

Summer 2009

Devon *Link*

Large Print

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

Turning back the clock

Devon *Link* turns 25

– page 32

A wake-up call

How deafness can isolate and exclude people

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Published by Devon County Council
and Torbay Council

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Happy birthday to us!

WELCOME to the 25th anniversary issue of *Devon Link*. As promised in our last issue, we're rewinding to 1984 – the year *Devon Link* began.

Turn to page 31 for a light-hearted reminder of what was going on in the world 25 years ago, with contributions from *Devon Link* readers, and a few nostalgic words from a previous editor! Over the page you will also discover some 'familiar' *Devon Link* faces (looking a little different I might add!)

Following on with the 1984 theme on page 51, Philippa Greenslade explores the development of mobility equipment over the past 25 years. It's fascinating to see how products have changed – mainly for the better. However, certain 'classics' have stood the test of time and are still popular decades on!

This issue, we feature two 'real-life' stories – both highlighting very different disabilities.

Firstly, on page 25, *Devon Link* correspondent Pat Mayston tells us what it is like to live with post polio syndrome (PPS). Pat hopes that her personal account of PPS will help to raise awareness of this little-known condition.

Then on page 42, Social Worker Steve Almy provides us with

an insight about how it feels to be Deaf. Steve's feature shows how easy it is to take hearing for granted.

Finally, as summer is now upon us and our thoughts turn to holidays, I must mention the winner of the Calvert Trust competition last issue. Congratulations go to Deborah King, from Newton Abbot, who will get to enjoy an all-inclusive activity break, at Calvert Trust Exmoor, with her family.

Whatever your plans are this summer, make sure you enjoy it!

Best wishes, Sarah

News from East Devon

Sound Out returns home

For the past year, Sound Out – a support group for people with hearing impairments and their partners – has met at Dunning Court in Honiton. From 15th September the group will return to its former home at the Methodist Church in Honiton, now that building work has finished. Meetings will also revert to the third Tuesday of each month.

Email Chris Clow at cy.clow@virgin.net or text 07702 504701.

Credit crunch hits charity

Wheelchair user Christine Morrison and her assistance dog Perry recently visited Sound Out to talk about the work of Dogs for the Disabled. Founded 21 years ago, the organisation has trained over 400 dogs. Unfortunately, the recession has meant funding for free dog food has been withdrawn. If anyone knows a likely sponsor, Dogs for the Disabled would be delighted to hear from you.

For more details ring 01295 252600 or visit www.dogsforthedisabled.org

Fun date for your diary

Craig Harper, comedy star of Britain's Got Talent, performs at Exmouth Pavilion on 12th September to raise funds for Exeter Multiple Sclerosis Society. Loop system is available. For preferred seating arrangements contact Mike on 01395 260488. To book tickets ring 01395 222477 or visit www.ledtickets.co.uk

Patricia Clow

patricia.devonlink@yahoo.com

News from Teignbridge

Piper Bill honoured by French people

In June, Dawlish war hero Bill Millin made a special trip to France for the 65th anniversary of the D-Day landings. On the 6th June 1944 Bill was the personal piper of Lord Lovat, commander of 1st Special Service Brigade. He came ashore with Lovat's Commandos on Sword Beach in Normandy, and played his bagpipes while the German troops fired at the advancing British. Bill, who can often be seen around Dawlish town in his electric wheelchair, said: "it doesn't seem like 65 years ago". Since returning home, Bill received the news that he is to be immortalised in a life-size bronze statue, near to where he played his pipes 65 years ago. The statue will be

paid for by the people of Colleville Montgomery – the French town that Bill helped to liberate in 1944, as a part of the 1st Special Service Brigade. He has also had a pipe tune written in his name and has been presented with a Citizen of Honour award by the local community. A nearby golf course has even named the 18th hole 'Piper Bill Millin' – alongside other wartime heroes such as Eisenhower.

Local coaches recognised at awards

Coaches and volunteers from South Devon were among those recognised for their efforts at the 2009 Devon Sports Awards, held at the Tiverton Hotel in May. In the 'Coach of Disabled Performers' class, Newton Abbot Soccabilty's Kevin Sharp – who runs fun football sessions for children with disabilities – was highly commended. If you want to find out more about sport groups especially run for disabled people, visit www.activedevon.org online. Disability Football Development Officer David Carpenter is also interested in developing football groups for wheelchair users and blind players. **To find out more telephone 01626 323560 or 07912 089838.**

Community transport correction!

In the last issue I mentioned Newton Abbot Community Transport association – which enables people living in isolated places to go shopping in Exeter or Newton Abbot, and hires out electric and manual wheelchairs and scooters.

The association is also appealing for volunteers. Those wishing to find out more should contact Debbie Phillips, not Karen Rose (as printed) on **01626 335775**.

Diana Frost

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Listen to DCC leaflet online

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL (DCC) Adult & Community Services (ACS) is leading the way with accessible social care information.

People with visual impairments can now download an audio version of the information leaflet 'Social Care for Adults Explained' from **www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare-audio**

The pioneering move by the Public Information & Communication Team follows the earlier development of a British Sign Language version of the leaflet, also available online.

The full range of ACS leaflets and factsheets, including large print and easy read versions, can be found at **www.devon.gov.uk/factsheets**

Campaigning for dementia awareness

DEMENTIA AFFECTS around 700,000 people in the UK and is expected to increase more than threefold in the next 50 years. Yet dementia is still regarded as one of the 'last great taboos'.

Earlier this year, the Department for Health launched the first ever National Dementia Strategy. This sets out plans to increase awareness of dementia, ensure early diagnosis and intervention, and improve the quality of care given to people with dementia. It has called for a national public information campaign to improve awareness about dementia and reduce the stigma of the disease.

In June, a two week awareness campaign was launched in Devon, with three primary aims:

- To raise public awareness about living with dementia.
- To get feedback from people about their experiences of living with dementia.
- To point people in the direction of local and national sources of advice and support for dementia.

Paul Giblin, Head of Public Information & Communication for Devon County Council Adult Community Services, said:

“There is a growing challenge for local authorities and health services posed by the explosion of numbers of people affected by this condition.

“It has traditionally been a hidden problem, but we hope that by running this campaign we will have shone a light in some dark corners.”

