, to install a solar panel array at Corrin Court.

Your support matters now more than ever. Donations, big or small, directly impact our sustainability efforts and the wellbeing of our members. Every contribution earns recognition on our SUN-o-Meter.

Here's how you can get involved:

- **Donate:** Contribute online or contact us directly to support our £21,000 goal.
- **Spread the Word:** Share our campaign on social media and with your network.
- **Join the Celebration:** Follow us for updates and events as we commemorate 21 years of Corrin Court.

Let's make Twenty-One for Twenty-One a success together, shaping a more sustainable and inclusive future for those with sight-loss

## **Dining in the Dark**

### **A Journey of the Senses:**

Picture this – you, blindfolded, relying solely on taste, smell, touch, and sound to savour a gourmet meal. Dining in the Dark is designed to challenge your senses and provide a unique dining experience. There are three menus available, all of which have been designed to surprise and delight. After you've made your initial choice, you'll rely solely on smell, sound, texture and taste to work out what you're eating.

There are still tickets left for this fantastic experience...get yours today!!

**Date:** Saturday, 20th April, Doors: 7PM

**Venue:** Sight Matters, Corrin Court, Heywood Ave, Onchan, IM3 3AP

**Tickets:** £70 (including four-course set meal - meat, fish or vegetarian - and a bottle of wine)

## **21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Coffee Morning**

To celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> birthday of Corrin Court we are holding one of our ever-popular Coffee Mornings on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30**. It's a chance to catch up with friends and meet the team here at Sight Matters, buy some sweet treats and take part in our tombola and raffle. Entry is just £2. If you would like to help on the day or donate any cakes or prizes contact Debbie on 674727

## **Bank Holiday Bingo!**

Come and join in the fun of Bingo at Sight Matters on **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May – 7pm!** This is going to be a popular night and tickets will be limited. Bingo caller Dave will be drawing the numbers for cash prizes! Entry is £10 and will include a 10-game bingo book – there will be more books available if you're feeling lucky and want to do more! The numbers are in large print (and we won't be calling at speed) but if you require larger numbers please let us know in advance. Bring your own drink, no food will be provided so feel free to bring snacks too. There will also be a fabulous raffle on the night which has been put together by

member, Lynne Foster – lots of vouchers and donations by many companies and friends. To book, call 674727 or email [events@sightmatters.im](mailto:events@sightmatters.im)

## **The Coast 2 Coast Is Back – Mark Your Calendars!**

The highly anticipated annual 'Sight Matters Coast 2 Coast Walk' is gearing up for its return this September, sponsored by Conister Bank.

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, September 8th**, as participants will be embarking on a picturesque 12-mile journey from Douglas to Peel. The Coast 2 Coast isn't about competition; it's about fun and family, welcoming walkers of all ages and abilities, including children, individuals with disabilities, and even our beloved furry, four-legged doggy companions. The scenic route will kick off with a lap around the NSC track, leading westward along the Heritage Trail before concluding in Peel.

Beyond the joys of walking through the stunning Manx countryside, by taking part, participants will contribute to Sight Matters' crucial mission of

supporting the Island's blind and visually impaired community.

The full-distance walk commences at 1:30 pm, with check-in starting at 12:45 pm at the NSC's outdoor pitches' reception. For those opting for a shorter route, an alternative start at St John's is available. Check-in for the three-mile route opens at 3:15 pm at the car park by St John's School, with walkers setting off at 3:30 pm.

More info to follow

## **Adult Members Activities**

Members have had the opportunity to see some fantastic shows at the Villa Marina and the Gaiety. The local productions of Evita and Oliver were amazing. Members also had a good sing along to the Neil Diamond tribute band. A big thank you to Boaksey Closs, Manx Bard, for opening our creativity with poetry writing and who is due to also complete a creative writing session with members. Members creativeness was also in abundance in ceramics workshop facilitated by Anna Clucas.

The monthly activity groups and walking groups continue to be popular with members.

## **Upcoming Events**

If members are interested in attending any of the events below please give Julie a call on 674727 or email [jcannon@sightmatters.im](mailto:jcannon@sightmatters.im)

Transport is available for the following events.

