

Spring 2010

Devon *Link*

Large Print

The regular magazine for people with physical and sensory disabilities in Devon

Checking up on carers health

– see page 31

**Published by Devon County Council
and Torbay Council**

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A farewell message

UNFORTUNATELY, I have the unenviable job of being the bearer of bad news – sadly this will be the final issue of Devon Link as we know it. We have had to make the difficult decision to stop producing the magazine as it is no longer viable for Devon County Council and Torbay Council to continue to fund it in its current format. We have kept the magazine going for as long as possible but the recession meant that we have not been able to sell the level of advertising space necessary to support the publication. I have no doubt that readers will be extremely disappointed to hear this news, although I'm sure many people will appreciate the constant pressure felt by the public sector to make financial savings – Devon Link is a victim of that pressure.

However, it isn't all doom and gloom. Devon County Council continues to provide information and advice to disabled people through the Disability Information Service and Care Direct. In addition this, Living Options Devon (with who we already work very closely) have stated that they intend to take up where Devon Link left off and go on to produce a new user-led magazine specifically for disabled people and carers.

We want to make sure that you enjoy this final Devon Link just as much as all the previous issues. So it's packed with all the usual news, features and information – highlights include important information about new health and wellbeing

— Editorial —

checks for carers, and a brilliant interview with local author Sallyann Sheridan. We take a look at a new project that will make the countryside more accessible, and guide you through the latest technology in seating equipment. Be sure to read the message from Diana Crump, Living Options Devon CEO, on the next page – it includes important information about the new magazine that they intend to produce. And on page 58 there are contact details if you wish to comment on the decision to end Devon Link.

Finally, thank you for reading; we really do appreciate our readers and the support you have shown to Devon Link over the years.

Best wishes,

Sarah

A message from Living Options Devon...

Dear Reader,

Seven years ago, a number of visually impaired people who subscribed to Devon Link said that they would prefer to read the magazine in large print, rather than receive the audio version. This was the beginning of Living Options Devon working in partnership with Devon Link by helping to develop a large print version.

Shortly after the first large print issue was published in 2004, Devon County Council made the decision to involve service users more in the production of Devon Link. Living Options Devon was commissioned to recruit, train and manage a team of four people with disabilities, who would find story leads and write local disability related news columns. This addition to the magazine proved to be a great success with readers.

We know from our annual monitoring and evaluation of the magazine that Devon Link is enjoyed and valued by the people who read it, and we know that it will be greatly missed. Because of this, Living Options Devon would like to publish a magazine to succeed Devon Link. We are very excited about the prospect of doing this, as the publication would be totally user-led, and would also mark our 20th anniversary this year.

We hope to provide not only disability information, but lifestyle features and a broad range of subjects such as gardening, cookery, travel, sports and the arts.

If you are a subscriber, inside this issue you will find a reply-paid form, which you can use to send us your contact details, so that we can make sure you receive the new magazine. The Devon Link mailing list is of course data protected so we won't know who you are unless you tell us – so please do fill it in and send it back. If you are not already a subscriber to Devon Link, but you have picked this copy up, or maybe you were given it by a friend, you can register your interest to receive the new magazine by contacting Living Options Devon using the details below.

We look forward to hearing from you and sending you our very first magazine!

Yours sincerely,
Diana Crump
Chief Executive, Living Options Devon

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Please think carefully before dialing 999

THE CHIEF Executive of NHS Devon has urged people to consider their options before calling 999. Rebecca Harriott said people should consider whether an emergency response is absolutely necessary before calling for an ambulance or attending an emergency department. The call came as the icy winter weather caused disruption to transport links and some local services.

Mrs Harriott said people should “choose well” by using NHS services wisely this winter. “We want people to think twice before they visit emergency departments or dial 999 as these options are meant to be used for emergencies only,” she said.

“There are plenty of healthcare options – other than emergency services – and we are asking people to consider these if they don’t feel it is an emergency.

“Minor injury units provide a non-urgent service for a range of conditions including cuts, bruises, broken bones, sprains and minor head injuries (excluding concussion).”

Mrs Harriott’s comments came a day after NHS Devon launched its “Choose Well” campaign. The campaign urges people to use the most appropriate medical service, whether that be those available from a pharmacy, out-of-hours GP or a minor injury unit.

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Research has shown that as many as one in four visits to emergency departments are unnecessary.

Minor injuries units at community hospitals are open 365 days a year. Out-of-hours on call medical services for urgent medical issues are also available. To contact this service simply call your GP. People can also phone NHS Direct for advice and information about any healthcare issue 24 hours a day.

Full details of NHS services are available in the Yellow Pages or on NHS Devon's website www.devonpct.nhs.uk

News from West Devon

New Tavistock support groups

A group offering support to people with Parkinson's disease meets on the last Tuesday of every month from 10.30 am until noon at the Anchorage Centre in Tavistock. A programme of talks has been arranged for upcoming meetings. All are welcome to attend and to view the information held at the centre about the condition and related issues. Contacts for the group are Pam on 01822 6124204 or Andy on 01822 616958. Another Tavistock support group, this time for people affected by Macular Degeneration, also welcomes new members. The group meets every second Thursday of the month in Tavistock Church Upper Hall, for further details ring Esme Wheeler on 01822 618561.

New scooter scheme

A new mobility scheme in Tavistock has proved very popular since it launched in December. Running from the Anchorage Centre in Tavistock, Tavimobility offers a variety of equipment, including scooters, manual wheelchairs, a motorised wheelchair and other walking aids. At the moment the service is open Monday to Friday and people can use the equipment on payment of a membership fee of £2.50, with an optional donation. It is advisable to book in advance, the phone number is 01822 617525.

Post Polio new booklet

The British Polio Fellowship has recently produced an excellent practical guide to understanding and living with the condition of post polio syndrome, which I am finding very useful. In fact I have bought extra copies to pass on to other people as it gives them a very good understanding of the condition. The booklet costs £5.00 plus £2.50 for post and packing and can be ordered by phoning 0800 018 0586 or emailing infobenefits@britishpolio.org.uk

Expert Patient Programme

Many of you may have taken part in the NHS Expert Patients Programme (EPP) – a self-management programme for people living with a chronic (long-term) condition, with the aim of supporting them by increasing their confidence, improving their quality of life, and helping them manage their condition more effectively. In a large county such as Devon you may have to wait some time before the EPP is running near you; however, I recently found out that it runs more frequently in Plymouth, and people living in nearby West Devon or the South Hams are eligible to attend. For details of the Devon scheme phone 0800 073 0792 or for Plymouth 01752 201766.