To find out more visit

www.devon.gov.uk/dementia-awareness

News from West Devon

Accessible transport in West Devon

Okehampton and District Community Transport Group have recently purchased a new wheelchair-accessible vehicle which will be used to transport people to medical appointments and social events. The group continues to operate the Ring & Ride Bus and a community car service and is always keen to recruit voluntary drivers. Telephone Sue Wonnacott on 01837 55000 for more information.

Meanwhile, in another part of West Devon the Tavistock Area Disabled Fellowship has a new vehicle on the road, while Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) will be running its Easy Going wheelchair accessible minibus tours of Dartmoor throughout the summer months. For details of both ring Kevin Mathison at TASS on 01822 617525.

Course for carers

St John Ambulance will be running a course for carers in Tavistock starting in September. The course has proved very worthwhile in the past; issues covered include the carers role, first aid, manual handling and continence. As an added bonus lunch is provided. For details ring Emma Healey on 01392 822646 or email emma.healey@devon.sja.org.uk

Hear Me Now in Tavistock

The hearing loss support group Hear Me Now were joined by the charity Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, the Hearing Company of Tavistock and Devon County Council's Sensory Team at an awareness raising day in Bedford Square, Tavistock. Shoppers were able to see fully qualified hearing dogs and trainee puppies and a total of £350 was raised for the charity. Hear Me Now meets in the Anchorage Centre every fourth Thursday of the month, ring **Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) on 01822 617525 to find out more.**

Windfall for guide dogs

Did you know that each month local Waitrose stores distribute £1000 to three local charities nominated by customers? The proportion given to each is then decided by customers' votes. This spring Okehampton and District branch of Guide Dogs for the Blind were one of the three beneficiaries of this scheme – they received a cheque for £484. Tesco and the Co-op also run schemes to help fund local groups; check out their websites or ask in your local store for further information.

Pat Mayston devonlink@mayston.eclipse.co.uk

News from Mid Devon

Stress control courses

With so many of us feeling stressed these days, a new course arranged by the NHS Psychological Treatment Service seems a brilliant idea. The four-week course (two hours per session) takes the form of lessons, which teach you how to tackle stress. The evening course is free and takes place in Tiverton. **For more information contact Gill Mobbs on 01884 235561.**

Getting out and about this summer

I've heard about a couple of nice walks near Tiverton, which are suitable for wheelchair users or those who prefer not to have to rock climb! The first starts at the car park in Old Road; go through the opposite end of the car park from the entrance into Old Road and join the solid path at a metal gate. When you've left the houses behind you just follow the railway track. Another lovely walk is alongside the Great Western Canal in Tiverton – to get there from the M5 motorway follow signs from junction 27. There is a short slope at the start.

Delicious sounding garden!

The National Garden Scheme include in their 'yellow book' a selection of gardens that have wheelchair access. Those with at least 50% of accessible grounds are marked in the book with a wheelchair symbol. One that caught my eye in particular has the delicious sounding name of Kia-ora Farm & Garden. Created in 1770 by John Veitch (founder of the Veitch horticulture dynasty) the Kia-ora gardens span 10 acres, incorporating lakes, a wisteria walk and even a novelty crazy golf course. You can even treat yourself to a cream tea – without which no visit to a Devon country garden would be complete! **For details of opening dates throughout the summer until September, telephone Mrs Disney on 01884 32347 or email rosie@kia-orafarm.co.uk** Visitors are welcome other times by appointment. Please note that dogs, other than assistance dogs, are not allowed.

Patricia Clow

patricia.devonlink@yahoo.com

News from Exeter

One mile swim for charity

Exeter charity Hospiscare is organising a one-mile sponsored swim across Roadford Lake, near Okehampton. The swim will take place on Saturday 26th September, and money raised will go towards the charity's 'Ease the Pain' appeal – which provides care for people with terminal cancer. There are 1,500 places, open to anyone over 18, disabled or non-disabled. Entrants must be able to swim one mile, or 64 laps of a 25 metre pool, within 50 minutes. The event is being supported by the Express & Echo newspaper and the South West Lakes Trust. **For more information telephone Vicky Lachenicht on 01392 688063 or visit www.onemileswim.co.uk**

New playpark for all

A new inclusive play park in Exeter is bringing disabled and non-disabled children together. Local parents and carers are delighted with the facilities, which, they say, enable integration between children who may not get the opportunity to play together otherwise. Miriam Guard, from Exeter and District Mencap, was behind the play park. She said: "We wanted to cater for as wide a range of disabilities as possible. We now want to put some more equipment in, so I'm looking for feedback as to what people would like to

see here.”

Anyone with any suggestions can contact Miriam on 01392 256869.

Jackie Oldham

jackie.devonlink@btinternet.com

Charity backs new policy

GUIDE DOGS for the Blind is welcoming a new move that could save the sight of thousands of people who have glaucoma, or are in danger of developing the disease.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence and the National Clinical Guideline Centre are issuing a guideline to improve the diagnosis of glaucoma.

Guide Dogs Chief Executive, Bridget Warr, says: “This is welcome news for nearly half a million people in the UK who are at risk of developing the condition, which can lead to blindness.

“Early diagnosis and appropriate, timely, management is therefore vital in preventing sight loss.”

News from South Hams

Plans to extend coastal walk

Having enjoyed the stunning coastal views on the National Trust 'Access for All' path between Bolt Head and Bolt Tail for several years now, I was pleased to hear the path is due to be extended to nearly two miles. People with limited mobility and those of us who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters, will now be able to enjoy even more of this beautiful scenery with its abundant bird and insect life. You may already be aware of the The National Trust Access Guide – which has details of all their properties and walks. But did you know that the companion of a disabled visitor has free entry to Trust properties? **For more details visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk or telephone on 01793 817400.**

Wheelchair rally

Many people in Sierra Leone in West Africa were left with mobility problems after contracting polio, or from horrific injuries inflicted during the civil war. The Rotary Africa Mobility Project (RAMP) started after Westcountry Rotary Clubs discovered that many donated wheelchairs from the UK sadly fail after a short time due to inadequate maintenance and because they are unsuitable for local conditions. RAMP has set up two workshops in the country

to build and maintain scooters and wheelchairs which are suitable for the user and the terrain. Roborough Rotary Club recently organised a wheelchair rally in aid of RAMP at Marjons College in Plymouth. **Contact George Walker on 01822 859252 to find out more about RAMP.**

Walking and riding for charity

Congratulations to four cyclists from a South Hams village who rode from Bristol to Blackawton – a total of 145 miles – to raise over £1000 towards an all-terrain wheelchair for local girl Millie Springer.