### **Monday 29<sup>th</sup> April Guided Tour of the Manx Aviation and Military Museum- 10.30-12.30**

The museum focuses on people rather than events and has an unusually intimate and often moving atmosphere. You can discover the amazing story of civil and military aviation in the Isle of Man and also find out about the Island and its people both at home and in the armed forces in wartime. Often likened to Dr Who's "Tardis", and packed full of exhibits ranging from a single button to a full-size aeroplane, the museum has something of interest for everybody.

### **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May Wild Mann Photographic Exhibition – Manx Museum 10.30-12**

Inspired by Wildlife Photographer of the Year, enjoy a photographic showcase of the Isle of Mans wildlife and natural environment captured by photography enthusiasts.



Also on display at the museum to view is a colourful wall of recently digitised prints and posters from the Manx National Heritage collections.

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May Illegal Eagles - 7.30pm**  
**Villa Marina**

Celebrating the music of the legendary USA West Coast country rock band The Eagles this critically acclaimed show features the very best from The Eagles, catalogue of classics including *Hotel California*, *Desperado*, *Take It Easy*, *New Kid in Town*, *Life in the Fast Lane* and many more...

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June The Overtones- 8.30pm**  
**Villa Marina**

One of the most successful vocal harmony groups in the UK, the four-piece band known for their exquisite vocals, incredible harmonies, dance moves and their charming and distinctive style will have you singing and dancing along.

## **Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June Craftworks 10.30am**

Why not come along to the Craftworks Studio and have a go at painting an item of pottery from a great selection. The studio is a fully equipped ceramic studio and they will glaze and fire the item once completed and you will receive it a week later.

## **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July Have a go acoustic shooting – Corrin Court**

Would anyone like to come and have a go at Acoustic Shooting? This is proving a popular event with members, it is a sport for any degree of sight loss and you do not need to have any previous experience and the session is safely supervised.

## **My handbag, by Sue Dentith- written during one of the recent poetry workshop with Boakesey Closs 27/1/24**

My life without my handbag is unthinkable and impossible,

everywhere I go it's with me, my life is in that bag.

My purse with no money in it,  
bills, glasses, tissues, painkillers, you name it,  
if I rooted long enough I'd find anything anybody  
needed.

I'm always good for a plaster or two  
and if you need a potato peeler I'm your woman,  
found one of them in there yesterday!

God help anyone who tried to swipe it from me  
they would need strong arms and muscles  
like a weight lifter to get it over my head!

Try it at your own risk I dare you!

If I don't hit you with it first,  
the weight will break your arms trying to lift it.

It's my bag with my stuff in it, my big bag of  
mostly crap,

but my life would be much duller without it.

## **Younger Members Club**

Over the winter our younger members have enjoyed several fun activities starting with a trip to Energy FM Bowl in Ramsey. This was a popular event where some competitive games of tenpin bowls were had!

The next activity was at the Manx Fun Farm – Fun Barn, the children enjoyed slide races, jumping in the ball pit, climbing over obstacles and through the tunnels!! They certainly worked up an appetite and had a well-deserved meal afterwards.

In March they boarded the Great Laxey Mine Train, a new experience for some members. They travelled through the Isle of Man's only remaining railway tunnel before walking to the Ballacregga Corn Mill Café for lunch. After lunch they enjoyed a few hours in the Laxey Glen playpark. There was plenty of play equipment to choose from including a rope ladder swing, some very fast slides, seesaw and several of our younger members entertained themselves on the assault course. There were some very tired but happy children (and staff) going home at the end of the day.

We have several activities planned for the Easter holidays fingers crossed the weather is kind to us! If you know any young person that would benefit from our services or you would like to sponsor any of our activities, please get in touch.

## **Digital Accessibility Collaboration**

In a digital age where technology is omnipresent, ensuring accessibility for all is not just a moral imperative but a necessity. Sight Matters and SQR Group, a local trailblazer in digital identity solutions are proud to continue their digital accessibility collaboration.