Pat Mayston

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Matthew can offer wealth of experience

AFTER BEING made redundant last year, local businessman Matthew Allen took the opportunity to use his experience in the mobility industry to set up his own company. His friendly local firm – Westcountry Rehab Supplies & Training (WC-RST) – offers customers a range of mobility equipment, as well as carrying out assessments and training. They can provide seating assessments for adults, paediatric and bariatric clients, including:

- Posture care seating
- Pressure care seating
- Rise/tilt and rise/recline seating

Matthew has a range of chairs that have only just come on to the market, and can run demonstration meetings on request. His team is also qualified to carry out moving and handling assessments – with hoists, slings, stand aids and other transfer aids.

WC-RST will be appearing at the South West Disability Show on the 9th and 10th of July this year. They plan to hold fully certified training sessions at the show, including:

- Seating and pressure care
- Moving and handling
- Resuscitation (first aid)

To find out more, contact Matthew by telephone on 0845 5390192 or 07763 688479, email matthew@wc-rst.co.uk or write to WC-RST, PO Box 713, Exeter EX1 9QG

Change to bus pass eligibility

IF YOU were born on or before 5th April 1950 and resident in England you are eligible for a statutory travel permit (National Bus Pass) from your 60th birthday.

If you were born after 5th April 1950, the age of eligibility for a bus pass for women will be pension age and for men it will be the pensionable age of a woman born on the same day. As from the 6th April 2010 the government is gradually increasing the state pension age for women from 60 to 65. This means that by 6th April 2020 both the pension age and the age of eligibility for a bus pass will be the same for both men and women.

If you are unsure on what date you will become eligible for a National Bus Pass you can check online at www.direct.gov.uk – follow the links to the state pension age calculator (indicate as female regardless of whether you are male or female). Alternatively you can telephone the Concessionary Bus Travel Team on 01392 383688 or 01271 383688, who will be able to look this up for you.

News from Mid Devon

Local mayor won't let diabetes get in his way

There's a saying 'if you want something done ask a busy person.' That is certainly true of Tiverton's Mayor Paul Graham. You only have to read the local newspaper to see how full his diary is with mayoral duties, as well as his 'day job' as an administrator within the engineering section of local company Broad Oak Toiletries. This workload would be daunting to anyone never mind someone who has type 1 diabetes. With a daily insulin regime and regular hospital checks, Paul manages his condition with the support of his family. For more information about diabetes, contact Diabetes UK on 020 7424 1000, or email info@diabetes.org.uk

Rotary club hopes to help adventurous young carers

Thanks to Tiverton Rotary Club up to ten young carers from Mid Devon will enjoy an outdoor adventure-packed weekend away from their responsibilities on Exmoor with the Calvert Trust. The club aims to raise some of the funds at a Variety Show taking place in March at the New Hall in Tiverton. In Mid Devon alone there are 120 children who help care for a parent or sibling who is disabled.

Rebecca raises funds for Guide Dogs

Rebecca O'Sullivan-Wilson, a 12-year-old school girl from Tiverton showed entrepreneurial spirit by selling dog biscuits to raise money for the Guide Dogs for the Blind as well as other animal charities. Rebecca contacted Tiverton company Klassy Canine Bakery and persuaded owners Sue and Neal

Mathias to donate some of their specialist dog biscuits for her to sell. With names like Dogrritos and Bourbone Biscuits, Rebecca had no problem selling the doggy treats to friends and teachers at her school, as well as local dog walkers that passed by her house.

Crediton transport move successful

The relocation of the headquarters of Crediton and District Community Transport Association to a more central location in Market Street, Crediton, has proved a success. The association assists disabled and elderly local people by transporting them door-to-door. Up to 200 people a week use the scheme, which hopes to have wheelchairs and scooters available to hire sometime in the spring. The much-relied on association, which received a £500 donation from Tesco in December, is dependent on funding and donations to buy the new equipment.

Barclays Bank adds to fundraising effort

A Christmas bazaar in aid of Tiverton and District Community Transport Association raised over £2300. This included a donation from Barclays under the bank's community scheme which offers like-for-like contributions to charity fundraising efforts, to a maximum of £750. Carol Hitt is a volunteer fundraiser for the association and, as a retired employee of Barclays, was eligible under the bank's community programme for its matched funding scheme.

Patricia Clow

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News from North Devon

Hartland lady teaches fox sign language

A wildlife enthusiast from North Devon has taught sign language to a fox cub she rescued at only six-weeks-old. Beth Tyler-King, 43, who herself lost 95 per cent of her hearing at the age of four, has taught sign language to vixen Milly who is also deaf. Beth says: 'I get her to sit – I put my palm out facing downwards to say sit and she does sit.' Beth, who lives in Hartland, currently cares for 70 animals at her bungalow – 30 hedgehogs, five owls, seven dogs, 14 cats, five pigeons, a dove, a parrot and a squirrel. Milly is so domesticated that her best friends are cats Angel and Harley. She even wears a collar, watches TV and eats Coco Pops!

Samia's media ambition

15-year-old Samia Galal suffered a stroke when she was only eight, which left her paralysed down her right hand side and with epilepsy. Despite this, the Barnstaple teenager has overcome adversity to study for 10 GCSEs and hopes to become a journalist or work in the media one day.

Tai Chi aids stroke recovery

Vicky Allebone is running a unique Tai Chi course for people affected by stroke in North Devon. Vicky needs volunteers to support those with limited mobility. Contact Vicky on 01271 378441 or email vicky.allebone@stroke.org.uk

Jackie Oldham
jackie.devonlink@btinternet.com

Hearing dogs steal the show

DEVON COUNTY Council (DCC) staff celebrated Deaf Heritage Month by holding a drop-in event at County Hall on 9th March. This special event allowed staff to see for themselves how the awareness of Deaf culture and services provided to Deaf users in Devon is growing more each year.

The event was organised by Natasha Cole, Equality Officer for the Environment, Economy and Culture directorate, with the support of the Deaf Awareness Group. Several organisations from the voluntary sector also attended, along with stands from DCC directorates.

Stealing the show was undoubtedly the presence of Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. Several cute puppies came along with their owners and demonstrated just how well trained and exceptionally well-behaved they are. There were also some fund-raising stalls for the Hearing Dogs which were well supported.

Other exhibits included the proposed plans for the new Exeter Royal Academy for Education. Staff from the Academy were on hand to answer any questions that people had about the proposed new 'state-of-the-art' building which is planned for a site just down the road from County Hall. Another well attended activity was the 'Signing Circle' where students from the Exeter Academy joined the Deaf Awareness Group to practice using British Sign Language

(BSL). Staff were invited to join in so they could learn to sign their name. Staff from the Deaf Advocacy Service at Living Options and also RNID were also available to help people who wanted to find out more about their services.

DCC stands included information about Equality and Diversity, the Devon Charter for British Sign Language, Easy Read information and what's happening to celebrate Deaf Heritage Month.