Another fundraiser going that little bit further is Steve Showler from Hope Cove, who set out on an epic journey in April to walk from Lands End to John O' Groats. Steve, accompanied by his dog Bullet, is raising money for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Steve and Bullet plan to walk the entire route via footpaths – a total of 1,200 miles – over five months. **To sponsor them ring 01548 562252 or visit www.justgiving.com/steveshowler**

Pat Mayston

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News from North Devon

Football coaching

Football coaching sessions for both adults and children with disabilities have proved a great success in Torrington. The sessions, hosted by Torrington District Council and the Devon County Football Association, are aimed at people with learning disabilities, and people with physical and sensory impairments. **For further details contact James Jarroundi, Torrington District Council's Sports Development Officer on 01237 428737 or email james.jarroundi@torrington.gov.uk**

Bus driver learns to sign

Ron Formes, a 68 year-old bus driver from Bideford, is learning sign language so he can communicate with one of his passengers. Aaron Bennett, 24, who has autistic tendencies and no speech, regularly travels on Ron's bus to get to college. Ron's efforts to learn sign language impressed Aaron's mum Diane so much that she nominated him as a superstar through First Devon and Cornwall's Superstar scheme.

Mrs Bennett commented "It was so lovely to see someone trying their hand at sign language." Ron, who has been driving buses since 1978 said, "I'm really interested in

learning to sign; it's a fascinating language, and while it takes years to become proficient, I've learned enough to be able to say hello, thank you and goodbye."

Jackie Oldham

jackie.devonlink@btinternet.com

City Sights

LAUNCHED IN May, City Sights is a new service provided by Exeter Community Transport Association (ECTA). The service enables blind and visually impaired people to fully explore Exeter, with the aid of a sighted guide.

Available to both visitors and residents of Exeter, for a small fee the service can assist with:

- **shopping**
- **accessing arts and entertainment facilities**
- **visiting attractions**
- **exploring local heritage**

For more information, or to discuss your needs, contact ECTA by telephone on 01392 494001, or email citysights@exetercta.co.uk

News from Torbay

Steam railway trip down memory lane

Residents from a Torquay care home were recently treated to a steam railway adventure. Cary Lodge staff arranged a private carriage for the 25 day trippers, who made the return journey from Paignton to Kingswear. The trip was a perfect choice due the accessibility of the steam railway. Cary Lodge manager, Julia Gow-Smith said: "It was the best day out we've had so far. The staff at the steam railway were so helpful it was fantastic." Cary Lodge are always looking for volunteers to help take their residents out. **If you are interested in helping telephone Julia on 01803 328442.**

Computer training made easy

Cathy Gillard and her team at Laptop Learning specialise in computer tuition for people of all ages who find computers challenging.

The Torbay-based company often trains people who have already attended conventional computer classes, but found it difficult to learn this way. Instead, the one-to-one tuition offered by Laptop Learning is varied and designed specifically for your needs. **For more information telephone 01803 506070 or visit www.laplearn.co.uk**

Local company aims to make life easy

WHILST GOING about your every day business you may have passed dozens of minibuses and wheelchair accessible vehicles built by GM Coachwork.

If you thought you didn't need to know about a company like this just yet – it might just be time to think again!

GM Coachwork – a local company based near Newton Abbot in the Teign Valley – offer a range of products and services to make everybody's life easier.

From adaptations and vehicle alterations which make your own car easier to use, to wheelchair-accessible car and minibus hire, for the times when your usual transportation becomes too difficult.

Our needs often change gradually, so GM Coachwork aim to provide a solution which can be tailored to your current needs, whilst giving you all the information you need to plan for the future.

As well as new and previously owned cars, GM Coachwork also build minibuses for community transport groups,

schools, sports teams and care homes; with Totnes Community Transport's new Sprinter being one of the most recent to be put into service.

This summer, it's not only Devon Link reaching a milestone anniversary – GM Coachwork are also celebrating 21 years of business in Devon, and they're extending an open invitation to anyone who wants to join in with the party!

GM Coachwork's full range of wheelchair accessible cars and minibuses are on show across the county, including The South West Disability Show at Westpoint in Exeter in July.

Access Auditors – home based

Living Options Devon is looking for self-employed Access Auditors, who have personal and first-hand experience of living with a disability, to carry out work on behalf of the Access Auditing service.

The aim of the Access Auditing service is to provide organisations with access solutions at the minimum necessary cost, so that premises and open spaces are made more accessible for people with disabilities. We are committed to the social model of disability.

Training and support will be provided as required, to ensure that you are able to deliver our Access Audits to a consistently high and corporate standard. Work will be available on a sessional basis as and when required.

Please download a job description and person specification at www.livingoptions.org or telephone 01392 459222 or email info@livingoptions.org.

For informal enquiries, please contact Yvonne Pope, who leads on the Access Auditing work by telephoning 01363 775661 or emailing yvonne.pope@livingoptions.org

Living Options Devon exists to ensure people with physical and/or sensory disabilities and Deaf people with sign language can make an active and equal contribution in society. Living Options Devon strives to be user-led in all that we do and we welcome interest from disabled and Deaf people.

Living with PPS

When Devon *Link* correspondent Pat Mayston was diagnosed with post polio syndrome (PPS), she was determined not to let it take over her life.

POLIO. IT'S no exaggeration to say, that during the middle of the twentieth century, that word used to strike terror into people's hearts.

Polio was seen as a particularly cruel and terrifying disease, known as the 'summer plague', because it seemed to hit mostly children and young people at the best time of year – during summer.

Attitudes to disability were very different back then. People affected by the disease were widely known as polio 'victims', which didn't necessarily make those of us unlucky enough to have caught polio feel very good about ourselves.

But thanks to intensive physio and other treatments many people, even with the most incapacitating form of polio, made remarkable recoveries and have been able to live full lives in spite of the minor irritations of living with a disability for many years.

Now, thanks to the 'sugar cube' Salk vaccine developed in the 1950s, polio is almost forgotten in countries such as the UK.

Polio is still present in a few countries in the developing world, but even there, the vaccine campaign coordinated by the World Health Organisation aims to eradicate the disease making it only a distant memory for future generations.

I caught polio in 1957, during the last major UK epidemic, but within a few years made a very good recovery.

Although my walking was affected I was able to lead a very full and active life.

