

# **VISOR NEWSLETTER**

## **SUMMER 2026**



## **CHAIR'S WELCOME**

**Dear Members & Friends**

**Welcome to our Summer Newsletter which contains write ups and photos of the Visor holiday to Teignmouth, Devon, in June.**

**Firstly, we would like to thank the Chair & Committee of the Richmond May Fair for their very generous donation of £1,000 towards the cost of our accessible coach. We are so very grateful to all at the Richmond May Fair Committee for their help.**

**Mat, our driver of the coach from Cruisers, stayed with us throughout the five days. His help was invaluable when assisting those with mobility problems on and off the coach. The particular coach used this year was brand new and had a lift to enable wheelchair access or to help those with mobility issues.**

**Don't forget our monthly quiz/tea and chat afternoons on the second Thursday of every month. This is held at 2:30 pm in the Richmond Library Annexe, near the Richmond Theatre, and is completely accessible. We would love to see you there.**

**A very warm welcome to our new members, Terry, Pippi, Jackie, Raj, Frances and Debbie. We hope to see you soon at one of our events.**

**Pat**



## **VISOR HOLIDAY OUTING**

**in June 2026 to**

## **BUCKFAST ABBEY**

**During our VISOR holiday at Teignmouth we spent several, mostly sunny, hours at Buckfast Abbey.**

**The Abbey was founded in 1018 and had mixed fortunes until Henry VIII dissolved it in 1539. The lands were sold and the buildings fell into ruin until a Gothicstyle mansion was built in 1806 using stone from the Abbey ruins.**

**In 1882 French Benedictine monks, who had been expelled from France, came via Ireland and decided to rebuild the Abbey. I found this history amazing - how 6 monks, with the help of an architect, created an amazing cathedral-like building. Funds were low to begin with so the monks dressed the stone and mixed the mortar in self-built workshops, erected scaffolding from wooden poles lashed together with rope and chain, and manually hoisted the**

**stones. They built the walls from platforms 150 feet above the ground without helmets or safety rails and buffeted by the weather.**

**The Abbey was consecrated on 25 August 1932 and the building work completed in December 1938. And it is a stunning building, light and simply decorated, high ceilinged with imposing arches. At the East end is a chapel, accessible by stairs or lift, lit by beautiful stained glass installed in 1968**

**Surrounding the Abbey are well tended grounds and gardens including a lavender one, with over 100 varieties. Further on are the physic and sensory gardens. I spent time sitting in a sun-lit bower admiring the roses. In the background you could hear the River Dart flowing by, screened by trees. And lots of benches around the grounds.**

**By the entrance gate is a small, stone built chapel which is a Methodist church - very comfortable, welcoming and simple inside. The**

**chapel was built before the rebuilding of the Abbey and the two have existed happily together.**

**And of course there is a shop, café and restaurant. I didn't go into the museum; and there are also the monastery buildings, not open to the public, and a conference centre.**

**Ann and Brian**



# **VISOR HOLIDAY OUTING**

## **in June 2026 to**

# **WIDDECOMBE ON THE**

# **MOORE**

**After leaving Buckfast Abbey, we made our way to Widdecombe via the Dartmoor National Park, looking out for ponies, sheep, cattle and any other animals that roam around.**

**When reaching Widdecombe we went directly to the café for afternoon tea, which was paid for by a generous donation from Barry and Shirley. We had a choice of plain, fruit or cheese scones, with jam and cream, plus a pot of tea or coffee. This went down a treat.**

**Our members then walked to the local shops or had a look around the church. We then made our way back to the coach for the return journey to our Teignmouth hotel and a 3-course dinner!**

**Keith**



## **VISOR HOLIDAY VISIT TO THE DONKEY SANCTUARY, SIDMOUTH, DEVON.**

**By popular demand, on the Thursday of the holiday week, we made a return trip to the Donkey Sanctuary after an absence of three years. Unfortunately, the weather was not brilliant and we had a few showers. It was sweet to see the donkeys independently return to their sheds to shelter from the rain and then out again to enjoy their 227 acres of lovely green fields.**

**Some of our members attended a talk about the work of the sanctuary and others went to the restaurant which served delicious home-made food. Some of us walked down to the barns and made friends with the donkeys whilst they were sheltering.**

**At the sanctuary they have their own veterinary hospital and a large barn where riding classes are held for children with special needs. They are able to ride the donkeys and interact with**

**them. About 150 children attend the sanctuary for this wonderful opportunity.**

**The shop is huge and was full of wonderful gifts and souvenirs and many of us came back to the coach with several bags of goodies.**