The event was followed by a 'Dress Down Day' for county council staff, to raise money for Hearing Dogs for the Deaf. For more information about Deaf Heritage Month contact Katherine Weston, Heritage Outreach Officer on 01392 384253 or email katherine.weston@devon.gov.uk

News from Torbay

Football – with wheels!

South Devon College and the Devon Football Association (FA) are pleased to announce they are now running wheelchair football coaching sessions. Power and manual chair-users of all ages are welcome to attend the free sessions. To register your interest contact David Carpenter, Devon FA disability football development officer on 01626 323560 or email david.carpenter@devonfa.com

Bird watching is ACE

Brixham charity Access to Community Education (ACE) has been given £2,000 by Torbay Disabled Fellowship. Following closure, the fellowship is distributing funds to local groups supporting disabled people. ACE plan to use the money to fund a trip to Slimbridge Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre in Gloucester. To find out more about ACE call Yvonne Ramos on 01803 853302.

Text a taxi service

A Torbay taxi firm is offering a text service for hearing impaired customers. Torbay Taxis is having specialist equipment installed to enable anyone who is registered to text for a cab. To do so, call in to any of the Torbay Taxi offices in Hyde Road, Paignton; coach station waiting room, Lymington Road, Torquay; and 55 Belgrave Road, Torquay.

Diana Frost

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News from East Devon

Brainwave shop now open in Ottery

Brainwave, the national charity which provides home therapy for children with cerebral palsy and similar development delaying conditions, has opened its 16th charity shop in Mill Street, Ottery St Mary. Brainwave employs trained teachers, occupational and physiotherapists – for which no government funding is provided – so charity shops are a vital source of revenue. The Ottery shop, managed by Alison Potts, welcomes contributions of saleable items as well as volunteers to help work in the shop. Contact Alison on 07856 985052.

Scooter scheme in Joe's memory

The mobility scooter donation scheme started by Carol Gilson of Honiton after the death of her husband Joe in late 2008 goes from strength to strength. Known as the 'Joe Gilson Mobility Scheme', the amount of donated mobility equipment has escalated so much that Carol now uses a garage to store items, which also includes walking aids and other items useful to people with disabilities. Carol continues to receive help from Belinda Bennett of the Midweek Herald, who helps with the difficult task of deciding who should benefit from the freely donated items. If you have any items to contribute please contact Carol on 01404 43341 who may be able to organise collection.

Jim's St Dunstan's experience

When Jim Adderley from Newton Poppleford discovered his sight was deteriorating, he was referred to St Dunstan's Centre in Brighton to find out what could be done to improve his quality of life. St Dunstons is a national charity that helps support and rehabilitate blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women. It is run on voluntary contributions and employs fully qualified therapists. Jim now has a stick, enabling him to go out to the local shop alone, a machine that reads his mail for him and anti-glare spectacles for when the sun is too bright. Jim says: "I've never known such kindness as I received there." To find out more about the charity visit www.st-dunstans.org.uk, call 020 7723 5021 or email enquiries@st-dunstans.org.uk

Blindfolded Seaton Lions Raise Awareness

Seaton Lions Club highlighted just how difficult it is for non-sighted people to get around, during a blindfolded charity walk for Lions World Sight Day. Rather than a fund raising exercise, the annual event appeals for people to donate unwanted spectacles. The glasses, collected by Lions Clubs around the world are recycled and given to people with sight problems in poorer countries. As if being blindfolded wasn't enough, one walker even donned a lion costume too! It was hoped the combined effort of international Lions Clubs would win a place in the Guinness book of records as the 'largest blindfolded walk' category.

Patricia Clow

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Closure of Kaleido

KALEIDO ARTS, the regional agency run by Deaf and disabled artists, sadly closed on 31st March. The regional agency, which supports Deaf and disabled artists in the South West, was shocked to find out that Arts Council South West had confirmed that they are cutting Kaleido's funding completely from the end of March 2010.

As a result the Kaleido Arts Board has taken the difficult decision to close the office. Kaleido Arts is the latest in a long list of organisations run by disabled people to have its funding cut by the Arts Council. London Disability Arts Forum, the National Disability Arts Forum, the West Midlands Disability Arts Forum and the East Midlands Disability Arts Forum all closed in the recent past.

Arts Council England South West will be allocating the budget themselves instead. Given the likelihood of cuts to the Arts Council budget in future, the targeted funding could end up being cut altogether.

The Arts Council do not employ any disabled people at all in their South West regional office (Arts Council disability data 2009). By contrast Kaleido has been the only Arts Council England South West funded regional development agency run by a Board made up of 85 per cent Deaf and disabled people. Half of the staff team are disabled. Kaleido Arts argue that it is a backwards step if the Arts Council, rather than Deaf or disabled artists, make the final decisions about

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how the funding for supporting Deaf and disabled artists and audiences is used. Deaf and disabled artists in the South West, who have been over consulted with, but under assisted for years, have been invited to yet another round of Arts Council consultations. Only 2 per cent of the Arts Council South West arts award funding in 2008/9 went to disabled artists. Given that around 20 per cent of the population in the South West is disabled, Deaf and disabled artists are clearly under represented.

The recent Arts Council Taking Part survey briefing also shows that, despite the fact that people in the South West have the highest levels of participation and attendance at arts activities in the country, for people with a limiting illness or disability, attendance is only 53.7 per cent versus 67.4 per cent nationally for the rest of the population, and 72.3 per cent for the rest of the population in the South West region.

Before they close, the staff at Kaleido Arts are contacting all the people on their database to refer them to other organisations. You can call them on 01392 219 440 or email them at info@kaleidoarts.org. Alternatively visit the Kaleido Arts website www.kaleidoarts.org or their Facebook page.

Kaleido Arts are asking artists and the general public to express concern about this decision. You can email Alan Davey, Chief Executive of the Arts Council at chiefexecutive@artscouncil.org.uk or write to: Arts Council England, 14 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3NQ.

News from Teignbridge

Embracing a healthy life in Newton Abbot

The launch of a new healthy lifestyle clinic in Newton Abbot will encourage local people to embrace a healthier way of life. The clinic, which recently opened at the town's hospital, is open every Thursday between 1pm and 3pm, and is run by a team of health trainers on an appointment-only basis. Health trainers are employed across England by the NHS as part of a government strategy to prevent ill health and promote healthy living. The trainers are there to help people make positive changes to their lifestyle and give the right support to help them do so. To find out more call 01626 357010.

A chance to meet other carers in Dawlish

A warm welcome awaits carers at a new support group in Dawlish, which meets at the Methodist Church Hall in Brunswick Street. All carers are invited to come along and meet new friends, over a cup of tea or coffee. If you would like to find out more please contact Liz Potts, Carers Link Service Worker on 08456 431 341.