I suppose I started to notice changes in my mobility when I was in my late thirties, but not enough to cause major concern or trips to the doctors. Gradually over the next ten years I became worried about a fairly drastic change in what I was able to do, and the onset of overwhelming tiredness if I did too much.

Eventually my GP diagnosed post polio syndrome (PPS). This was confirmed during a short stay at St Thomas' Hospital in London – one of the few centres of excellence for this condition in the UK.

The diagnosis was a shock, as at the time I thought my polio was in the past – now it had returned with a vengeance.

During the initial attack, the polio virus destroys motor neurones – which are responsible for movement of muscles, leading in severe cases to paralysis. But nerve, and therefore muscle function, can be partially restored as nerves regenerate or grow new branches. Working muscles take over from the ones that don't have fully functioning nerves.

However, with too few overworked, damaged nerves trying to compensate for muscle weakness, it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of polio survivors have problems in later life.

Luckily there is a lot of information and advice around for how to live with PPS these days. Unfortunately, living where I do – in a rural area – there are no support groups nearby.

I try to think of 'rules' that I should follow every day, but like all rules some of them are easier to keep than others.

The most important thing is to try to pace all my activities; not to try to do too much and to stop before I become really tired. How to actually achieve this is easier said than done; I try to plan my weekly calendar so that I am only doing one major activity a day, for example, I won't try to do my shopping if I am seeing friends. If I am going out in the evening I try to have a rest on my bed in the afternoon.

I have tried to maintain my quality of life as far as possible because I think the worse thing for my well-being would be to sit around and do nothing.

Strenuous exercise is not recommended for people with PPS. I have found that a special form of Tai Chi based on the Living Movement system developed by Angus Clark has been invaluable.

I also have regular acupuncture, which alleviates some of the associated symptoms of PPS, such as headaches.

I don't smoke and drink and try to have a healthy diet (I've been a vegetarian for nearly forty years) and very importantly, but sometimes with difficulty, I try not to put on too much weight!

At first it is difficult for family and friends to understand what is happening to someone with PPS, but once the condition is explained, their support and understanding can be the most important single thing that keeps you going – it has been for me.

And the piece of equipment that has truly liberated me from the constraints of PPS has to be my mobility scooter!

I hope that this personal view of PPS has shed some light on a condition which affects a lot of us, but which few people know much about.

Polio and PPS factfile

Polio, also known as poliomyelitis, is a condition caused by a highly infectious virus. For most people, polio is a mild illness

and only causes flu-like symptoms. However, for others, polio is a potentially fatal condition that can cause severe muscle paralysis (paralytic polio). This is because a severe case of polio attacks the nerve cells that help the muscles to function.

Polio is now a rare condition

In the past, polio was a very common condition. It was a frequent cause of death and paralysis all over the world, particularly in young children. However, today, as a result of widespread vaccination, the number of polio cases has been dramatically reduced.

Since 1993, there have not been any cases of polio in the UK, and there are now only four countries where the condition remains a serious problem. These are Nigeria, India, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Post polio syndrome

Post polio syndrome (PPS) is a condition that affects approximately 20-66% of people who have had polio. People may develop post polio syndrome between 10 and 40 years after the initial illness.

The syndrome can cause new muscle pain and weakness, and can also leave the person feeling fatigued and lethargic. This may make it difficult to get around, or carry out everyday tasks and activities.

It is not known exactly what causes post polio syndrome.

Some theories suggest that the polio virus can sometimes lie dormant in a person's system after the original infection, because their immune system has not completely destroyed it. This dormant virus can then become re-activated, although it is not known what triggers this re-activation.

Other theories suggest that the syndrome is the result of damaged nerve cells that gradually deteriorate over time.

In recent years, post polio syndrome has become a more common condition in the UK, largely due to the high number of polio cases during the 1940s and 1950s. However, now that polio is no longer naturally active in the UK, post polio syndrome should become much more rare in the future.

Information courtesy of www.nhs.uk

Get in touch with Pat

Pat would love to hear from other people with PPS, and can be contacted via email at

devonlink@mayston.eclipse.co.uk

Alternatively, if you don't have access to email please write to her via the Devon *Link* office at:

Devon *Link* magazine

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Turning back the clock

In honour of Devon *Link's* 25th birthday, we thought it appropriate to take a trip down memory lane to 1984...

IN 1984, we had the choice of four television channels, watched movies at home on VHS video players, and listened to the latest album cassettes on a Sony Walkman.

Somehow we survived without all the technology we now take for granted – things like email, the internet, Facebook or iPods. Mobile phones were more 'brickberry' than 'blackberry', and as a child you impressed your friends if you were one of the lucky few to actually own a computer – usually a Commodore 64 or an Atari. Today, you would be pushed to find a household that doesn't own a Nintendo or Xbox!

holidays

In 1984, the idea of holidaying abroad was becoming more popular. However, for many families, travelling overseas was still a luxury they couldn't afford. The current trend for 'staycations' – taking your annual holiday in the UK – may be a consequence of the recent credit crunch, but in 1984 a camping trip or a seaside break was as common as jetting off

to Greece or Tenerife is today!

Someone who did travel abroad was Devon *Link* reader Janet Lucas, who remembers a special trip to Spain:

“I’ve been a carer for my husband Ted since 1972; so when our youngest daughter got the opportunity to work in Alcudia, Majorca, I had an opportunity for respite.

“At that time I’d only travelled as far as Jersey, so I was really excited.

“My daughter shared a large apartment with a balcony overlooking the marina in Alcudia – it had a superb panoramic view.

“That trip left me with itchy feet, and inspired me to travel again and further afield; I’ve since visited America twice.”

in the news

In 1984, politics divided the country, and whether you loved or hated her, Margaret Thatcher was undoubtedly carving out her place in history as events such as the Falklands War and the Miner’s Strike unfolded throughout the year.

The media also focused on the famine in Ethiopia, which had killed over a million people by the end of the year. The global news coverage prompted Bob Geldof and Midge Ure to form ‘supergroup’ Band Aid, who’s single *Do they know it’s Christmas* topped the charts in December – raising millions

for the famine relief fund.

1984 was the year of the Los Angeles Olympic Games, where British hopes were pinned on decathlete Daley Thompson, who picked up his second gold Olympic medal following success in Moscow four years earlier. But the undoubted superstar of the games was American track and field athlete Carl Lewis. He made his first of four Olympic appearances and won four gold medals in LA – equalling the performance of Jesse Owens at the 1936 Olympics.

