

Below is the London NFB UK logo -it is a line drawing of the London eye with the NFB UK name as part of its spokes to support the wheel of capsules.



Dear London members,

Welcome to London Life.65. This edition includes personal experiences from Blackpool and other activities. Please note the change of content for our July branch meeting. If you have any articles or would like to submit a personal story please email: london@nfbuk.org
Please use this email, if you would like to unsubscribe from this circulation.

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Next Branch meeting - Monday 3rd July, 7pm on Zoom.

The next branch meeting takes place on Monday 3rd July at 7pm on Zoom. This month we will be discussing the upcoming elections as set out in the most recent circulars, Eastbourne, the AGM, usual branch matters and much more.

We hope to conclude the meeting with Reflections from Blackpool . Tell us about your experiences on this seaside town.

London Branch is looking for a new Treasurer

This role involves keeping our financial records up to date and reporting to members, Officers and the Executive Committee when required.

David intends to step down towards the end of this year, to allow time for a smooth transition. If you would like to receive a copy of this role please email:
london@nfbuk.org

No experience is necessary but, you will have to demonstrate some knowledge of accounts management. Training will be provided.

Last chance to book your Eastbourne weekendFor over 45 years the London Branch has organised weekends for its members in Eastbourne. This year, we have secured 30 rooms for London members at the Cumberland Hotel for the weekend of 6th-9th October 2023. Bookings are to be done direct with the hotel.

There will be evening entertainment at the hotel where the bar remains open all night for residents.

There are two options available: A dinner bed and breakfast rate of £65 per person per night or Bed and breakfast rate of £55 per person per night in their standard rooms.

The sea view supplement will be £10.00 per person per night and the balcony supplement £25.00 per person per night. Anyone wishing to have a twin/double room for single occupancy there will be a supplement of £25.00 per night.

This offer is only up to July 31st 2023.

Booking information

Hotel telephone number is: 01323 730342 Please book your room type and number of nights under the name NFB for the weekend beginning 6th October 2023.

We would appreciate you dropping us a short confirmation of your booking :
londoneastbourne@nfbuk.org

Greetings from Blackpool

Here are a few articles and photos received from members and guests attending the Blackpool Break last week. For a more comprehensive read please see July's Fed News.

A Short Break in Blackpool.

By Arthur Payne.

On Monday 19 June my friend Jimmy Jones and myself went on a short break to Blackpool. The event had been organised by Pardy and we joined a large group of about 80 plus people.

The entertainment was very good. We had singers on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings. On the Wednesday evening there was a karaoke from 9.30 where both Jim and myself sang several songs. Also because it was mid summer's day a Summer Solstice event where people dressed up as druids. The summer solstice took place on the beach opposite the hotel.

Blackpool has an excellent tram system. There was a tram stop just outside the hotel. The trams went from Stargate which was simply a terminus to Fleetwood Ferry. We visited that place on the Tuesday and had some fish and chips. On the Wednesday we went to an excellent Indian restaurant called Twisted which had won top awards for Blackpool. I enjoyed the food there.

A raffle took place during the break with all kinds of corporate prizes including two first-class returns on East Midlands Railway to a station of their choice and gifts from RNIB and a number of other prizes but at £5 a strip was quite expensive but this was because of the corporate nature of the prizes.

I would like to thank Pardy for organising this excellent break and would certainly do it again if it happens next year. The weather for the break was excellent and we did not get caught in any rain.

Read Arthur's full account in July's Fed News.

From: Aqua & Tahira

To Pardy and the team working along side him Thank you so much for organising this Blackpool trip. we enjoyed ourselves and met and made so many new friends and acquaintances. Not to mention becoming reacquainted with old friends.

We would also like to say a” Big Thank You “ to Connie and the other Volunteers . who’s presence Also made this trip a possible reality for many of us. They spent a lot of time helping , supporting, assisting, watching over and looking after all of us. Even when we didn’t know / realise we needed it. Thank you And thank you to those individuals , partners, Wives and husbands who not only looked after “ their own “ partners but stepped in to assist other VI’s without being asked when we needed it. We too were recipients of such help and support. Thank You.

And finally , yesterday when leaving the Carousel hotel there was the usual confusion with cabs at the reception area. During all this confusion we forgot to do something. Had it not been for Tahira we would have returned to London with our room keys .

But thankfully she remembered . So, As our cab was about to pull away They were handed to Stu (the VI with glasses , a vibrant yellow shirt and shorts). Thanks Stu for handing them in . back to reception on our behalf.

We Hope that everyone returned home safely. If the opportunity arises in the future? We are looking forward to seeing you all again. Take Good care of Yourselves.

Blackpool.

By Darren Vickers.

Last week a large number of us went to Blackpool for 4 nights. We traveled from Euston to Blackpool North with Avanti west coast. Their Staff were very good and helpful.

We stayed in a very nice hotel called the Carousel. It has over 100 bedrooms. We booked half board. The Staff were fantastic and went out of their way to help us.

Most of us did our own thing in the day and in the evening we all met up in the bar. On Wednesday about 38 of us went for a curry.

