



SIGHT MATTERS

Optic Topics

Issue No 125
Autumn 2022

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

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Introduction

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Optic Topics. We hope that you find this edition interesting and informative.

Inside you'll find articles about how our members got on learning circus skills, the formal opening of the Freedom Field and our annual Coast to Coast walk. Also included is information on some 'Hub days' we are holding to help members keep warm this winter.

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'.

A big thank you to everyone involved and to Stiklings for helping our members to adapt, build confidence and overcome their fears.

If you are interested in the different activities we have to offer, please contact us for more information.

The Freedom Field

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

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.

Coast to Coast

Our Annual Coast to Coast walk, this year sponsored by Conister Bank, took place in September. Having nearly 500 entrants it was a busy day for all. The morning starting off with heavy rain but thanks to some prayers the sun came out just in time. The morning started off with an exercise class from Alice from Thrive Fitness getting the participants warmed up for the 12 miles ahead. Ian Cooil, CEO, started the walk with some participants speeding off from the very start!

Once a lap of the NSC was completed they headed off along the railway path towards Peel. We had water stops along the way with Bananas and Mars Bars in Marown to keep them going. These were kindly donated by Tesco.

The first person in was at 2 hours 10 minutes – well done to him!

A big thanks to all the helpers on the day and especially to our main sponsor Conister Bank.

If you are interested in sponsoring this or another event for Sight Matters please contact us.

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.

Safeguarding Matters

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

Our Safeguarding Officer is Debbie Thomson
Our Deputy Safeguarding Officer is Kerry Healey

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.

Introducing Julie Cannon

'I'm Julie 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.

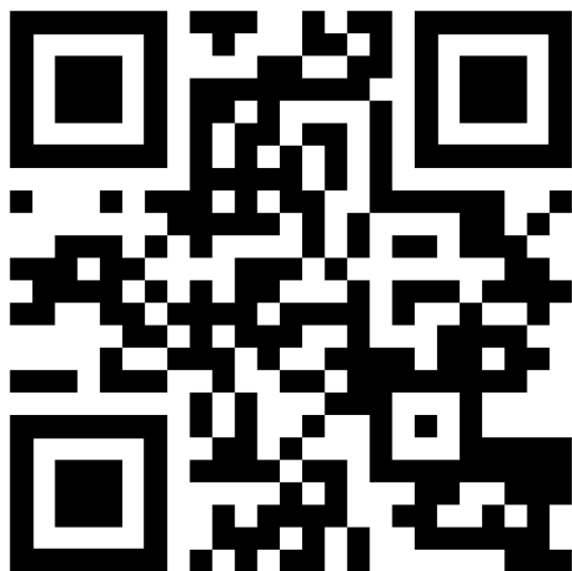
My role is a new post to develop social and inclusive activities for members over the age of 18. I'm open to ideas and would value members' input. Please feel free to contact me by phone, email or even in person if you are up at the

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](mailto:jcannon@sightmatters.im)

Support us

You can support us in many ways through donating, legacies, volunteering and supporting our events. Now we are offering you a more flexible way 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

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

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)
Melon and parma ham

Mains

Mushroom risotto
Lasagne

Dessert

Tiramisu
Gelato

For bookings call 674727 or email events@sightmatters.im

Remembrance Service - Friday 11th November 2022 11am at Onchan War Memorial

Would any members who live in the local area like to attend the short service followed by a pub lunch? Please contact Julie on 674727 or email jcannon@sightmatters.im before Monday 24th October, if you would like to reserve a space.

Transport is available but spaces are limited.

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

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

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

Sandygate Methodist Chapel raises £250 for Sight Matters

We'd like to say a huge thank you to Pauline, Jane, Carolyn and everyone else at Sandygate 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.

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

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

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

A thought for the day – Gift Republic –

Today can be the beginning of anything you want

Luncheon clubs

For further information about attending the Lunch Clubs please contact Cathryn Bradley or Stacy Beasley at the Centre.

The lunch clubs will run every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.
Transport is provided.

Special dates for your diary

Friday 21st October Italian Night @ Corrin Court

Thursday 17th November, 10.30am -Christmas Coffee Morning @ Corrin Court

Monday 28th November at 9.30am @ Comis Hotel – Authors Breakfast

Friday 9th December at 2pm Christmas Celebration @ Corrin Court

Manx Macular Support Group
Registered Charity 1258 Manx Macular Support
Group
LOSS OF CENTRAL VISION

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 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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MBWS audio library

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

New books added to the audio library since the last edition are as follows:

Item No	Title	Author Surname	Author Forenames
NF149	A Brief History Of Time	Hawking	S W
FI8971	A Home from Home	Hendry	Rosie
FI8972	A Royal Ambition	Gower	Iris
FI8960	An Island Wedding	Colgan	Jenny
FI8962	At the Captain's Table	Phinn	Gervase
FI8961	Bloomsbury Girls	Jenner	Natalie

FI8973	Cornish Clouds & Silver Lining Clouds	McNamara	Ali
MM1932	Crescent Dawn	Cussler	Clive
MM1934	Dead End Street	Wood	Trevor
MM1936	Death and the Decorator	Brett	Simon
MM1921	Death in Dalvik	Ridpath	Michael
MM1935	Death of a Heretic	Tremayne	Peter
MM1929	Devil's Gate	Cussler	Clive
MM1937	Dirty War	Leather	Stephen
FI8974	Finding Summer Happiness	Penhall	Chris
MM1930	Lost City	Cussler	Clive
FI8975	Moorend Farm	Kirkwood	Gwen
MM1922	Murder Before Evensong	Coles	Rev. Richard

MM1938	Murders at the Winterbottom Women's Institute	Kirkham	Gina
FI8976	Operation Moonlight	Morrish	Louise
MM1939	Overboard	Paretsky	Sara
MM1942	Queen and Country	Judd	Alan
RO519	Strangers' Hall	Jeffrey	Elizabeth
FI8966	Summer at Primrose Tower	Robertson	Annie
FI8967	Summer of Hopes and Dreams	McDonagh	Sue
MM1941	The Accomplice	Cavanagh	Steve
FI8979	The Air Raid Girls Wartime Brides	Holmes	Jenny
MM1933	The Bootlegger	Cussler	Clive
MM1923	The Botanist	Craven	M.W.

FI8958	The Diamond Daughter	Trotter	Janet Macleod
MM1924	The Hawks of Delamere	Marston	Edward
SF70	The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy	Adams	Douglas
MM1925	The House Across the Lake	Sager	Riley
MM1931	The Jungle	Cussler	Clive
FI8959	The Leaving of Liverpool	Andrews	Lyn
MM1926	The Murder Book	Billingham	Mark
FI8963	The Runaway Family	Costeloe	Diney
FI8964	The Summer Trip	Broom	Isabelle
FI8978	The Waste Land	Hodkinson	Tim
FI8977	The Wedding Party	Kelly	Cathy

MM1940	The Whisperer's Game	Carrisi	Donato
FI8965	The Widow of Bath	Bennett	Margot
FI8968	Tilly Trotter	Cookson	Catherine
FI8980	Tilly Trotter Weds	Cookson	Catherine
MM1927	To Kill a Troubadour	Walker	Martin
MM1928	Trouble in the Valley	Capaldi	Francesca
FI8969	What Eden Did Next	O'Flanagan	Sheila
FI8970	What Time Is Love?	Williams	Holly
MM1943	Where Demons Hide	Skelton	Douglas

Sickness

- If you have Coronavirus symptoms, please stay away from the Centre

- 1.a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- 2.a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- 3.loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal
- 4.Shortness of breath

Please remember that 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
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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.