

# **VISOR**

## **CHRISTMAS 2024 NEWSLETTER**



# CHAIRS WELCOME

Dear Members

We hope you enjoy our Christmas Newsletter which contains lots of information about our events & updates.

Recently we have been working with some undergraduates from Roehampton University. They approached us to find a volunteer to help them understand sight loss and the difference it makes to lives. The grandmother of one of the students is totally blind and they wanted to do some research for a film which is not for public use but education. Lesley, one of our members just happened to visit the office after their first visit and she immediately volunteered. They spent two Mondays in the office interviewing, recording and filming. They were such a nice group of young people and we were pleased to help because we thought it was a good opportunity to pass on sight loss awareness to the younger members of society. A big thank you to Lesley for her help and input.

Please take a look at our list of free items available towards the end of this newsletter and let us know if there is anything you would like. We have been able to rehome quite a lot of donated items recently which is really good news.

We would like to wish you, your families and friends a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Pat

# **BARNES WETLAND CENTRE**

**Visit on 18<sup>th</sup> September**

**We were blessed with decent weather for our 11:00 a.m. start. Most of us went directly to the cafe for a caffeine top-up before we set off on our discovery trails. During this visit we were not guided on our walks but left to our own devices, branching off in small groups.**

**We manoeuvred our way around the choice of winding paths, delighted with the landscaping as well as the glorious variety of wild birds, of all sizes and coloured plumage, enjoying their well-managed environment.**

**There were many areas with seating where we could sit and gaze in peace. A few of us managed a well-timed respite at lunchtime by taking advantage of the inviting menu on offer in the café.**

**A couple of us sought out two of the 6 'hides' used by the dedicated wild life**

**observers, and stumbled across a rope bridge and stepping stones designed for the young at heart. Of course, one of us just had to try out the swinging bridge and managed to look like a drunken sailor in his efforts trying to get off it! This would have made an hilarious video clip – Alas! A missed opportunity.**

**Most of us congregated at the appointed time to witness the (Asian small-clawed) otters being fed. Despite a Perspex shield around the pond, most of us could catch the antics of the two otters, whilst the Keeper gave us a potted history about this fascinating species. They certainly brought smiles to our faces.**

**Of course, our last stop was the Gift Shop – with a temptingly huge variety of souvenirs on offer. Thereafter, we headed for home quite satisfied with our day's outing.**

**Alwyn**

## **NEWMARKET WEEKEND**

**September 20th – 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**I went by train from Richmond via Kings Cross, then Cambridge, and onto Newmarket. On arrival I went to my accommodation, then into Newmarket for a look around, then onto Wetherspoons for dinner, and thereafter returned to my accommodation.**

**On Saturday morning I got up and made my way to the Gallops to see the horses go up Warren Hill. I then went into the town and caught the free bus up to the Rowley Mile course for a day's racing. I had one winner, so came out even. Afterwards I visited Wetherspoons again for dinner, then directly back to my accommodation as I had planned an early start on Sunday.**

**I got up at 7:15 a.m. as I had to be at the Gallops for 8:00 a.m. when horses come**

**from various yards. They were on the Gallops until 8:45 a.m. I then made my way up the Bury Road. I started at John & Thady Gorden's yard which has 170 horses. This was the first time this year this yard had been open. Then I made my way to Harry Eustace and then Charlie Fellows (Chairman of the event). Then on to the Moulton Road starting off at Dylan Cunha then Tom Clover and lastly Kevin Philippart De Foy in a new yard.**

**It all finished at 12:30 p.m. when the yards closed. Then it was back to town and then the Severals for show jumping and a dog show.**

**A great weekend was had by all. On Monday I came back home.**

**Keith**

## **FULL OF LIFE FAIR**

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2024, held at  
Twickenham Rugby Ground**

**Visor rented a stall for the second year at Richmond's Full of Life Fair. Stalls cost £30 for charities and £60 for commercial establishments.**

**The Fair lasts all day and it is a key event for older people and carers. It is a great opportunity for local organisations and charities to come together and offer their services. The event has taster sessions of classes available such as Zumba, Bollywood dancing and massage as well as healthy eating advice.**