The recent success of the second accessibility focus group exemplifies the power of partnership in driving positive change. Through robust dialogue and a user-centric approach, the focus group tackled critical accessibility challenges faced by individuals with sight loss.

At the heart of this collaboration lies a shared commitment to inclusivity. SQR Group's dedication to listening and learning from the experiences of individuals with sight loss has been instrumental in driving meaningful progress. Together, we're not just improving digital experiences; we're fostering

a culture of understanding and empathy – that we wish to continue with other companies.

Looking forward, the journey towards accessibility is an ongoing one. With each focus group session, we take significant strides towards a more inclusive digital landscape. From enhancing screen reader compatibility to improving navigation for users with low vision, every improvement brings us closer to our vision of a world where technology empowers everyone, regardless of ability.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our members who have contributed to this endeavour. Whether you're a member of the Sight Matters community or a representative from SQR Group, together, we look forward continuing to break barriers and build a future where accessibility is not just a goal but a reality for all.

## **Cooil Roy Social Club**

We'd like to say a huge thanks to Cooil Roy Social Club for raising a fantastic £890 for Sight Matters!

Cooil Roy Social Club organises a range of fundraising events through the year, and has

raised thousands of pounds for local charities since its inception

We are incredibly grateful that this time they chose to support us!

## **Safeguarding Matters**

A copy of our Safeguarding policy is available in your preferred format on request.

Our Safeguarding Officer is Cathryn Bradley  
Our Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Michelle Ferrer

## **MBWS AGM**

At the recent AGM held in March, Mr Charles Fargher MBE stepped down as Chairman. He has supported our charity for 47 years, from the young age of 27! He became Chairman after the late Deemster Corrin retired. We wish him well and thank him for all his support over the years. Our new Chairman is Mr Bob Dowty. Bob has been a volunteer for many years and was our Vice-Chairman. We therefore also have a new Vice-Chairman, Jayne Hughes, who many of the luncheon club members will know!

## **Parent Support Group**

There is now a dedicated parent support group on the island, for parents and carers with visually impaired children. This group is chaired by a parent of a visually impaired child. Sight Matters are supporting this initiative with the meetings being held at Corrin Court.

They meet in person every few months and are also available to chat via a WhatsApp group. If you are interested in joining this group or want to find out more information, please contact Hayley via email [viparentsgroup@gmail.com](mailto:viparentsgroup@gmail.com)

## **Nystagmus Research**

A lecturer in Health, Care & Public Health at University College IOM is looking for individuals with nystagmus to help him with his research. Adam Melvin, who is working on his PhD, is researching the lived experiences of individuals with nystagmus, he also has nystagmus himself. He is in the process of interviewing people with this condition on the island and would like it if some members may be willing to take part in his interviews.



If you are interested and are over 18 years, please contact: **Adam.Melvin@ucm.ac.im**

## **MBWS audio library**

Please remember if you need an up to date catalogue, please let us know and we will forward one onto you.

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Author Surname</b>	<b>Author Forename</b>
FI9176	A Call to Courage	Green	Holly
FI9197	A Court of Betrayal	O'Brien	Anne
MM2140	A Nye of Pheasants	Burrows	Steve
FI8496	A Rose in the Highlands	McCollum	Heather
FI9169	A Shop in the High Street	Thompson	Grace
FI9198	A Spy Alone	Beaumont	Charles
FI9171	Alexander's Legacy: Forging Kingdoms	Fabbri	Robert
MM2124	Beautiful Innocence	Matthews	Beryl
FI9178	Beneath Us The Stars	Wiltshire	David

MM2117	Big Ben Strikes Eleven	Magarshack	David
MM2113	Blood Debt	Wood	Tom
MM2118	Cheated	Kray	Roberta
FI9163	Child of the Ruins	Furnivall	Kate
FI9167	Christmas Wishes For The Railway Girls	Thomas	Maisie
FI9168	Christmas with the Engine Girls	Styles	Daisy
FI9194	Coming Home to the Cottage By the Sea	Alexander	Rebecca
MM2115	Death of a Lesser God	Khan	Vaseem
MM2119	Diamond Promises	Jacobs	Anna
FI9173	Digging for Victory at Rookery House	Hendry	Rosie
MM2137	Fear Stalks the Village	White	Ethel Lina
BM417	From Me to You	Greenley	Brian
MM2135	Impact of Evidence	Carnac	Carol
FI9188	Kemp: Passage at Arms	Hall	Daniel
MM2120	Kill for me Kill for You	Cavanagh	Steve
MM2129	Last Orders	Butler	S.J.
FI9162	Loyalty	Cole	Martina

