



Latest news from Insight



Fun and games

Available at our
Resource Centre

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Eugenio is back!

Get in touch if you would
like to support him

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The Insight Magazine is produced six-monthly by Insight Gloucestershire. Registered charity in the UK (No 204279)

Hello and welcome

to the latest issue of our Insight magazine.

Since the last issue, our General Manager, Steve Martin, has sadly left Insight Gloucestershire. Many of you knew him, and I'm sure will join all of us in wishing him all the very best for his retirement.

You might remember from our Autumn 2022 edition that our Trustees were worried about the financial security of our small charity in the long term. With Steve's departure, the Trustees have decided to commission neighbouring charity Sight Support West of England to oversee the day-to-day management of the charity and services, rather than appoint a new General Manager.

The Board believe that this step will be a really positive one for the charity – Sight Support are another local charity with a wealth of experience in running highly effective and client-centred services for people with sight loss. Working together in partnership will mean that we can reduce costs through sharing many functions (things such as IT, HR, Finance and Fundraising), whilst ensuring that Insight Gloucestershire remains an independent charity in its own right.

There will be no immediate change to our services. Insight Gloucestershire will continue to offer support to everyone affected by sight loss across the county. You will continue to see the same Sight

Loss Advisors in our Resource Centre and hubs, at the same locations. In the future, we will aim to have outreach hubs at more local locations, with more appointments available. But this will follow gradually. For now, please continue to use the services in the way you expect to! And do keep telling your friends and neighbours about us.

If you have any queries, please do speak to a member of the team or email me directly:
mike.silvey@sightsupportwest.org.uk
As always, we would love to hear from you.

Best wishes, Mike Silvey, CEO



Sight Support provides local services for people living with sight loss across Bristol, Bath & North-East Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and across Wiltshire and Swindon through our partner charity, Wiltshire Sight.

Sight Support West of England is a registered charity (1178384)

Study Breaks

Add-venture in Learning Residential Study Breaks

Add-venture in Learning organises residential study breaks for visually impaired adults, who enjoy learning in a relaxed way and socialising with like-minded people. This is a self-funded charity run by a volunteer committee of both sighted and visually impaired people.

Each visually impaired person is assisted by a sighted guide, and guide dogs are also welcome. Accommodation can vary from hotels to university halls, in different parts of the country. They usually run three study breaks a year, on various topics, generally lasting four nights. Study topics might include subjects such as history, literature, ecology or music. Course content involves talks and associated visits.

Find out more

To find out more about Add-venture in Learning, phone Barbara on **01460 28 12 26** or visit the website www.add-ventureinlearning.org.uk

A visit To Cheltenham Town Football

By Mary Woolley

If you've always enjoyed going to football matches, but think that having sight loss means you might not be able to do this any more, it might be worth investigating whether your club offers assistance to people with a disability. Recently, Bev and I were invited to Cheltenham Town Football Club to watch a match, and check out the accessibility of the ground. As we are both sight impaired, we wanted to find out how easy it is to take advantage of the assistance the club offers to people with a disability and then share our experience with you.

On arrival at the ground, we were directed to a red information hut

in the car park, which we found very easily. We were greeted by friendly members of staff, one of whom guided us to our seat. On the way, we were even allowed to avoid the turnstile and enter the stadium through a side door, as it was easier for us to manage.

When we got to our seats, we were both given a radio with earphones, so we could listen to the BBC Radio Gloucestershire commentary. (This commentary is available for most home games.) The buttons on the radio were explained to us, and it was very simple to use. Even though the radio coverage had a two second lag, it did not pose a problem and the commentary was



excellent. When we left our seats at half time, we were immediately asked by one of the stewards whether we needed any assistance.

After the match, we waited for a member of staff to come and meet us and take us to the exit. While we waited, we noticed a steward was assisting a supporter who was having difficulty negotiating the last few steps of the ground, because there was no handrail.

Despite there being a few issues, such as the corridor near the toilets being quite dark and the last few steps of the ground having no handrail, we had a thoroughly enjoyable day, with the bonus of Cheltenham Town winning 3-1 against Exeter City. We would definitely consider going back again to watch another match.