Football club supports the Deaf community

Deaf people will be able to access football more easily thanks to a local club. Tedburn St Mary FC has become one of Devon's first deaf-friendly clubs after joining the National Deaf Children's Society Deaf Friendly FC project. The project, which was set up in 2007 has so far attracted 60 clubs in

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England, including Premier league teams Manchester United and Arsenal. Geoff Harbor, first team manager at Tedburn St Mary FC said: "We are looking forward to developing our playing and coaching opportunities for Deaf people and ensuring we help them reach their full potential in the sport. We are also committed to supporting Deaf footballers and ensuring that the club and its officials are Deaf-friendly." By joining the scheme, the club can access courses, including a British Sign Language football course. If you would like to find out more about the project, or are interested in joining Tedburn St Mary FC, please get in touch with Geoff Harbor on 07896 002368 or email him at geoffharbor@hotmail.co.uk

Diana Frost

diana.devonlink@btinternet.com

Attractions recognised

DEVON VISITOR attractions; the South Devon Railway and Totnes Rare Breeds Farm were among the diverse range of places to visit shortlisted in the first ever Rough Guide to Accessible Britain Awards.

The national awards, supported by Motability Operations and launched to coincide with the third edition of the award winning Rough Guide to Accessible Britain, recognise the best accessible, inclusive and inspirational attractions around the country.

Attractions were whittled down by Rough Guides' expert reviewers and judging panel into four categories – Best Family Venue, Best Active Venue, Best Heritage Venue and Best Free Venue.

A fifth award, the Readers' Choice prize, has been voted for by consumers and Rough Guide to Accessible Britain fans, online at www.accessibleguide.co.uk

Other South West attractions which made the shortlist include the Eden Project in Cornwall, and Brunel's SS Great Britain in Bristol.

Martin Dunford, founder of Rough Guides, explained: "The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain Awards mark the achievements of attractions, however large or small, across the UK that have demonstrated considerable effort and creativity in providing inclusive experiences for disabled visitors."

Winners of the Rough Guide to Accessible Britain Awards were announced shortly after Devon Link went to print. The ceremony – which was be hosted by TV personality Ben Fogle – took place at the Tate Modern in London at the end of March.

Carers are rewarded

IN RECOGNITION of the invaluable work that carers do on a daily basis, Exeter law firm Crosse & Crosse Solicitors launched the third annual Devon Carers Award Scheme to raise awareness for the valuable support that thousands of unpaid carers provide across Devon.

With this year's ceremony held on 28th January, the scheme has gone from strength to strength since its launch three years ago.

In the run-up to the awards, Crosse & Cross send out approximately 1500 posters and nomination forms across Devon. A judging panel considers all of the nominations and selects the finalists.

The ceremony took place at Sandy Park Rugby Park, Exeter, and was well attended by carers and their guests. Having been a supporter of the awards scheme since it began, Debbie McGee presented winners with their gifts and certificates.

For more information regarding the next Devon Carers Award Scheme please contact Laura Andrews at Crosse & Crosse Solicitors on 01392 258451 or email lauraa@crosse.co.uk

News from South Hams

Hard of hearing group in Kingsbridge

If you live in the Kingsbridge area and are hard of hearing or have tinnitus you may be interested in joining a new group which is being started by local residents and the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) in Plymouth. For more information call Jo on 01752 228657, text phone 01752 604862 or email Joanna.Steer@rnid.org.uk

New minibus for Salcombe

A minibus service which has been providing transport for disabled and elderly residents of Salcombe for many years has recently acquired a brand new bus. The new vehicle has access for three wheelchairs and will continue to provide a weekly service into Salcombe on Thursdays as well as trips to Dartmoor, and shopping in Kingsbridge and Plymstock. Call 01548 842156 for more details.

Captioned performances at Theatre Royal

People from all over Devon visit the Theatre Royal in Plymouth, but those of us living in parts of the South Hams and West Devon are lucky not to have to travel far to do so. And now thanks to a legacy left to the Theatre Royal Applause Club (TRAC), Deaf and hard-of-hearing patrons visiting the Drum Theatre will be able to read the words at selected performances on a new caption screen. The theatre relies on trained volunteer captioners, who reformat scripts for the caption screen – each production takes about 60 hours

preparation. If you have good computing skills, an eye for detail and are interested in becoming a volunteer captioner the theatre would love to hear from you. Please contact Jackie Armstrong on 01752 230371.

Pat Mayston

devonlink@mayston.eclipse.co.uk

Free ticket offer for readers

THE ALLERGY & Gluten Free Show 2010 is delighted to offer Devon Link readers a pair of free tickets to attend The Allergy & Gluten Free Show 2010, held at Olympia in London. Each pair of tickets (worth £18) is for free entry to the show on any of the open days (from Friday 21st May to Sunday 23rd May 2010). Not only that, but all free ticket registrations are automatically entered into a prize draw to win £200 worth of ASDA 'Free From' food vouchers!

The Allergy and Gluten Free Show 2010 is Britain's only live event for the 18 million allergy and intolerance sufferers in the UK. This year, the new look show will be packed full of demonstrations, advice, products, therapies and treatments for visitors.

To receive your free pair of tickets simply visit www.allergyshow.co.uk/go/devonlink and fill in your details, or alternatively send a SAE to: Free Ticket Offer, F2F Events Ltd, 119 High St, Berkhamsted, Herts, HP4 2DJ.

News from Exeter

Power to the people

Exeter City Council has made a u-turn in its plans to close a third of the city's public toilets, following widespread public outrage. Local newspaper, the Express & Echo, even launched a 'Save our Toilets' campaign, which was supported by local charities representing vulnerable, disabled and elderly people. Nick Hall of Headway Exeter, a charity that supports people with brain injuries, said: 'It is very good news that now people with brain injuries will be able to use the city centre more easily knowing that that public toilets will be available for them to use.' Hearing of the decision, Julie Clarke of Whipton said: "That is fantastic news and I am over the moon. I have a severely disabled daughter and public toilets are very important to her." The proposal to close ten toilets across the city had been planned by the council in order to save £60,000.

Grant awarded to support deaf people

Living Options Devon has received a government grant for £351,306 to help support the Deaf community. The money will be spent on recruiting and training a Deaf British Sign Language (BSL) user to work with isolated Deaf people to help them understand their rights and what services are available. A peer group support network will also be set up using visual aids such as Facebook, websites and webcams, to help people increase their social contact and access to information. Drop-in sessions will also be available for

members of the Deaf community, and research will be carried out that will be used to influence the local, regional and national delivery of services ranging from local government and police to health and education. For more details, call 01392 459222 or visit www.livingoptions.org

Jackie Oldham

jackie.devonlink@btinternet.com

Checking up on the health and wellbeing of carers

Carers across Devon are benefiting from free health and wellbeing checks from participating doctor's surgeries and other local services, thanks to a new initiative...