**We left feeling happy that we had returned to the sanctuary despite the weather conditions.**

**Pat**

## **DAISY COMPLETES THE TRIATHLON** **FOR VISOR**

**We are delighted to announce that Daisy Holdroyd Smith, the granddaughter of Sally (one of our members) completed the Windsor Triathlon in June and raised funds for Visor. The final amount raised will be reported in our next newsletter.**

**We are very grateful to Daisy for all her efforts on our behalf and wish her every success in her studies.**

**Pat**

## **WIMBLEDON - JUNE 2026**

**I made my way to Wimbledon on the 493 bus, arriving about a 5-minutes-walk from the grounds. I had a problem with my ticket but a quick resolution booth sorted me out.**

**I then went for a coffee and a programme, and walked around the grounds making my way to Court 18 which was very busy. I also walked past the outside of the BBC set where Claire Balding was located. I tried to get into the big shop but all the shops had queues, so I continued to walk around the grounds.**

**I arrived at the Village with the big screen and saw sporting greats from various sports being introduced to Centre Court. It was then more walking to find my way to Henman's Hill to see the current Ladies Champion knocked out.**

**As the day progressed it was very tiring and I left around 6:15 p.m. not before getting my 2 new Wimbledon caps.**

**Keith**



**ROSE OF YORK, RICHMOND  
LUNCH ON  
22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL 2026**

**VISOR members went for lunch at the Rose of York Pub in Richmond, this being a return visit.**

**We had a delightful two-course lunch with drinks, and later coffee/tea was provided by the Management.**

**The staff are very friendly and accommodating. We are always made very welcome.**

**Keith**

## **OBITUARY**

**JOHN IVO SIMEK (known as JJ)  
23<sup>rd</sup> March 1948 - 19<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

**We are very sad to announce the passing of JJ who had been a member of VISOR for many years.**

**We attended a service for him on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> May at the South West Middlesex Crematorium where we joined Moira, his wife, and family to celebrate his life with memories, music and prayers. JJ had been in the Norwegian navy and had led a very interesting life. The service started with Petula Clark singing 'Sailor' which was very moving.**

**We will always remember him from one of the first VISOR holidays – he had a wonderful sense of humour and had plenty of stories to keep us amused.**

**JJ and Moira came on many of our outings and he was a regular attendee when we had the quiz at the Cabbage Patch in Twickenham.**

**We all send our love and sympathy to Moira, Ivana, JJ's family and friends at this sad time.**

**Pat**

# FREE ITEMS

## AVAILABLE IN OFFICE

|           |                                                      |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Gents watches</b>                                 |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Line writing aids</b>                             |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Magnifiers - battery</b>                          |
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Magnifier – Specs in case</b>                     |
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Magnifier – Cord around neck</b>                  |
| <b>1</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>2</b>  | <b>Large print key boards</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>10</b> | <b>Magnifying specs (different shapes and sizes)</b> |

|          |                                                                                                                    |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2</b> | <b>Extendable walking stick</b>                                                                                    |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Large label medication dispenser</b>                                                                            |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Measuring jug</b>                                                                                               |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Pocket Rape Alarm</b>                                                                                           |
| <b>1</b> | <b><u>NEW</u> MAB combined player<br/>radio/cassette/USB (CD doesn't work)<br/>H8"xW15"xD8" – battery or mains</b> |
| <b>1</b> | <b>Merlin Elite Pro reader/video magnifier by<br/>Enhanced Vision – desk/table top size</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.**

# **THANK YOU**

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

- Richmond Foundation 2025-2026**
- The Hampton Fund 2025-2026**
- The National Lottery 2024 Community Fund**
- Chair & Trustees of the Kew Fair**
- Chair & Trustees of the Richmond May Fair 2025/2026**
- The London Mayor's Fund (Building Strong Communities)**
- The Ulverscroft Foundation**
- Middlesex Association for the Blind**
  
- Richmond Council Voluntary Services - Ed Mears, IT Consultant, for his continued invaluable assistance**
- Cartier Graphics for their assistance with printing our brochures, newsletters, etc.**
- Cruisers Limited for their quality coaches and helpful driver**
- Richmond Libraries (Annexe) for providing a venue for our regular meetings**

**VISOR Trustees**

**VISOR  
CURRENT ELECTED OFFICERS AND  
TRUSTEES**

**Pat McNamee – Chair**

**Ashley Wright – Volunteer Treasurer**

**Trustees:**

**Keith Bulmer**

**John Hoschander**

**Doug. Smith**

**Josie Wood**

**Alwyn Wales**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

**Sheen Lane Centre**

**74 Sheen Lane**

**East Sheen**

**London SW14 8IP**

**Telephone: 020 8487 5301**

**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.**