Warm and Well

Free energy efficiency advice

In our last Autumn Magazine, we wrote about a scheme called Warm and Well, which is managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency, on behalf of the seven local authorities in South Gloucestershire and Gloucestershire. Because so many clients were concerned about their heating bills last year, we thought we should mention it again. You can phone Warm and Well and speak to a trained advisor who can give you free energy efficiency advice, to help you stay warmer and healthier in your home.

The advisors can give you tips on making simple changes in your home to save energy, help you access grants for home improvements, or arrange a free impartial home visit from one of Severn Wye's Community Energy Advisors. They can help you manage your energy debt, provide free energy-saving measures such as LED bulbs, and offer help understanding your energy bills. Severn Wye also works with other organisations in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire to issue financial support in emergency situations.

Contact Warm and Well on **0800 500 3076**



Social Groups

For everyone

Social Groups – everyone welcome including your friends and family! These are informal events to share advice, hints and tips and talk to other people about the experiences of living with sight loss

Cheltenham Coffee Mornings

VENUE: The Everyman Theatre

WHEN: The last Friday of every month 10am – 12 noon

The next few dates are - 29th September, 27th October, 24th November

Gloucester Coffee Group

VENUE: Mary de Crypt, Southgate Street

WHEN: The second and last Wednesday of every month 1.30pm – 3.00pm

The next few dates are - 13th September, 27th September, 11th October

Stroud Coffee Mornings

VENUE: The Subscription Rooms Café

WHEN: The last Thursday of the month 10am-12 noon

The next few dates are - 28th September, 26th October, 30th November

Lunch Club

VENUE: Albion House Social Club, 7 North St, Cheltenham, GL50 4DJ

WHEN: The first Monday of the month 12 Noon – 2.00

The next few dates are - 2nd October, 4th December

Please note there will be no Lunch Club in November

Time2Talk

This is an informal opportunity to chat with other people with sight loss, over a cup of tea/coffee and a piece of cake.

VENUE: 81, Albion Street (CHANGE of DAY)

WHEN: The second Tuesday of every month 1.30pm -3.00pm

The next few dates are - 10th October, 14th November

If you are interested in joining us at the coffee groups, Lunch Club or the theatre trips, please contact Insight Gloucestershire on **01242 22 11 70**.

You are very welcome to bring a friend or family member to any of our events.

Fun and Games

At our Cheltenham Resource Centre

“Life is more fun if you play games”, said Roald Dahl - a sentiment with which many people would probably agree. However, if you are sight impaired, it might be difficult to continue playing a favourite game if the standard version of it is difficult to see.

In our Cheltenham Resource Centre, we have a range of low-tech games and activities which may make it a little bit easier to have “more fun” in your life. These include:

- Large print Scrabble
- Boggle (Super Big)
- Rubik’s Cube (with tactile markings)
- Large playing cards
- Jigsaw puzzles 500 to 1000 pieces
- Large print Wordsearch books
- Large print Sudoku books
- Large print crossword books

For those who enjoy using technology, there are numerous free games available on Android and Apple tablets, including word puzzles and card games. You can even use your Alexa smart speaker to play games. Just say “Alexa, play a quiz”, and you will be given the option of a range of quizzes, including Pointless, trivia games, music games and many more.

I hope you find an activity or game you enjoy and... keeeeeeep playing!

Theatre group

Our theatre outings at the Everyman, Cheltenham, generally include a touch tour, lunch and then a matinee performance with audio description (optional). We are planning to see the ‘**The Full Monty**’ on 21st September, ‘**Twelve Angry Men**’ on 9th November, ‘**Mother Goose**’ on 14th December and ‘**SIX**’ on 7th February.



Fundraising

A big thank you to our fundraisers

Insight Gloucestershire relies on donations, legacies and fundraising to keep our charity going and help us provide activities for blind and sight impaired people. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us in the last year, and indeed, over the years, but we'd also like to give a special mention to two of the people who have recently raised money for us.



Charity of the Year

We would also like to say thank you to Sue Gore and her family for choosing Insight Gloucestershire as their "Charity of the Year". Despite a very wet day for Sue's fundraising event, the Gore family were not deterred and raised an amazing £851!

Breaking news – Eugenio is back!