FI9175	Meet Me on the Buddy Bench	Pearl	Hannah
FI9166	Midnight at the Christmas Bookshop	Colgan	Jenny
MM2133	Miss Austen Investigates	Bull	Jessica
MM2109	Murder at Maybridge Castle	Moncrieff	Ada
MM2127	Murder by Christmas	Cookman	Lesley
MM2130	Murder in Transit	Marston	Edward
MM2111	Murdering the Messenger	Jecks	Michael
MM2112	Murders at the Rookery Grange Retreat	Kirkham	Gina
MM2116	Never Walk Away	Triplow	Nick
FI9182	Nurse Kitty: After the War	Campbell	Maggie
MM2122	Old School Ties	Waugh	Daisy
FI9196	One Love	Cain	Matt
FI9177	One Week in Winter	Norton	Sheila
FI8474	Pack Up Your Troubles	Harrod-Eagles	Cynthia
FI9184	Please Come Home	Johns	Elaine
FI9172	Rebellion	Scarrow	Simon
MM2132	Resurrection Walk	Connelly	Michael

FI9181	Return to Half Moon Farm	Hepburn	Holly
MM1056	Sherlock Holmes The Rediscovered Railway Mysteries	Taylor	John
MM1098	Smokescreen	Francis	Dick
FI9180	Sophie Street	Thompson	Grace
RO534	Stand Up Guy	Kaye	Nina
BM416	Take Nothing For Granted	Kemp	Ross
MM1207	The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes Vol 2	Conan Doyle	Sir Arthur
FI9199	The Bone Hunters	Burn	Joanne
MM2136	The Borrowdale Body	Tope	Rebecca
MM2123	The Cage	Jardine	Quintin
MM2108	The Christmas Appeal	Hallett	Janice
FI9201	The Country Sisters	Tarpey	Sally
MM2110	The Covent Garden Murder	Hollow	Mike
MM2131	The Dog Sitter Detective Takes The Lead	Johnston	Antony
FI9203	The Excitements	Wray	C J

MM2134	The Fake Wife	Bolton	Sharon
MM2141	The Ghost Orchid	Kellerman	Jonathan
FI9186	The Girl	Cookson	Catherine
FI9189	The Gunner Girl's: Evie's Story	Broady	Sylvia
FI8492	The Irish Princess	Chadwick	Elizabeth
MM2114	The Last Line	Ronson	Stephen
MM2121	The Last Request	Barrows	Brandon
MM2143	The Longest Goodbye	Hannah	Mari
FI8909	The Lost Sister	Francis	Lynne
MM2139	The Lucky Eight	Bugler	Sheila
RO498	The Mallen Litter	Cookson	Catherine
FI9200	The Mother of All Problems	Peach	Nancy
FI9185	The Narrowboat Girls	Archer	Rosie
FI9165	The Party Season	Holliday	Sji
FI9191	The Rag Maiden	Ashworth	Libby
FI9193	The Secret Sister	Baynham	Jan
MM2138	The Secrets of Blythswood Square	Sheridan	Sara

FI9170	The Sewing Factory Girls	Lovell	Posy
FI9204	The Sleeping Beauties	Ashe	Lucy
MM2128	The Square	Walden	Celia
MM2126	The Sunset Years of Agnes Sharp	Sharp	Agnes
FI9202	The Tide of Life	Cookson	Catherine
MM2142	The Trials of Marjorie Crowe	Robertson	C.S
FI9192	The Wartime Book Club	Thompson	Kate
FI9190	The Wedding of the Year	Mansell	Jill
MM2125	The White Lie	Kelly	J. G.
FI9183	The Widow's Choice	Revell	Nancy
FI9187	The Winter Widow	Brear	AnneMarie
FI9164	Unbreakable	Askwith	Richard
PL40	Under Milk Wood & other plays	Thomas	Dylan
FI9174	War Comes to the Dales	Firth	Betty
FI9195	What We Did in the Storm	Baker	Tina