IF YOU ARE a carer, you may be able to benefit from a free health and wellbeing check, thanks to the initiative from NHS Devon, Devon County Council, and Devon Carers Link.

Because this is a pilot scheme, checks are not available in all GP practices or all areas of Devon but 21 surgeries and six pharmacies already have appointments available. Further surgeries, pharmacies and other health teams across Devon have expressed interest in being part of the project and will be making appointments from April.

Dr Simon Kerr, a GP from the Coleridge practice in Ottery St Mary explained how his surgery got involved: "Last year, as part of the My life, My choice carer's support worker project, we experienced at first hand how mutually beneficial it can be for a practice to identify and offer help to its carers.

"So, when asked, I was very happy to join the carers health and wellbeing checks board as the GP clinical lead.

Feature

“At Coleridge we joined the project with gusto, being the very first practice to undertake a check, we have now completed 16 checks and have many more pre-booked.”

The checks will be completely free to you as a carer, you will have the opportunity to spend approximately one hour with a suitably qualified and trained person considering a broad range of health and wellbeing issues.

On making an appointment, you will be given an information booklet which guides you through all aspects of your health and wellbeing. You are encouraged to read and think about this before bringing it with you to the check. This is your personal record and is yours to keep.

If you need someone to look after the person you care for while you are out for the check we can pay for this – ask about how this works when you make your appointment.

Why would I want to have a check?

- **The check provides re-assurance for you, and the person you care for.**
- **It could be an opportunity to pick up on any early signs of ill health.**
- **It will give time for you, the carer, to think about yourself and your own health.**
- **It can offer advice, information and support (including a voucher for two hours free handyman time if you need it).**

- It may give you a chance to access any necessary treatment before a crisis develops.

Carers are already praising the scheme. As one gentleman from East Devon told us: "They have come up trumps, they found a problem with my heart that I had no idea I had. Now I am booked in for tests and have been put on tablets for high blood pressure."

Another lady who attended a check said, "it was just really great to have time for myself for a change and to talk about my problems."

Could this help someone you know?

GP practices and pharmacies are actively looking for people who may not have recognised themselves as being a 'carer' before and may therefore not have realised that information, advice and support is available to them – to enable them to care confidently and to have a life outside of caring. If you or someone you know is providing care to another person, please talk to your doctor.

A young carers health check is also being developed by the Children's Trust and will be piloted later in the year.

Other support services for carers are available through Devon Carers Link, commissioned by Devon County Council and NHS Devon. So far 5,500 carers in Devon are registered with Devon Carers Link, which is available for anyone who provides unpaid care to a family member, neighbour or friend.

Feature

Devon County Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for adult social care, Councillor Stuart Barker, said:

"Health and wellbeing checks have been identified by carers as a priority in Devon. Carers provide an essential service, and deserve support like this, which will help keep them fit and able to live their own lives while they are caring for others.

"Devon Carers Link provides support to around 5,500 carers, but that's only a fraction of the total estimated number of carers in Devon. This might be because people don't identify themselves with the term 'carer' or because they are not aware that there is support available for them.

"We would like more carers to register with Devon Carers Link, to start receiving the support that they're entitled to." For more information about Devon Carers Link, call 08456 431 341, or visit www.devoncarerslink.org

Participating surgeries

An updated list of all the surgeries and pharmacies carrying out carers health and wellbeing checks is available on the Devon County Council website at www.devon.gov.uk/carershealthandwellbeingchecks

Enjoy the great outdoors

Living Options Devon is celebrating after being awarded nearly £424,000 to help disabled people enjoy the countryside.

THE GRANT was made to the Exeter-based charity by Natural England, as part of its Access to Nature programme, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

As a result, Living Options is tasked with rolling out the 'Countryside Mobility' project across the South West, in partnership with a wide range of organisations, including the South West Coast Path Team, the Forestry Commission, Cornwall, Devon and Dorset County Councils and the South West Lakes Trust.

Forty specially designed electric all-terrain scooters, called 'Trampers', will be distributed across country parks and countryside sites spread across the region. People with disabilities will be able to book the mobility vehicles by the hour, in many cases for free.

James Maben, Countryside Mobility South West Project Manager, explained: "The basic concept of the project is to enable people with mobility problems to get out and explore the fantastic countryside we have here in the South West.

Feature

“We are working with a range of organisations at countryside sites like urban parks, country parks, woodlands and lakes, and by the end of our second year hope to have at least 30 sites within the partnership. Some examples of these sites include Haldon Hill, Grand Western Canal – Tiverton and Siblyback Reservoir – Liskeard.

“The Trampers are serious bits of kit capable of negotiating steep slopes and muddy paths. They are also very stable, easy to use and reliable and will provide people with a real outdoor experience, rather than being confined to boring flat tarmac paths.

“At other sites we will be providing accessible boats called Wheelyboats, which allow easy access and control for wheelchair users and are very stable.”

Living Options Chief Executive Diana Crump said: “We put a great deal of work into bidding for the money for this project because we so strongly believed there was a need for it.

“We’re delighted to have been selected as competition was so fierce. The Trampers should be purchased and ready to use by August 2010 and we look forward to helping wheelchair users see parts of our beautiful region which would previously have been completely inaccessible to them.”

An author interview with Sallyann Sheridan

by **Patrica Clow**

I'VE KNOWN local author and wheelchair user Sallyann for a number of years through Honiton Writers' Circle. Last year Sallyann's first novel 'If Wishes Were Horses' received great reviews and a nomination for The Guardian Literary Award. As well as novels, Sallyann writes non-fiction and teaches her literary craft to would-be writers across the UK and further afield. Anyone who meets her is struck by her cheerfulness and she has always been unstinting with her professional advice. I was delighted when she agreed to be interviewed for Devon Link...

Did you always want to write?

Not consciously. I have always been an avid reader and as I grew older I realised writing was something I was quite good at. I began to look at the craft of writing in the hope that I could become a better writer.

How old were you when you started to write?

I produced my first book around the age of eight or nine. At 17 I began to write sales letters for a company and found I had a flair for writing. Later, I became a freelance copywriter and non-fiction author before turning my skills to fiction.

____ Feature _____

Do you think you would have been a writer were you not disabled?

Yes. It's difficult to say but I am so inspired by words and books that I can't think of doing anything else.

I've always been struck by your positive outlook; to what do you attribute that?

I feel I have always been good at acknowledging what is. There is no point kicking against things you can't change. I don't see myself as having a disability. This is just the vehicle I turned up in and I make the best use of what I've been given.

When you research a book do you visit the locations?

In the main, I write about places I know, but I will still research details to ensure I get it right. Sometimes I visit the location or, if it's about a time gone by, I use old photographs and the internet to check details.

Do you use a Dictaphone to take notes?

I hold a lot of the information in my head before I write. This level of detail remains until the book is written. For *If Wishes Were Horses* I researched facts during writing. I'm a head writer – I go to sleep plotting and often wake up plotting!