He is raising money for Insight by taking part in different sporting events. He has just entered a half Ironman event in Weymouth. The event consists of 1.9 km of swimming, 90 Km of bike and 21 km run, the distance is known as a half Ironman and the event is on the 17th of September.

If anyone would like to sponsor him, please get in touch with us on **01242 22 11 70**.



Name the Teddy & more

We would like to thank Kate Evans for running a variety of fundraising events throughout the year, including a "Name the Teddy" competition, which was very popular.



Talking Newspapers

Audio recordings of local news

If you are an avid listener of Talking Books, you may also enjoy listening to one of the free Talking Newspapers we have in this county.

Talking Newspapers are audio recordings of local news and events in your surrounding area. They are available to you if you are visually impaired or unable to read a traditional newspaper. The Talking Newspaper recordings are produced weekly by local volunteers and sent out to you free of charge.

There is a choice of five Talking Newspapers, depending on where you live:

Five Valley Sounds covers Stroud and surrounding towns and villages.

Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper is based in Dursley and covers Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

Corinium Talking News covers Cirencester and the surrounding towns and villages.

The Cotswold Listener covers Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, and North Cotswolds.

Gloucester Talking Newspaper covers the Gloucester area.

If you would like to listen to your local talking newspaper, call Insight Gloucestershire on **01242 22 11 70** and we can arrange this for you.

Online Sighted Guiding Training

For your Friends and Family

We thought you may be interested in knowing Guide Dogs is offering free, online, sighted guiding training, including an Introduction to Sighted Guide Training (suitable for people working or volunteering with the public), and Friends and Family Sighted Guide Training.

Friends and Family Sighted Guide Training will enable participants to help a friend or family member with sight loss to get out and about and do the things they enjoy.

This is an online, group session, where participants will learn to guide safely, or refresh the skills they already have, with expert support from Guide Dogs' staff. Participants can also speak to people who are in a similar situation to themselves, for mutual support.

These sessions are specifically tailored towards people, or networks, which support adults with sight loss, and participants can take part, either on their own, or with a group of friends and family. The

person with sight loss is welcome to attend the training session as well. Although this training is online, it can be delivered in-person if this is more appropriate. Participants aged 12 and over are welcome, but children should be accompanied by an adult.

In less than two hours, friends, and family of those with sight loss will:

- learn how to help their friend or family member deal with the obstacles they encounter every day, so they can get out and about with confidence.
- learn guiding techniques, such as the correct grip to use, walking through narrow spaces and how to detect changes on the ground and at head height.
- discuss some of the emotional consequences of sight loss.
- get an introduction to issues concerning access rights for people with sight loss.
- meet others with similar experiences and have the chance to share knowledge and offer support.



For more information on either of these training sessions, or to sign up, please visit: www.guidedogs.org.uk/sightedguiding

OrCam Read

Transform the Way You Read

As seen on TV



A Game-Changer for People with Low Vision or Reading Difficulties.

Try the full OrCam range in the comfort of your home.

Call Mike Page on **07545 951797** to arrange your home demonstration or speak to the Insight Team on **01242 221170**.

- Assistive Technology for the Visually Impaired
- The award winning full-page text to Speech Reader
- Ultra-small and lightweight hand-held device
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- Helps read post, menus, newspapers and books along with small details on prescriptions and food packaging
- Point and press with NEW "Hey OrCam" voice commands

SAVE £100 off all OrCam Products at Touchpoint Vision

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MyEye Smart
£2,600

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46 Cornwall Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1PF

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Eye Health Check

Looking after your sight

We all know how easy it is to put things off when we're busy, or tired. We might even have a "to-do" list of jobs we're meaning to get round to, but the list just seems to get longer and longer. One thing we mustn't do, however, is to put-off looking after our eyes. Regular eye health tests with your local optician are vital to check for changes in your sight (if applicable) and ensure that your eyes are healthy.

The NHS recommends that we have an eye health test every two years, although in certain circumstances, someone might be advised to have a test more often than this.