**Doug and myself turned up on the Thursday evening to set up our stall with the Visor banner, brochure and leaflets.**

**We returned again on the day of the event at 9 am but unfortunately the weather was not good, rainy and chilly, which I think put**

**a lot of people off attending the early events.**

**We were very pleased to be assisted throughout the day by Alwyn, Keith and Steve who were able to manage the stall whilst we took a short break.**

**We had lots of enquiries from members of the public and it was a good opportunity to meet other volunteers from local charities. Local MPs and The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Kuldev Sehra visited our stall and chatted about our work in the community.**

**We thought it was a very successful day in that it was such a good opportunity to liaise with other charities and advertise our work to the people of Richmond upon Thames.**

**Pat**



**VISOR QUIZ & TEA PARTY**  
**“FULL OF LIFE SOCIAL”**  
**10 OCTOBER 2024**

**This social quiz afternoon was held at the Richmond Library Annexe, courtesy of funding from the borough’s Full of Life Fair fund. Some of the Visor Trustees arrived early to set up the tables and chairs, etc. The kitchen was also being prepared for the refreshments to be served later.**

**We enjoyed an entertaining quiz during the first half of the afternoon. Then during an interval, we were served with tea and coffee plus plates of special cakes and fancy chocolate biscuits. During this break we had a free raffle for Visor members (Trustees were excluded). There were 10 raffle prizes which included upmarket items kindly donated by Leon and Jaye.**

**The quiz resumed following the short interval, with prizes given to the successful table team. The afternoon concluded around 4:45 p.m., with our members very satisfied with an entertaining social afternoon.**

**At the end of the afternoon, the Trustees were joined by two members who kindly offered to assist with tidying up the hall and kitchen.**

**Doug**



### Battle Proms Picnic Concerts

In support of SSAFA - the Armed Forces Charity  
Soldiers Sailors Airmen Family Assistance

I had never heard of this series of concerts until Doug mentioned them at a committee meeting in June as a possible event for VISOR members. The concerts arranged since the first one in 1997 at Battle Abbey in Sussex bring the Promenade concept of classical military and popular music out from the Concert Hall into an openair setting. Although the high cost of the events might be mitigated by personal contact, there were other matters of accessibility and mobility to be

considered. I was enthusiastic to try it out and test suitability for our members as a group or individually. The concept brought back memories of when I first started work in London and the midday concerts in Finsbury Square bandstand in the Barbican.

Doug and I went on Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> July, to the Battle Proms Picnic Concert in the grounds of Blenheim Palace.

I was a little apprehensive, given our meteorological experience on Visor's last trip to Blenheim in the rain earlier this year. However, although the weather could have been kinder for an outdoor event in "flaming" June, the rain at least held off. However, it did get a bit chilly when the sun disappeared sporadically behind the clouds and finally set.

The first surprise for me was the number of cars (probably in the high 100's). We were able to park in a special area reserved for blue badge owners, closer to the entrance to the picnic area. Through Doug's contacts we were ushered into the large picnic area and were able to set down our picnic about 20 metres from the stage and arena where the other events in the programme were to take place, between the marquees and refreshment tents and the stage.

We had arrived around 4:30 p.m. and sat down and enjoyed the picnic prepared by Doug's cousin, Lesley.



During this time, we were entertained from the stage with a medley of songs from the 40's - Glen Miller style - including "Bugle Boy from Company B" and "Chatanooga Choo Choo" from a duo called the Battle Prom Belles, who sounded remarkably like the wartime entertainers - The Beverley Sisters.



Around 6 p.m. we were treated to a display by the Worcestershire Historic Cavalry Society showing the evolution of the use of mounted soldiers in battles over the years from the Battle of Hastings through the Civil War, Waterloo and finally to the 1914/1918 conflict. For each period they staged mock battles wearing the costumes and dress and using the weaponry of the time evolving from pikes, lances and swords, to muskets and pistols.