You travel extensively, how helpful do you find different countries when it comes to your mobility?

Some countries are easier than others, yet I never let this influence my choice of destination. I have to trust that what I need will be available to me. Otherwise, listing

all the reasons why not to go, would stop me from doing anything. When I went to India alone for a month, I had no idea how I would wash my hair, bath my feet or who was going to help me around. But despite quite a few 'Oh my goodness what have I done?' moments, the joy of that trip will stay with me forever. Without wishing to minimise the amount of thought anyone with a physical challenge needs to consider, the more you do something, the better you become at it. I always mix a degree of organisation with a huge amount of trust. Uncertainty often fuels the joy of life.

Have you started another novel yet? If so when can we look forward to seeing it in the shops?

I've just started writing my next novel and aim to have it finished in early spring. All being well it should be in the shops by early 2011.

How long does it take to write a novel and how much time do you spend each day working on it?

The actual writing doesn't take me too long as its conception, outline and much of the plotting I do in my head beforehand. 'If Wishes Were Horses' took me a couple of years from conception to completion but I was working on other projects at the same time. When I write, I tend to become so involved that everything else takes second place. It's not the getting started that's difficult; it's the knowledge that once I start everything and everyone else falls to the wayside!

Thank you Sallyann, I for one, thoroughly enjoyed 'If Wishes Were Horses' and look forward to reading your next novel!

Are you sitting comfortably?

Philippa Greenslade from the Independent Living Centre talks through the latest developments in seating equipment...

WE ALL LIKE to flop on the armchair or sofa at the end of a hard day; and concern about our seating posture is usually the last thing on our mind.

This might be okay if you can move about anytime you feel uncomfortable, however, if you are sitting in the same position for a while because you are unable to change position easily, or can't get up from the chair independently, you should really think about the sort of chair you choose to sit in.

The wrong chair can lead to pain in your back, hips and shoulders. It can cause a build up of pressure in your back, bottom, thighs, which might make it more difficult for you to get in and out of your chair.

So how do you find the right chair for you? When people visit the Independent Living Centre (ILC) for a seating assessment we start by getting out a tape measure to determine the right size. Once measured, like goldilocks, you need to try a variety of chairs to find the one which is 'just right' for you.

When you sit in a chair that is the right size, your feet are flat on the floor with your bottom right at the back of the seat with your lower back supported by the contours of the backrest. Your ankles, knees and hips should be at a right angle, with the seat deep enough to support the length of your thigh with a space of about one or two inches behind your knees.

If your seat is the correct height your knees and hips should be level and your thighs parallel with the floor.

Seat width is important too, make sure you have space either side of your thighs for comfort and ensure armrests are within reach for forearm support and to help when standing from the chair. Your elbows or forearms should rest comfortably on the armrest without hunching your shoulders and the backrest height and angle should allow your head to rest comfortably on it.

When sitting supported in this position your weight will be evenly distributed through your bottom, back, forearms, feet and thighs. This will help prevent build up of pressure on those 'bony bits' so you shouldn't feel the need to wriggle and slide so much when sitting for long periods of time. Remember that the cover fabric and type of filling will also affect comfort and function.

If getting out of the chair is a problem, choose armrests that extend to the end of the seat cushion or beyond. Armrests with wooden hand grips at the end are easier to grip than upholstered armrests when pushing up.

Feature

If your chair is too low, check if it has a loose seat cushion. If the cushion rests on webbing or a sprung base, then a board cut to size and placed under the cushion could get rid of the sag and might give you another inch or two of height. Adding extra cushions to the seat might give you extra height but you would lose the support of the armrests when seated and trying to get up. Chair raisers that fit under the chair will give extra height without changing the seat and armrests dimensions, call us at the ILC for information about suppliers of chair raisers and also to find out which style of raisers is suitable for your chair.

If your chair is too high it might make it easier to get up but your feet will be dangling unsupported. You may end up sitting forward to get your feet on the ground and then your lower back won't reach the chair back – resulting in aches in your back, hips and thighs.

Buying a new chair can be expensive. Prices for an upright chair start at about £200, so it is worth having a look at home for a chair that you don't usually use but which might suit your dimensions better than your old chair. A simple swap might solve the problem.

If you do decide you need a new chair, here at the ILC we don't sell equipment but have a good range of chairs for you to try out. We can help you to find the right one for you, and advise you where you can buy it and how much you should pay.

If your chair is the right size for you but you still have difficulty getting out of it there are a range of gadgets that might help. As well as fixed or free standing rails to help you pull or push up, devices are available that fit under or on top of the chair, which are spring loaded or powered so that at the touch of a button you or you and the chair will gently rise into a position where you can stand independently. We can give you more information about gadgets that might be suitable for you or your chair.

If you need more support than a standard chair can give you then getting it right is vital to maintain your balance, preserve the condition of your skin and to support you in a comfortable and functional position.

You might need to be assessed by an occupational therapist to identify suitable seating. If you don't have access to an occupational therapist already then make an appointment to visit us at the ILC where our occupational therapists can assess your needs and look at the options available to improve your seating.

Dates for your diary

The Independent Living Centre (ILC) is organising a seating event at the Ivybridge Rugby Club on Thursday 13th May and another at our centre in Exeter on Thursday 25th November.

At each event companies will exhibit chairs and seating systems and staff will be on hand to discuss your needs.

Feature

The centre is also planning to launch a new 'outreach' service this year, for people who find it difficult to get to Exeter. Monthly advice and information sessions at venues around the county are planned.

Contact the ILC for further information about the open events and outreach sessions.

Independent Living Centre

Isca House

Haven Road

Exeter EX2 8DS

Tel. 01392 687276

Email: ilc-exeter@devon.gov.uk

www.devon.gov.uk/ilc

Local information services

Devon's Disability Information Service

provides information and impartial advice for people with disabilities, their carers and their families. Open from 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday, 9am - 1pm Saturdays.

Tel. 0845 1551 005. Email: disabilityinfo@devon.gov.uk

Minicom: 0845 1551 020 SMS: 07773 333231

The Torbay Disability Information Service

welcomes enquiries by telephone, fax, minicom, by post or in person. Open Monday to Thursday from 9am - 4.30pm and Fridays from 9am - 1pm. Based at The Chadwell Annexe, Torquay Road, Preston, Paignton TQ3 2DW.

Tel. 01803 546474 Textphone: 01803 546497 Fax: 01803

546498 Email: dis.torbay@nhs.net

DISCplus

provides information for the parents and carers of children with special needs.