The cost of these tests can vary, but many people will be eligible for a free eye health test. This includes:

- people over 60
- children and 16-18-year-olds in full-time education
- people registered as blind/severely sight impaired or sight impaired
- those with diabetes or glaucoma, or who have been advised they are at risk of glaucoma
- someone over 40 with a parent, sibling or child who has glaucoma
- those who are eligible for an NHS complex lens voucher
- people in receipt of certain benefits e.g. Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credit Guarantee Credit

Some people may also qualify for help towards the cost of glasses. This includes children under 16, young people aged 16-18 who are in full-time education, and people who need complex lenses. People who receive certain benefits may also qualify for this, so speak to a member of staff when you go for your eye check.

In addition, someone who is eligible to receive a free eye health test **and** has a physical or mental disability which prevents them leaving their home unaccompanied, may be able to have their eyes tested at home. Contact your usual optician to see if they provide this service and if not, they may be able to recommend somewhere that does.

If you are wondering whether you still need to go for an eye health test if you have a sight impairment already, the answer is yes. One of the questions we often get asked at Insight is "I've been diagnosed with dry macular degeneration, but I know there's no treatment for this, what's the point in having an eye health test?". Sadly, it is possible to have two eye conditions at one time, for instance macular

degeneration and glaucoma, so a two-yearly check with your local optician is a good way of making sure there is nothing else going on.

The equipment at a high street optician is so sophisticated now, that you may even be offered an Optical Coherence Tomography scan (OCT). This non-invasive procedure uses light waves to provide detailed 3D images of the inside of your eye, including the layers of the retina. Generally, this involves an extra cost of around £10.

Hopefully, this article may have reminded you to go and book an eye health test if you haven't had one for some time and maybe you can also encourage a friend or family member to make sure they are having regular checks as well.



The Theatre Group

Theatre shows with audio description

Insight Gloucestershire has had a successful theatre group for some years now, although during the pandemic of course, this activity was put on hold. Since then, however, we've been back with a vengeance and the theatre group seems to be more popular than ever.

Each year, the group organiser, Mary, liaises with the Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham, to choose approximately six shows that our sight impaired clients might like to attend. The shows could be comedy, drama or even musicals, but they must be suitable to be audio described. Audio description allows people with sight loss to follow what is happening on stage when none of the actors are speaking. For instance, the audio describer might say something like "the man walks towards the door, looking sad". The audio description is played through a headset, which is given out at the start of the performance. We've had some lovely feedback from people who have said the audio description is amazing and they wouldn't be able to attend a show without it.

EVERYMAN
THEATRE · CHELTENHAM

Whenever possible, the Everyman also offers a touch tour to our sight impaired theatre-goers and their partners/carers. This allows people to have a closer look at what is on the stage and handle some of the props or costumes. Our clients have said this gives them a good idea of what the stage setting is like and enables them to work out how everything comes together. Because the touch tour takes place a couple of hours before the show starts, the group also stays for lunch at Matchams restaurant at the theatre, where they have a choice of one or two courses. Alternatively, people can make their own arrangements for lunch and come back just before the performance starts.



Join us

The Theatre Group

If you would like to be part of our theatre group, please get in touch with Mary on **01242 22 11 70**. She will contact you by email or letter to let you know what shows we are planning to see, what it costs, and the date of the shows. At present, we have some funding available which means we can offer transport to people who would otherwise not be able to attend. We have attended some amazing shows at the Everyman - in fact, one of our members described '**Titanic, the Musical**' as one of the best things they've ever seen, so if you would like to join in the fun, get in touch!

Volunteering

We presently have an excellent team of volunteers who assist with the theatre trips; however, we are looking for one or two people who are willing to be in charge of the group while they are at the theatre. This would free up Mary for other projects, although she would, of course, work alongside the volunteers for a few shows while they got used to the job.

If you are interested in volunteering or leading the theatre group, please let Mary know on **01242 22 11 70** or email Mary at **mary.woolley@insight-glos.org.uk**

Optelec Low Vision Product Clinic

Tuesday 21st November 2023

81 Albion Street, Cheltenham GL52 2RZ



Would you like support with your Sight or Technology?

We are offering one-to-one sessions with our experienced Low Vision Specialist and local Sight Loss Charity



Receive advice and hands-on experience with Low Vision aids, or simply gain knowledge and advice from your local Sight Loss Charity about the support they can offer you.



By Appointment only

Times available between 10am and 3pm

Call: 0800 145 6115

Email: skitson@optelec.co.uk



Low Vision Solutions
www.lowvisionshop.co.uk

Follow us



Christmas is coming!