Back home, British teenagers in their last year at school were the first to take new 'GCSE' examinations – replacing O-Level and CSE exams. It was the biggest exam shake-up for the British education system in over 10 years.

music and fashion

However, for most young people at the time, school was the last thing on their mind. The early 1980s were all about music and fashion, as recalled by Devon Link reader Kate Baker:

“In 1984 I was only 13! I was really in to Madonna and used to watch her videos over and over again, dressed in a ra-ra skirt and leg warmers.

“I used to perfect the dance routine and make my long-suffering parents sit through my version. I knew all the words, and can still remember them now funnily enough!”

— Devon *Link* Summer 2009 —

Without the digital channels we have today, it could be argued that terrestrial television in 1984 focused on 'quality' not 'quantity'.

Homegrown family favourites of the time included *Only Fools and Horses*, *Spitting Image* and *The Young Ones*, alongside American imports such as *Dallas* and *The A-Team*.

television and movies

At the movies *Beverly Hills Cop* was the box-office smash of the year, closely followed by *Ghostbusters* and other big hits such as *Gremlins* and *The Karate Kid*.

Going to the cinema was a social event to look forward to, as remembered by Kate:

"We lived in a very small country town at that time, and the cinema and youth club were our only forms of nightlife.

"*Ghostbusters* was the big film of the year; I can remember buying my sister the 7" record version of Ray Parker Jr's *Ghostbusters* for her birthday.

"I also had posters of Ralph Macchio from *The Karate Kid* all over my bedroom walls!"

Since the year that *Devon Link* was first published, technology has moved on dramatically; political situations have changed; while pop music and fashion trends appear to

have gone full circle!

Devon *Link* itself may look a bit different to the first issue 25 years ago – but the magazine has maintained it's original aim to provide Devon's disabled people and carers with a mix of real-life stories, thought-provoking features and the most useful local information.

Thanks to Devon *Link* readers Janet Lucas and Kate Baker for sharing their memories of 1984 – a £25 Marks & Spencer voucher is on its way to you both!

Blast from the past!

Paul Giblin, former Devon *Link* editor

“It gives me great pleasure to be writing for the 25th anniversary issue of Devon *Link* magazine, as I was involved with the publication from what I think was the third issue, and edited my first issue way back in the summer of 1986!

“As Head of Public Information & Communication for Devon County Council’s Adult & Community Services, the magazine is still produced by the team I manage, and I’ve been able to watch the publication flourish under a series of great editors.

“Devon *Link* has always been incredibly well received by its readers and it has been a real privilege to be involved with a magazine which provides such useful information in such a friendly way. Over the years Devon *Link* has covered a huge range of issues and, I believe, it has been a great asset in the assertion of the freedom, choice and independence agenda for people with disabilities in Devon.

“The current editor, Sarah, recently unearthed some early back copies, which even included a photo of me with hair – this really brought home how long the magazine’s production has been sustained! May Devon *Link* go from strength-to-strength, unlike my last-remaining follicles!”

Do you remember?

Editors past and present...

Rae Knight 1984 – 1986

Paul Giblin 1986 – 1997

Clare Pimm 1997 – 1999

Joanne White 2000 – 2005

Sarah Avery 2006 – present

Time to dust off the photo album!

What better way to remember years gone by, than with photographic evidence. With some reluctance, the Devon *Link* team all agreed to dig out a photo of themselves from 1984...



In 1984, I had just completed my first year as a lollipop lady. I loved the job – my own two children attended the school where I was on patrol. I was out in all weathers, and remember thinking it would never stop raining!
Diana Frost, correspondent

This photo was taken at our home in North Tamerton. The year before – 1983 – we had spent in France, as my husband was working there.

Jackie Oldham, correspondent



I had a very special Christmas present in 1984 – my son Ben was born on the 21st December!
Helen Smith, correspondent team co-ordinator

Feature

I know that this is from 1984, because we got our kitten, Pippin, that year.

Pat Mayston, correspondent



I turned five in 1984, so I can't remember very much! I started school in September that year and according to my mum I didn't want to come home on my first day.

Sarah Avery, editor

This photo was taken at Christmas 1984. I bought the dress to wear and found an old lace collar to finish it off. I was selling Avon at the the time, and had matched my lipstick and nail varnish to my dress! We had a busy time with most of my family either staying or visiting, and neighbours popping in. This was also the year that I passed my driving test.

Patricia Clow, correspondent



Artists make their mark

Devon-based disabled artist Sue Austin is part of a collaborative trio of artists called Freewheeling, who have brought their unique exhibition to Plymouth this summer.

FOLLOWING a successful exhibition of their work at Holton Lee (home to the National Disability Arts Archive) in Dorset earlier this year, Freewheeling brought their site-specific installation pieces to Plymouth this month July, as part of the Fine Art Degree Show.

The installation involved the three artists all temporarily leaving their traces on the pavements of Plymouth – in an attempt to explore the ways in which we all interact with public space.

Through the use of white pitch-marking paint, Sue created a looping, meandering set of wheelchair tracks on her journey through the city to make visible the freedom and expansion she experiences when in her ‘power’ chair.

Fellow ‘Freewheeler’ Jack Morris created an installation through walking which encircles the city, outlining a face which is found in the coast line, and Shirley Phillips invited people to walk along a plaited grass spiral that she created on the grid pavement in Frankfort Gate – bringing the

countryside into the city.

Sue explains: "In the media, wheelchairs are often used to signify limitation, pity and restriction – whereas for many people, a power wheelchair or scooter enables them to regain some of the freedom and independence that was lost when walking became a problem.

"By using looping, sweeping, frivolous lines I hope to express some of the joy I experience when travelling through the city in this way.

"Many people report the feeling that they have become 'invisible' when they start to use a wheelchair.

"This intervention in the cityscape hopes to 'reclaim the street' by making our presence visible to all who pass by.

"The lines created tend to be seen as a maze, which makes both children and adults divert and play, by retracing the route marked out by the wheelchair.

"Our social 'absence' becomes a playful 'presence'; a way to value our unique place within the world."

Video work relating to the Fine Art Degree Show and to the Freewheeling exhibition will be played on the Big Screen in Plymouth at regular intervals during the show and for about a month afterwards.