Tel. 0800 056 3666 Email: discplus@devon.gov.uk

www.devon.gov.uk/discplus

Local groups

East Devon Special Needs Action Group

is a free information service for people with physical and sensory disabilities, carers and professionals. Information

Information

includes education, employment, support groups, charities, benefits, recreation, access, transport and mobility. Contact the group, by writing to:

**SNAG, Senphy Centre, St Michaels, Orchard Way,
Honiton EX14 8HH**

Living Options Devon

runs disability forums for people with physical or sensory disabilities, carers and Deaf people with British Sign Language. Regular meetings are held across Devon, and are a way for people to:

- Influence and comment on the services they use and become actively involved in improving those services. Representatives from the forums have access to service providers and pass on views from the forums.
- Meet with service providers who are invited to the forums on occasion to consult on services, give information, hear feedback and take questions.
- Learn about developments, initiatives and issues in the disability world and discuss them with peers.
- Meet and get to know other disabled people who live in your area.

Meetings are held across Devon in North Devon (Barnstaple), Mid Devon (Tiverton), South and West Devon (Tavistock), East Devon (Honiton), South Hams (Totnes), Teignbridge (Kingsteignton) and Exeter. Dates for future meetings can be found on the Living Options website at

www.livingoptions.org

All meetings are held in accessible venues and communication support is provided to ensure that everyone

can participate fully. Travel costs are also paid (40p per mile for car drivers).

For more information contact Living Options Devon, Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter, EX2 8DS. Tel. 01392 459222 Fax: 01392 423427 Email: info@livingoptions.org

The Deaf Equal Action Forum (DEAF)

is a group of people who have similar experiences and understand each other. It's where Deaf people can share their experiences and support each other. It looks at the barriers that Deaf people face and thinks about how Deaf people could better access services. It's also a place to meet service providers face-to-face and improve services together. How can DEAF work for you? Can you understand your Doctor? Are you unhappy in the cinema or theatre because there are no interpreters or subtitles? Have you had problems with the police, hospital, education, transport, events or anything else because of communication or other issues? If so contact **Living Options Devon, Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter EX2 8DS Fax: 01392 423427 SMS: 07958 517919 Email: info@livingoptions.org**

Tavistock Area Support Services

reaches out to older people living in rural isolation within Tavistock and the outlying area. The charity operate nine outreach centres (Lifton, Mary Tavy, Horrabridge, Bere Ferrers, Bere Alston, Yelverton, Princetown, Buckland Monachorum and Milton Abbot) each offering a variety of support as well as a lunch where local people can come together to share concerns, play games, have a laugh and a

Information

joke and support each other. The charity also has a centre in Tavistock, where a variety of in-house activities are run. To find out on how you could help or how the charity could help you, **contact Andy Lyle on 01822 616958 or visit their website www.tasstavistock.org.uk**

Devon Ileostomy Association

covers Devon and South Somerset and offers support to anyone with a stoma or about to undergo surgery for a stoma – ileostomy, colostomy or urostomy.

For more information contact Margaret Bond (Secretary) on 01392 447374 or email bomarg10@aol.com

Sound Out

– the East Devon support group for people with hearing impairment and their partners – get together on the third Wednesday of each month at Dunning Court, Dowell Street, Honiton from 10am - 12pm. Facilities include disabled access and a loop system. Tea and coffee is available. Car parking is available nearby in the municipal car park (currently 85p per hour). **PLEASE NOTE** that the group has now returned to its former home at the Methodist Church in Honiton and meetings take place on the third Tuesday of each month.

For more information contact Pat or Chris on 01404 54938 and leave a message, email cy.clow@virgin.net or text 07702 504701.

Lip-reading group

There is a lip-reading group based in Exeter for the hard of

hearing, organised by the Workers Educational Association (WEA). Being hard of hearing can be an isolating experience. The group has given members renewed confidence to take up old and new activities. Day trips and group outings are organised. The helps you to get the most from your hearing aid, as well as where to sit, lighting, positioning yourself in a crowd and teaching your family how to deal with your impairment.

For more details contact WEA at Bradninch Hall, Castle Street, Exeter. Tel. 0845 4582758.

Employment

Disability Employment Advisers

and Incapacity Benefit Specialists offer assistance for disabled people looking for, or seeking to maintain, employment. Devon's contacts are:

Exeter 01392 473929

Honiton 01404 403200

Tiverton 01884 703000

Plymouth 01752 616154

North Devon 01271 392115

South Devon: Torquay 01803 356065

Paignton 01803 354239

Newton Abbot 01626 236327

For Access to Work assistance in your employment (equipment, help with taxi fares and other support) contact Colin Reeves on 01803 356947. For Pension enquiries contact the Pensions Service for Devon on 0845 6060265.

Pluss

provides employment, training and equipment services for people with disabilities and long term health issues. They do this by offering disabled people a range of training and recruitment services, and through direct employment in our own manufacturing and mobility equipment businesses. Employment services include training, personal development, work experience, job-matching, job-search, in-work support and rehabilitation. Equipment services offer a one stop shop including assessment, purchase, hire, servicing and aftercare of disability equipment by fully trained staff, many of whom have a disability themselves. Pluss is the largest provider of disability service with 26 sites across South West England. They have been in business for over 35 years and are owned by Devon County, Plymouth City, Torbay and Somerset County Councils.

To find out more, please call 0800 91 777 92, email pluss@pluss.org.uk or visit www.pluss.org.uk

Transport

Go Cabs

taxi service, based in Torbay, offer taxis with disabled access and space for other passengers to travel at the same time. Drivers are CRB checked.

Tel. 01803 606060. Website: www.gocabs.net

Exe Access

a specialist taxi service for people with mobility issues is now operational in Exeter. Part of Exeter Community Transport Association – supporting independent mobility.

Tel. 01392 253004

Yelverton Cars

private hire taxi service. 6 and 7 seat vehicles with wheelchair access. Available for airports, stations, weddings, local and long distance.

Tel. 01822 616695 or mobile: 07970 052668.

Email: eric.pinch@btinternet.com

Tavicab XL

Tavistock and West Devon. 6 seats plus wheelchair access. Licensed driver. Competitive tariff. Pre-bookings arranged.

Tel. 07525 730003.

Other services**Haven Advocacy**

assists and empowers individuals with physical and / or sensory disabilities, or older people experiencing general frailty to express what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and to access services, in order to lead full and independent lives. The professional advocacy service provides one-to-one support to address health, social care and accommodation issues according to an individual's wishes and instructions. They can assist people with letter writing / phone calls, gathering information to enable

Information

informed choices, attending and supporting individuals at meetings and by signposting individuals to other services.

Contact Haven Advocacy via Living Options Devon at Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter EX2 8DS. Tel. 01392 459222 / 456524. Fax: 01392 423427.