The Insight Gloucestershire charity Christmas cards have arrived!

Each pack is made up of 10 quality cards & envelopes (one design per pack) and costs £5 + P&P.

P&P costs

1 pack = £1.50 2 packs = £2.00
3 - 6 packs £3.00 7 packs = FREE P&P

The greeting in each card reads

'With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year'

We have five seasonal designs:

- A **Starry Night Kings**
- B **Starry Christmas Tree**
- C **Stable Donkeys**
- D **Keeping Warm**
- E **Gardener's Friends**



How to order

To place your order, please call the Resource Centre on **01242 22 11 70**.

To pay by post, please send a cheque (made payable to **Insight Gloucestershire** – don't forget to include your P&P!), with your order to Insight Gloucestershire:

Post to:

Insight Gloucestershire
81 Albion Street
Cheltenham
GL52 2RZ

Useful Contacts

Insight information office

Monday – Moreton-in-Marsh
Moreton Area Centre,
High Street, GL56 0AZ
🕒 10am – 1pm (Monday)

Head office and Low Vision Centre

Insight Gloucestershire
81 Albion Street,
Cheltenham, GL52 2RZ

Helpline Tel: 01242 22 11 70
Email: info@insight-glos.org.uk
Web: www.insight-glos.org.uk

🕒 Monday – Friday: 9am – 1pm

📘 InsightGlos1

🐦 InsightGlos

Attendance Allowance Helpline

Tel: 0345 605 6055
Textphone: 0345 604 5312

Personal Independence

Payment claims
Tel: 0800 917 2222
Textphone: 0800 917 7777

Calibre Audio Library

New Road, Aylesbury,
Bucks, HP22 5XQ
Tel: 01296 43 23 39
Email: enquiries@calibre.org.uk

Web: www.calibre.org.uk

Talking Newspapers

Contact Insight for your nearest
one or visit the Talking Newspaper
Federation website.
Web: www.tnf.org.uk

Gloucestershire Deaf Association

Colin Road, Barnwood,
Gloucester, GL4 7JL
Tel: 01452 37 29 99
Minicom: 01452 37 26 00
Email: admin@gda.org.uk

RNIB

Tel: 0303 123 99 99
Web: www.rnib.org.uk

Blind Veterans

Tel: 020 77 23 50 21
Web: www.blindveterans.org

Gloucestershire County Council

Adult Helpdesk: 01452 42 68 68
Web: www.gloucestershire.gov.uk

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Tel: 0800 953 0113
Web: www.guidedogs.org.uk

Sense – for Deafblind people

Tel: 0300 330 9256
Textphone: 0300 330 9256
Email: info@sense.org.uk
Web: www.sense.org.uk

Community Connectors

Tel: 0300 365 6463
Web: www.grcc.org.uk

Age UK Gloucestershire

Tel: 01452 42 26 60
Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/gloucestershire

NHS 111

When it's less urgent than 999
Web: www.nhs.uk

Qwell - online mental wellbeing
community available in
Gloucestershire online
Web: www.qwell.io

Do you support someone?



If you support a partner, relative or friend who is disabled or ill due to physical or mental health, you are a carer, even if you don't think of yourself as one.

We are here to support you.

Our friendly, trained advisors can provide information and support to suit your needs, and will listen to what's important to you.

Please get in touch:

☎ 0300 111 9000 @ carers@peopleplus.co.uk

🌐 www.gloucestershirecarershub.co.uk

📘 @Gloucestershirecarershub

🐦 @GCcarersHub



Gloucestershire Carers Hub is a commissioned service by Gloucestershire County Council and NHS Gloucestershire

Meet the team



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Mary Woolley
Communications Officer
Mary.Woolley@insight-glos.org.uk

EYE CAN

**An exhibition for blind
and partially sighted people**

**Find information on the latest
technology, equipment and services**

**11th October 2023 10 - 3.30
Swindon - STEAM Museum**

Sponsors: Optelec, Newmedica & Irwin Mitchell

Free entry, contact us to pre-register

01380 723682

info@witshiresight.org

**Wiltshire Sight is a
registered charity 1119462**

**WILTSHIRE
Sight**