For more information contact:

Sue Austin

artglass1894@btinternet.com

Freewheeling

freewheeling@hotmail.com

<http://freewheeling.carbonmade.com>

A wake-up call

Two houses, two alarm clocks, two people getting up to face the day, but one can hear and one is deaf. Steve Almy shows just how much the hearing world takes for granted and how deafness can isolate and exclude people.

7AM. I STIR from sleep to hear the sound of the rain on the window. Oh dear, that means sorting out a raincoat and an umbrella. I hear the unmistakable rattle of the milk float coming down my road, prompting me to panic as I remember I need an extra pint of milk. I shoot out of bed and from the bedroom window I shout down to the milkman, who is walking back from my front door. Phew, just in time. Gratefully I jump back into bed to doze for a few minutes more until I am awakened by the radio, followed by the

piercing, relentless prodding sound of the pips (as stark order that I must soon get up). The newsreader's voice wafts over me and, only half listening as one ear is firmly embedded in the pillow, I pick up snippets of what is happening in the world.

A familiar sound breaks my concentration – the clanking of the letter box as letters whoosh through, sweeping and brushing against each other as they land on the floor. With my mind racing about what the contents may be and whether or not I can face opening them this morning, a different sound breaks my mood as I hear something larger, and obviously not a bill, squeezing and pushing its way through, and then there's a thump as it lands on the floor. It's a parcel, the book I ordered and which I can't wait to read. My spirits soar, as I look forward to an evening lazing by a crackling fire.

Seagulls squawk above in disapproval of the wet weather and next door the couple chatter and jangle their keys as they let themselves in through their front door, to be greeted by the delighted yapping of their border collie. Life's preparations are beginning for the day, with people going about their daily routines in a cacophony of sounds.

In the attic bedroom above me, my 18-year-old son Ben is pottering about. The postman outside across the road is talking to a neighbour.

"How is your husband today?" he asks with genuine concern in his voice. "Oh," she replies, her voice rising with delight at

having been asked, “out of hospital and back to his normal self, ording me about!” They both cackle with laughter and I hear a clank and a tic-tac of the chain going round as the postman cycles off, whistling.

The news on the radio finishes with a traffic update. I’m going to have to set of early to allow for roadworks on the A397 – just my luck on a filthy morning. If I went an alternative route it would probably be longer and I must allow extra time for delays today as I have a meeting with my boss.

I hurriedly jump out of bed as I hear heavy footsteps coming down the attic stairs, which creak incessantly and remind me I need to contact a carpenter before they get any worse. Then my heart drops as I hear the unmistakable sound of the toilet being flushed, the flick of a switch, the boiler bursting into life and the rush of water coming from the shower. No time for me to shower this morning.

Terry Wogan’s dulcet tones are now filtering from the radio, and then I hear a song, inherent in my past, a reminder of romantic meals with my ex-wife... Van Morrison’s Have I told you lately that I love you? Every time I hear it, it evokes special memories, and I wonder if she is listening now.

Then, another tune interferes with my reminiscences as I hum in harmony – a whistling impatient tune from the kettle down below in the kitchen. Having cursed my son for being

in the bathroom, I am now praising him for his consideration, pleased that I'll have enough time for a cup of tea. Bless him!

As I am dressing, I hear the whirring, whining and squeaking of the refuse collection, bins wheeling around and I feel a sense of relief that my son put the bin out last night. At least he is earning his keep!

Suddenly, the smoke alarm goes off as I smell the toast burning. I rush down the hallway and press the switch to isolate it. I'm reminded that I must switch down the toaster before I leave home. "Will you be out soon?" I shout through the bathroom door.

"Two minutes, Dad. I'm just splashing myself with the last of your expensive after-shave."

"You devil! Well, I must be off." I head downstairs, grab a piece of toast, a quick cup of tea, dash out of the house and into the hustle and bustle of another day, in a world where sound maps out how we cope with the environment, even down to the trickle of water in a stream. Oh, how I would miss it.

Linda's house, a few doors away

7 am. Silence. Only the sensation of vibration from the shake-awake alarm clock through the pillow, annoyingly making her feel that the side of head is being prodded incessantly.

Her tinnitus has started as well. Thump, thump in her head. She leans across to the alarm clock and switches it off.

Her head is released from the grip of the vibration of the pad on the side of her head. She lies back staring at the ceiling, watching the light flickering as the bedroom curtains flutter in the breeze. She feels the soft texture of the duvet wrapped over her, the coolness of the sheeting on the sides of her bed and she musters up the courage to slide out of bed, to face another day.

Smelling the burning of toast, she lets herself out of the bedroom and makes her way down the landing, enjoying the sensation of the softness of the deep pile carpet she recently had fitted. What a shame it cost so much to replace some of the floorboards. The carpenter told her it could have been caught in time. She had queried the bill at the time, but felt intimidated and gave up asking as he went into a lengthy explanation.

Communication was always frightening and people's faces looked as if they were being played fast-forward on a video player. As always she had felt powerless, alone without a voice, useless, so she had just written out the cheque. Next time she would find another carpenter. But how? She couldn't just go to the yellow book with telephone numbers and didn't want to burden Rachel all the time to make phone calls.

It always left her feeling guilty. It wasn't fair to put so much

responsibility on the child, and make her take very adult decisions which belonged to the parent. Linda's reliance on Rachel – to be her ears and voice – made her feel that she was the child being looked after.

Oh, but the carpet feels lovely. Making her way along the landing she arrives at the bathroom only to find it locked which can mean only one thing. Her daughter Rachel is in there and will be there for at least another half-an-hour. No chance of a shower today then.

Suddenly the bathroom door bursts open and Rachel rushes past down the stairs, leaving her mother confused and perplexed. Linda watches as Rachel jumps up to the smoke alarm and then she walks downstairs to join her. Both Linda and Rachel communicate through sign language – Linda has always signed to her daughter ever since she was born.

It had been hard to sleep when Rachel was a baby and toddler. She would constantly go in to check she was alright, even though she had a special vibrating pillow which went off when the baby cried. She didn't trust it – what if the electricity went off? What if the equipment was faulty? Linda's whole life was dependent on something or someone else. Like a child.

“What's the problem?” Linda asks. Her daughter sighs and looks at her mum impatiently. “The smoke alarm went off and now I'm going to be late for the bus.”

“I’ll drop you off,” Linda says as she makes her way to the front door, opens it and her heart sinks. No milk – she’d forgotten to put a note out. Just the fruit juice.