Email: advocate@livingoptions.org

The Devon Sensory Bus

is a free, confidential and impartial service for people with hearing and/or visual impairment. The specially converted and equipped bus visits towns and villages in West Devon and Torridge on a regular timetable. The bus has been adapted to include special listening devices, lighting and colour contrast. Families, friends and professionals are also welcome to use the unit. Trained staff who understand the effects of hearing and sight loss provide support and advice. A comprehensive range of equipment – to help with everyday difficulties such as hearing the doorbell, telephone and TV, or with reading newspapers and books – is available for demonstration, trial and loan. Advice is offered on coping with problems associated with sensory loss.

To find out more ring 01392 383730 or email sensory@devon.gov.uk Timetables are available online from www.devon.gov.uk/sensory-bus-timetables

Pharmacy to your phone

– NHS text service. Text **64746** followed by the service you require (for example, chemist or GP) and info about the nearest will be sent to your mobile with a map and telephone number.

— *Devon Link* Spring 2010 —

Marion Slyfield

is an independent trainer who comes from a care background. Marion was a teenage carer, has worked for social services and the NHS – and this experience has led to her writing training programmes geared towards anyone who is a carer, regardless of age. Topics include Optical Care, Audiology Awareness, Care of the Feet, Oral Health and Life Skills & Activities, Within these programmes, Marion looks at reducing the risks of falls and accidents as well as decreasing malnutrition and dehydration, social withdrawal and depression, along with keeping the mind and body active. Her 'head to toe' training is provided in a fun, yet professional way, with all delegates receiving a certificate of attendance and handouts. If you are a carer or know of anyone that would gain from these sessions please contact Marion on:

07813 358530

or email mcs.training@yahoo.co.uk

Website: www.mcstraininginhealthcare.co.uk

Events

The Independent Living Centre

The Independent Living Centre (ILC) in Exeter run free open mornings, covering a variety of topics, from mobility equipment to adapted vehicles. The events are open to all and free to attend. Upcoming events include:

- **Thursday 13th May, Ivybridge Rugby Club – Seating, Household, Eating and Drinking Equipment. Workshop**

Information

9.30am-11.30am topic 'Careflex – introduction to posture and seating' followed by open event 12pm-3pm. If you wish to attend the workshop please book in advance. Buffet lunch.

- Thursday 17th June, ILC, Exeter – Bathing, Showering and Toilet Equipment, Clothing and Continence. 10.30am. Workshop to be confirmed.
- Thursday 23rd September, ILC, Exeter – Beds, Hoists and Small Handling Equipment. 10am. Workshop topic will be 'Hoists'.
- Thursday 21st October, South Moulton Hospital – Falls, Mobility and Safety in the Home, including Telecare Equipment. Workshop topic and open event time to be confirmed.

For more details about any of these events please contact the **Independent Living Centre:**

Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter EX2 8DS

Tel. 01392 687276 Fax: 01392 423427

www.devon.gov.uk/ilc

Parkinson's Disease Society

– Teignbridge Support Group. Meetings are held at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish Warren on the second Tuesday of each month at 10.30am.

For more information or if you need help with transport please contact Chairman Mike Simmons or Treasurer Sheila Simmons on 01626 888791, or Secretary Jenny Breeze on 01626 200656.

Holidays and leisure

Vitalise Holidays

offers overseas adventures in far-flung places such as the Australian Outback, South Africa and Costa Rica in its new 2009-10 Brochure. Closer to home, destinations include the Lake District, Loch Lomond, Snowdonia and County Antrim. These are just a few of the huge selection of group holidays for blind and visually impaired people, devised by national charity Vitalise. The innovative holidays are made possible by the addition of sighted guides, who accompany the groups and offer practical support. The guides help visually impaired holidaymakers to get around, describe their surroundings, assist with things like money and menus, and provide companionship. Vitalise holidays cater for all tastes and are categorised into adventure, activity, interest, sightseeing and leisure. They are also graded according to the level of fitness or expertise required of the customers.

To receive a copy of the Vitalise Holidays brochure (also available in large print, Braille and CD), call Vitalise Holidays on 0845 330 0149, email viholidays@vitalise.org.uk, or visit www.vitalise.org.uk to download a copy of the brochure or access it via screen-reader.

Classifieds

Wheelchairs and scooters

Beach wheelchair

Motorised, green and black, with charger. Ideal for the beach and independence. Excellent condition. £2000.

Tel. 01271 850285

Blue Electromotion SuperGlide mobility scooter

Pristine condition. Maximum speed 4mph. Rainproof hooded cape and instruction manual included. Garaged in Exeter.

Cost over £2500 in April 2008. Little used. Offers invited in region of £750. Tel/text: 07785 568075

Sunrise Medical Breezy 300 lightweight manual wheelchair

2008 model in red. Cost £452. Compact and robust. Weight: 13.5kg. Easy to transport and store. Excellent condition. £180.

Tel. 01626 369517

Invacare manual wheelchair

Attendant controlled. Excellent condition. £100 ONO. Buyer collects. Tel. 01647 433249

Lightweight Action Pro-T manual wheelchair

Rigid frame. Quick release wheels. Seat size 16"x16".

Turquoise. £50. Tel. 01395 223272.

Lightweight RGK wheelchair

Rigid frame. Quick release wheels. Seat size 18"x18". Dark green. £50. Tel. 01395 223272.

Aids and equipment

Mobility TRI Walker

Maroon colour including bag. Hardly used. Asking price £40 ONO. Tel. 01392 467596

Bathlift – Bathmaster Xtra (by Homecare, Rolyan)

Complete with rechargeable handset. Only two years old, very good condition. Original price £550. Asking £150 ONO. Tel. 01392 467596

Holidays

Woolacambe ramp access holiday home

Attractive site. Wheelchair-friendly bathroom with battery operated hoist. Ilfracombe and Exmoor short drive away. Sleeps 4, bedding supplied. Available Easter – November. Bookings and available dates obtainable from Mr G Nicholls. Tel. 07747 652549 or email garry.nicholls@btinternet.com

St Merryn, Padstow – 7 holiday bungalows

Sleeps 4-6, wheelchair-friendly, pets welcome. Tel. 01841 521920

Getting in touch

If you have any questions, or wish to comment on the decision to stop the production of Devon Link magazine, you can do so by writing to: Devon Link, Adult & Community Services, County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, EX2 4QR, or by emailing devonlink@devon.gov.uk

If you would like to register your interest to receive the proposed future publication from Living Options Devon (see page 5 for more information) please contact Living Options Devon using the following contact details:

Living Options Devon,
Isca House,
Haven Road,
Exeter, EX2 8DS

Email: info@livingoptions.org

Tel. 01392 459222

Fax: 01392 423427

Text message: 07958 517919

Devon *Link* – Spring 2010

Editor: Sarah Avery

**Editorial Offices: Devon County Council,
Adult & Community Services, County Hall,
Topsham Road, Exeter EX2 4QR**

Email: devonlink@devon.gov.uk

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Devon *Link* is also available in audio format.