**Manx Macular Support Group**  
Registered Charity 1258 Manx Macular Support  
Group

**LOSS OF CENTRAL VISION**

It is of considerable concern to our members that recently two of our housebound members have left our group as they can no longer see well enough to read. So, we wish to do something about that. We are looking at setting up a "telephone buddy" service where a volunteer phones the other member to read out the newsletter to them. In the first instance we would like to see how many reading this newsletter would like to become involved either as a recipient or as a reader. In order to do so would anyone interested in either side of this service please contact me either by letter, email, or phone as shown below.

We are acutely aware that with no ECLO certain help is not available and in particular the nonmedical kind. At our AGM we discussed an idea that the members would like to take forward. We would like to hear from anyone with help or advice of how to better deal with the problems of low vision.

For example, when I was first diagnosed someone told me how to differentiate between your shampoo and conditioner in the shower, put an elastic band around your shampoo! The intention is to gather as many of these "Helpful Hints" as we can and publish them to hand out to all who want a copy and especially those recently diagnosed with some vision impairment. It doesn't have to be an action it could be a thought that you found helpful. Again, as with the Phone Buddy initiative could I invite anyone with a "Helpful Hint" to contact me by which ever means they choose do so.

I can be contacted in writing:  
N.H. Malpass, 10 Clifton Drive, Ramsey IM8 3ND  
Tel 813774 or Mob 491234 or email  
[nhmalpass@manx.net](mailto:nhmalpass@manx.net)

Finally, Professor Harding last year said that the most beneficial way everyone could help the doctors in whatever treatment they are receiving is by controlling the amount of sugar they use daily. Excess sugar in the blood stream affects Eyes, Heart, Nerves to name but a few.

On Friday May 17<sup>th</sup> at 1100 hrs in the main hall of Sight Matters I will be giving a 30-minute power



point presentation to anyone who wants to attend on "Loss of Vision, Diabetes II and the effects of excess sugar". On how to identify hidden sugars and how to help the medical profession help you. For good measure we will be also discussing Charles Bonnet Syndrome. You may not have Macular or Diabetic symptoms yet but being aware of how to avoid excess sugar will help you remain free. So, all and everyone is very welcome.

Kindest regards Nigel

Nigel H. Malpass Chairman  
Support Group

Manx Macular

### **A thought for the day – by Gift Republic**

Being kind is never wasted

### **Luncheon club**

For further information about attending the Lunch Clubs please contact Stacy Beasley.

The lunch clubs run every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

**There will be no luncheon club over TT & Practice week**

## **Special dates for your diary**

**Dining in the Dark** Saturday, 20th April, Doors:  
7pm @ Corrin Court

**21<sup>st</sup> Birthday Coffee Morning** Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>  
April at 10.30 @ Corrin Court

**Bank Holiday Bingo** Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May –7pm @  
Corrin Court

**Coast to Coast** - Sunday, September 8th,

## **Donations**

Thanks to everyone who gives us donations because as you are all aware the society is entirely reliant upon fundraising, donations and legacies.

## **Sickness**

Please do not attend the Centre if you are ill.

If you are suffering with a sickness and diarrhoea type illness, it is essential that you do not attend the centre until 48 hours after your last episode. If, however you require assistance, please contact us immediately.

## Complaints Procedure

Whilst we appreciate the positive feedback that we receive on a regular basis, there may be times when we have not provided an acceptable standard of service. If you do have a problem or concern and you are able to make a member of staff aware of it at the time, they will endeavour to resolve the matter quickly. If this is not possible then we have a complaints procedure available on request in your preferred format.

**A standard digital version of Optic Topics can be obtained from the Manx Blind Welfare Society on request.**