She picks up the post lying on the floor and opens a letter from the school. She can’t understand some of the English words such as ‘truancy’. A meeting has been set for next week, at 1pm on Thursday, with the Head of Year. She closes the door, frustrated at not understanding. She must ask her daughter what ‘truancy’ means. Is she in trouble or is it something she’s done well?

Suddenly Linda looks up at the ceiling light which is flashing, indicating that someone is at the door. Maybe it’s the postman with a parcel from Argos that she’s been expecting. It has been weeks now. She opens the door, looks to left and right, there’s no one, but across the road a group of children are laughing and pulling faces at her. Once again, she feels humiliated. They’re always doing this for a laugh. Linda goes back to distant memories, that she usually tries to shut out, of when she was a child and a group of hearing children at school would always laugh at her, make faces and gesticulate cruelly, making out she was stupid and different.

Linda has been divorced for six years, and is reliant on her daughter as she had been her hearing husband. Now her daughter is out most evenings, but she never really knows where or with whom. Maybe she should get in touch with Hearing Dogs for the Deaf, get a companion and feel a little safer.

A quick change and a quick cup of black tea, yuk! She rushes out of the door, passing her next door neighbour who says 'good morning' but she can't catch the rest of the words after that. She doesn't look cross, so it is obviously not about the music, which she says Rachel is always playing too loud. Her daughter still plays the saxophone and Linda remembers sobbing her heart out after seeing Rachel play at a school concert. What was her music like?

Dropping Rachel off at the bus station Linda meets a solid traffic jam on the A397, wonders what the hold-up is about, and knows she will be late for work for the second time this week. She will have to face her boss, who will not be sympathetic, will dock her pay and insist she gets someone to phone-in on her behalf. How?

Linda is marginalised within everything that is happening around her, not having access to everything that we take for granted. She is lonely, isolated, deflated and often ridiculed or ignored by people who don't know any better and who don't make the effort.

All she wishes for is that people take a little bit of time and effort to make her feel part of the world, valued, welcome and gifted. If we live with fairness we learn justice, and if we live with security we learn to have faith. Her ears are broken. That is all.

Steve Almy, Social Worker with Devon County Council's Sensory Team, has worked with pre-lingually profoundly Deaf and hearing impaired people in statutory, voluntary and independent agencies for almost 30 years.

What's changed?

Philippa Greenslade takes a closer look at how new technology has helped to improve mobility aids and equipment over the years.

IN 1984, the idea of 'big brother watching you' was still just a scary fantasy, but 25 years on, love it or hate it, surveillance has become a reality. But far from restricting our life choices, monitoring systems can offer vulnerable adults the freedom to continue living in their own home, when in the past this might have been considered unsafe.

Bed and chair sensors can alert carers or a call centre in the event of a seizure, or if the person hasn't got out of bed that morning. If a person forgets to switch off the gas or leaves the bath running, sensors can detect this and automatically switch off the gas or water, or open a window and alert help.

Over the years the price of some equipment has been brought down due to market forces or advances in

technology, making parts and batteries cheaper to produce. As little as three years ago, a bath lift could cost at least £500, but now heavy models have been superseded by lighter, cheaper and more user-friendly lifts costing around £300.

Equipment is getting smaller as well. If you were an avid reader back in 1984, but had difficulty turning pages, you would need to purchase a cumbersome page turner. These days, the **Flip Automatic Page Turner** is a lightweight table top design, while the **Sony E Reader** can store 160 electronic books and is smaller than a paperback.

Down to more basic requirements – 20 years ago the range of underwear was very unsatisfactory for anyone with special requirements for independence, continence or size. Designs from **Discretely Different** and the **Big Bloomer Company** have addressed these issues, and the underwear and swimwear from **Hilary Underwear** and **Ostomart** have opened up new leisure and social life opportunities for those with continence needs.

On the subject of socialising, getting out for a drink has been made easier with height adjustable and stand-up wheelchairs from **Invacare** and **Gerald Simonds**.

The Really Useful Things company offers **Flexi Straws** that can be held in place in the glass with a **Strawberi Clip**. To avoid spills the glass can be fixed securely to the table with the **L'il Sucker drinks mat**.

It's good to see that some gadgets have been around for 25 years or more, and have truly stood the test of time! Such a classic is the **Pat Saunders Straw** – which enables the user to take small mouthfuls, without liquid falling back down the straw between sips. The **Neater Eater** helps people with a tremor or upper limb weakness to feed themselves. This gadget may have been tweaked over the years, but the original design remains and has been unrivalled for decades.

Who knows what the next 25 years of technology will bring? The Independent Living Centre will continue to keep up with developments, while offering advice and information about a wide range of equipment that can help to improve independence and choice.

For information about any of the products mentioned in this article, please contact the Independent Living Centre – the free, impartial assessment and information centre for Devon.

Isca House

Haven Road

Exeter

EX2 8DS

Tel. 01392 687276

Fax: 01392 423427

www.devon.gov.uk/ilc

***Link* Letters**

Praise for Devon *Link* audio

Dear Devon Link,

I've just listened to my first Devon *Link* on CD. It's very convenient being able to jump between sections and the sound is clearer than with the tape. I just wanted to ask if there's anywhere to recycle the discs after I've listened to them? I can't re-use them like tapes and it seems a shame to put them in landfill. The RNIB (who send me Talking Books on CD) apparently have a method of recycling CDs when I return them, but I've not heard of anything similar from the council. Any ideas?

Martin Wykes, by email

Thanks Mr Wykes for your compliment about the audio version of Devon *Link*! Your query about recycling CDs has had us all scratching our heads in the Devon *Link* office. Unfortunately, due to the small number of Devon *Link* CDs we send out, we don't have a specific system in place for recycling. However, we encourage audio subscribers to pass on 'previously listened-to' Devon *Link* CDs to friends, family or local groups, who may also enjoy the magazine. Another tip – for the green-fingered among us – is to use old CDs as a deterrent against greedy birds in the garden. Apparently our feathered friends (as well as cats!) don't like the shiny discs when they are hung above precious crops.

If you are determined to recycle your CDs, a company based in Wirral – Polymer Reprocessors Ltd – have developed a unique 100% recycling process. Simply send old CDs (and DVDs) to: Polymer Reprocessors Ltd, Peninsula Business Park, Reeds Lane, Moreton, Wirral CH46 1DW. You have to pay for postage, but they will take care of the rest. **For more information telephone 0151 707 3684 or email info@polymerrecycling.co.uk**

Get in touch with Devon *Link*!