One soldier dressed as a Civil War Cavalier demonstrated how to attack a Roundhead from his mount with a sword blow. In the demonstration a cabbage replaced a Roundhead's head and a week's supply of coleslaw cabbage was harvested.



We then heard an aircraft circling overhead and the next display was on the way. This was carried out by The Red Devils of the Parachute Regiment. 7 paratroopers gave a breathtaking feat of sky diving aerobatics, ending with opening the chutes and descending to the arena. The final soldier to descend bore an enormous Union Flag more than twice his size which fluttered proudly over the arena as he descended amid applause and flag waving from the hundreds of picnickers.

Just before 8 p.m. when the orchestra was due to open its programme, a gun salute from the assembled artillery cannons to the memory of the D-Day landings echoed across the picnic field.

The New English Concert Orchestra opened the music with the traditional ceremony music of Elgars Pomp and Circumstance March and Nimrod from the Enigma Variations. During this the distinctive sound of a lone Spitfire aircraft could be heard and then seen as it appeared through the clouds and swept down over the arena. The Spitfire then circled around and around above the picnic area almost at touching distance throughout the musical rendition of “Nimrod”.



This was followed by further military and classical music including a choreographed cavalry ride display by the Worcester Historic Cavalry Society, and a classical clarinet solo by a Miss Emily Cook.



The first half of the concert ended, of course, with Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with real cannon fire. As it turned out, a pre-taste of delights to come.



After a short interval there was a brief interview with the Paratroop Colonel who had borne the enormous Union Flag in the earlier jump. He talked of the work and activities of SSAFA, the charity benefitting from the proceeds of this event.

The concert continued the classic theme and we were charmed by the singer Denise Leigh who, some may recall, was the blind soprano who took part, to considerable acclaim by the judges and the audience, with her husband at her side, in the TV show BGT (Britain's Got Talent). She gave an impressive performance of "Summertime" from "Porgy and Bess"

as well as a moving rendition of the song she performed on BGT – “Climb Every Mountain”.

As darkness descended, we were then introduced to the music which inspired the creation of the Battle Prom series of Concerts. This was Beethoven’s “*Battle Symphony*” which was composed to celebrate Wellington’s victory over the French at the Battle of Vittoria (Spain), and included in the score 193 shots from live cannons – not something you can see performed live in a concert hall of course, but a spectacular addition to an openair concert! It is a performance which requires a very specialist ‘percussion’ section to be reproduced as Beethoven intended. I think this symphony figures less in concerts than the 1812 Overture precisely for the desire for authenticity of cannon shots but the presentation at this concert was absolutely stunning. One sees fireworks displays co-ordinated with canned music usually but here we had live music coordinated with fireworks and the 193 cannon shots with smoke rising from the guns.



To end the evening, we returned spiritually to the Albert Hall with the Sailors Hornpipe, Jerusalem, Rule Britannia, Land of Hope and Glory and Pomp and Circumstance accompanied by a magnificent firework display.



It was time to leave and return to the car. It was very dark and the parking area was not illuminated.

Somehow Doug's homing instinct took us straight to the vehicle and we joined the long line of cars over the grass of the Blenheim Palace pastures to find the M40 and London Home at 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

It certainly was a fantastic afternoon and evening but possibly difficult to take part in for a number of our members. Individuals however might like to check out "Battle Proms" in Google.

Special thanks from me to Doug and his cousin.

Edward

## **FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Dear Members**

**Please note that the Pantomime at the Richmond Theatre will be doing an Audio Described performance of Beauty & The Beast on Tuesday, January 2nd at 5:30 p.m.**

**You will need, if required, to book your own ticket at the Box Office as VISOR will not be going as a group visit this year.**

**VISOR Trustees**

## **OBITUARY**

### **STEVE ROLLINGS**

**1st October 1961 – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

**We are very sorry to tell you that Steve, our Trustee, friend and office volunteer, passed away peacefully at home in October.**

**He had been a member and Trustee of Visor for many years and brought a wealth of expertise to Visor being a printer by profession. He organised the layout of our notepaper, business cards and original brochures and newsletters.**

**For two years he helped organise the Brian Rollings Memorial Cricket match with the Kew Cricket Club and they made a generous donation to Visor which was passed on to members for outings and events.**

**Steve was also a good, kind friend – he arranged to download music (mostly heavy metal and Status Quo) and transferred**

**them on to hundreds of CDs for my husband John, who is totally blind. Despite Steve's deteriorating eyesight he wrote the name of every single track on to paper cards so someone could read them out to John.**

**Steve was loyal and very supportive of Visor– he was never afraid to speak his mind but you always knew where you were with him. He worked hard for Visor and was always suggesting new plans and ideas.**

**Steve's funeral was held at the Mortlake Crematorium on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November and attended by myself, John Mc, Alwyn, Josie, David, Doug, Keith, Edward, John H, Barbara, Jean L, and Leon. The family had asked for donations to Visor instead of flowers.**

**We will miss him always. Rest in peace Steve.**

**Pat**

**FREE ITEMS**  
**AVAILABLE IN OFFICE**

<b>4</b>	<b>Gents watches</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Line writing aids</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Magnifiers - battery</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Magnifier – Specs in case</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Magnifier – Cord around neck</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Large button telephones</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Answering machine</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Clear view power supply unit</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Large print - recipes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Smart talk – Easy to use talking set top box</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Large print key boards</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>TV picture expander - by 50%</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Large print playing cards</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Domino set</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Pill box</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Scrabble- large print</b>
	<b>300+ C/Ds and cassettes – Audio books</b>



<b>10</b>	<b>Magnifying specs (different shapes and sizes)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Large print book: “Walkabout” by James Vance Marshall</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Extendable walking stick</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Large label medication dispenser</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Braille (stud marked) measuring tape</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Measuring jug</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>C-PEN reader</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Pocket Rape Alarm</b>

**Should you wish to view any of the above items, we would appreciate you advising the office in advance of your intended visit to the office.**

**Thank you.**

## **FUTURE TRIPS/EVENTS**

**2024/2025**

<b>Thursday November 14th Lending Library Annexe</b>	<b>Quiz afternoon 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Thursday December 12th Lending Library Annexe</b>	<b>Christmas Quiz &amp; Raffle afternoon 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Tuesday December 17<sup>th</sup> The View restaurant</b>	<b>Christmas Lunch in Twickenham 12:00 noon</b>
<b>Thursday January 9<sup>th</sup> Lending Library Annexe</b>	<b>Quiz Afternoon 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Monday April 7<sup>th</sup> Goodwood House</b>	<b>Time tbc Tour and afternoon tea</b>

## **THANK YOU**

**VISOR Trustees would like to thank the following for their assistance and support:**

- **The London Mayor's Fund (Building Strong Communities)**
- **The Hampton Fund**
- **Richmond Parish Lands Charity**
- **The National Lottery 2024 Community Fund**
- **Chair & Trustees of the Kew Fair**
- **The Ulverscroft Foundation**
- **Middlesex Association for the Blind**
  
- **Ed Mears, IT Consultant, for his continued invaluable assistance**
- **The Complete Office for their assistance with printing and advice with respect to office services and equipment**
- **Richmond Libraries (Annexe) for providing a venue for our regular meetings**
- **Kew Cricket Club for advertising us on their website**
- **Keith Rose – volunteer and Kew CC liaison**

**VISOR Trustees**

**VISOR  
CURRENT ELECTED OFFICERS  
AND TRUSTEES**

**Pat McNamee – Chair**

**Ashley Wright – Financial Volunteer Assistant**

**Trustees:**

**Keith Bulmer**

**John Hoschander**

**Doug. Smith**

**Josie Wood**

**Alwyn Wales**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **VISUALLY IMPAIRED SOCIETY OF RICHMOND (VISOR)**

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**Email: [admin@visor.org.uk](mailto:admin@visor.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.visor.org.uk](http://www.visor.org.uk)**

**Visitors' Centre opening hours:**

**Mondays: 10:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.**

**UK Registered Charity No. 1090135**

**This newsletter was compiled by the office  
volunteers. Many thanks to our contributors.**

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