Remember this page isn't just for letters. We welcome funny stories, poems, recipe ideas, handy hints and tips... and letters too of course! You could even win a £25 Marks & Spencer gift card – so get writing!

Information

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 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 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 from 15th September 2009 the group will return to its former home at the Methodist Church in Honiton and meetings will also revert to 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.

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**

Taxi services

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. Six and seven seater vehicles with wheelchair access. Available for airports, stations, weddings, local and long distance.

Tel. 01822 616695 or mobile: 07970 052668.

33 Oak Road, Bishopsmead, Tavistock.

Email: eric.pinch@btinternet.com

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 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.

Events

Exeter-based charity **St Loyal's Foundation** is organising a sponsored 140ft abseil at the former Debenhams building, Sidwell Street in Exeter on Saturday 15th August, between 9am - 4pm.

Entry is £20 with a minimum sponsorship of £50.

There are prizes to be won for the highest fundraisers and fancy dress, including a day's rock climbing for two on Dartmoor with the AdventureFitness Company, and a trophy for the highest fundraising team.

The abseil also marks the charity's relocation from its old site at Topsham Road to new city centre headquarters opposite the former Debenhams. The abseil which will be professionally managed by qualified instructors from the AdventureFitness Company. Participants have a rare opportunity to enjoy panoramic views from the roof, before descending the front of the building. There will also be a photographer on the roof capturing every descent!

Money raised will help fund welfare projects to enable people with disabilities, learning difficulties and ill-health

achieve their work ambitions and build a better life for themselves and their families.

For further information and an entry form call 01392 286205 or email helen.trebble@stloyes.ac.uk

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

- **Thursday 17th September – seating for children and adults**
- **Thursday 22nd October (North Devon, venue to be confirmed) – bathing, showering and toilet equipment**
- **Thursday 26th November 2009 – beds hoists and small handling equipment for children and adults.**

All the above open events are open to all, free to attend and run from 10am - 1pm. There is level access parking and free tea, coffee and biscuits are provided! For more information about upcoming events contact

The Independent Living Centre: Isca House, Haven Road, Exeter EX2 8DS www.devon.gov.uk/ilc

Tel. 01392 687276 Fax: 01392 423427

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.**

Leisure and relaxation

Pamper weekends are now available at Calvert Trust Exmoor. How would you like a weekend of rest and relaxation with the only hard bit being the decision between a swim and a massage? That's exactly what Calvert Trust Exmoor is offering guests in their pampering weekends. Ordinarily pushing our visitors through their paces on the climbing wall and reservoir, we've decided to add breaks of therapeutic relaxation. During the day guests can enjoy massage, reiki, aromatherapy, hairdressing, manicures and reflexology. Alternatively they can relax in the pool, unwind in the jacuzzi or deep cleanse in the steam room. Both the pool and jacuzzi have hoists and the steam room has an accessible doorway. On the Saturday evening, a 'Body Shop' party allows guests to try out new potions and lotions. The weekend is topped off with a celebratory party on the Sunday night to show off new hair, nails or make-up! Calvert accommodation is totally accessible and equipment such as electric beds and hoists is also available. Set on the stunning Wistlandpound Reservoir – the perfect setting for a relaxing break. For details ring 01598 763221 or visit www.calvert-trust.org.uk

Affordable Complementary Therapies for carers registered with Teignbridge Carers Link. The Teignbridge Therapist Link for Carers (TLC) which puts you in contact with therapists offering carers reduced rates for therapies such as: osteopathy, acupuncture, massage, reflexology and

homeopathy. Look online at teignbridgetlc.org
or email teignbridgetlc@googlemail.com

Classifieds

Holidays

St Merryn, Padstow 7 holiday bungalows, sleep 4-6,
wheelchair friendly, pets welcome. Tel. **01841 521920**.

Vehicles

Ford Tourneo Connect 2004. 10,000 miles only. Four seats,
also accommodates wheelchair with ramp at rear. Genuine
reason for sale. For full details telephone **01363 866342**.

Aids and equipment

WANTED Portable hoist suitable for bathroom and
bedroom use with safety certificate. Required by Ilfracombe
& District Lions Club. Will collect.
Tel. **01271 883677**.

Willowbrook electric riser / recliner Chair in light coffee
Dralon. Still under guarantee (until April 2010). Little used,
in excellent condition. Cost £1200, offers in region of £800.
Ottery St Mary area. Tel. **01404 811007**.

Dreamworks 90cm Annabelle adjustable bed With two-drawer base. Purchased July 2008. Hardly used. Cost £988. Will accept £400. Buyer to collect.
Tel. 01884 840414.

Aquatec powered bath seat Rechargeable batteries avoids wiring. Perfect condition. Cost £545. Offers around £200.
Tel. 01237 422608.

Bathmaster chairlift Free-standing, rechargeable batteries. £375 ono. **Tel. 01392 832629** before 7pm.

Profilo shower seat Fold up and wall-mounted. In white. New and unused. Cost £79, bargain at £40.
Tel. 01237 422608.

Acorn Superglide 120 stairlift Full working order. Manufactured 2004, installed 2005. £850 ono.
Tel. 01884 821104.

Dolphin stairlift Available end of October. Only 6 years old. 13' rail. Excellent working order (cost £2,300). Owners emigrating. £950 ono. Buyer to be responsible for collection and refitting, which can be arranged through Dolphin Stairlifts. **Tel. 01271 862368.**

Visual Aid – Prisma colour video magnifier Enlarges print and images on to your television screen. Excellent order. £300 ono. Ring for more information.

Tel. 01803 863947.

Wheelchairs and scooters

Shoprider Napoli S787L three-wheel scooter. Two years old in excellent condition. Low mileage. Adjustable seat and controls. Folds for car. Variable speed. £650.

Tel. 01837 52397.

To put a classified advert in Devon *Link*, send your advert of no more than 40 words to the Devon *Link* address on page one (NOT Zara Media), with a cheque for £5.88, payable to Devon County Council. Please note that the cut-off date for the next issue is 16 October 2009 and the magazine will be published late November 2009.

Contact Us

Living Options Devon exists to ensure people with physical and / or sensory disabilities, and Deaf people with sign language can make an active and equal contribution in society.

Living Options Devon

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Our correspondents are waiting to hear from you...

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Contact Us

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Devon *Link* – Summer 2009

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Devon *Link* is also available in audio format. Contact us for your regular free copy.

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