On the Thursday Noel and I went to the Sandcastle Water Park. The staff went out of their way to give us as much help as they could, including looking after my guide dog Milo. One of the members of staff stayed with us the whole three hours we were there. We would definitely go there again.

The 4 night break was fantastic.

From Alison:

Dear all, I had a much needed fab few days away with y'all. I'm missing the sun shimmering horizon!

Stephanie and Edwina, it was a pleasure to have your company, sorry I was unable to say goodbye in person . Take care everyone, until next time, Alison X

Sandcastle Waterpark.

By Noel Farry .

Anyone who knows me well will know I'm a bit of a water baby, If the opportunity arises, I'm off swimming whether it's the pool, river, lake or sea. I was looking forward to going in the sea whilst in Blackpool, but unfortunately, a major sewage leak put a stop to that. Luckily, Blackpool is home to the UK's largest indoor waterpark, so I knew this was somewhere I had to visit.

Sandcastle Waterpark is just opposite the Pleasure Beach and features a wide range of rides and attractions for everyone, including a wave pool, lazy river and water slides such as Master Blaster, Sidewinder and Montazooma.

As a VI person, I find places like this can be very difficult to navigate as there are so many stairs, ramps and other obstacles to negotiate. This wasn't a problem here as we had our own personal guide who stayed with us throughout our three hour session.

From the moment we arrived, the staff couldn't do enough for us, they were so positive and seemed to have had excellent disability awareness training. I can thoroughly recommend this venue to anyone, it's great fun, and you will be very well looked after.

“I’m Todd Cartie!”

By Fiona Musgrove

Below is a photo taken of the bemused Todd Cartie and Fiona Musgrove smiling outside the stage door of the Grand Theatre .



Like many of you I can't identify faces and this was another such incident when I asked a, slightly stocky, man, outside the back stage door, at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool “Is Todd Cartie here?”

Thirty of our Blackpool revellers attended the 70th anniversary of Mousetrap. The irony of the tune "Three Blind Mice" was not missed either by us, as it played a part in the show.

Todd Cartie, who plays the Major in the Mousetrap, has had a career from appearing as Tucker in Grange Hill, Mark Fowler in Eastenders and more recently Gabriel in The Bill. He was charming and found the question "where is Todd Cartie?" Rather amusing as he responded "thats me".

We explained how useful having audio description is for us to fully appreciate the set and actors appearances. He said he had delivered a few shows where AD had been provided. He asked how we had found the Mousetrap and was pleased the dialogue provided us with clear directions.

Thanks to Pardy for arranging this for us - it was a great evening. Click here for more information: <https://www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk/>

News from our members

Great welcome at Beyond Sight Loss.

By Fiona Musgrove.

The below photo shows Ash, Fiona, Paula and Tom all linked together and smiling.



I received a warm welcome, to Beyond Sight Loss, on Thursday 8th June. This group, based only a short walk from Bethnal Green Underground Station, was attended by around 30 blind and partially sighted people, alongside a team of volunteers. Ash introduced herself and went through future activities including driving high performance cars, a cookery class and a trip to Margate.

Members initially, sat together in small groups to enjoy the provided light lunch, before the room was rearranged to accommodate the guest speakers. Tom and Paula, from Extant, provided a lively interactive session with everyone participating and there was a lot of laughter.

Beyond Sight Loss meets every month in Bethnal Green, regularly on Zoom and through a number of activities. For more information please contact: info@beyondsightloss.org.uk

Mother Art Collection.

By Richard Simpson.

I've often wondered what my liposucked belly fat would look like. Now I know thanks to the Mother Art Prize at the Zabłudowicz Collection.

This is a marvellous assembly of prize winning female artists from all over the world who also happen to be mothers bringing up children, whilst creating fabulous pieces. So, apart from the aforementioned belly-fat with designer labels, there was painting with one's hair as a brush, spooky randomly moving chairs and seemingly bland tables that suddenly spoke to you. Not just a visual feast available only to the sighted but also both aural and oral facilitated by wonderful Royal Academy curator, Harry Baxter, who just happens to look like a young Johnny Depp.

The photo below shows a group of VIPs listening intently to Harry's description of Xie Rong's painting and video work, *Painting until it becomes marble – Love never dies* (2019). The large-scale painting, made from Chinese ink and Ultramarine Blue powder pigment, is the result of a performance by the artist, which is documented in the video.



The below photo shows the group listening to Harry's description in the converted Methodist Church where it now houses the Mother Art Prize at the Zabłudowicz Collection.



These audio-described tours are created so us VIPs may engage with the artistic world but often undersubscribed. Use them or lose them, so, get in there and book forthcoming events. As we are VIPs, we generally get refreshments and quality cake, as an added bonus. Treat yourself and your friends; you know you are worth it.

Careen Bradbury - Obituary.

By Valerie Clarke.

Careen Bradbury – 30 September 1936 to 20 June 2023. It is with sadness that I let you know of the death of Careen Bradbury. Careen was very involved with so many blindness related charities.

She was initially educated at Haberdashers Girls before moving to the National Institute for the Blind's (now RNIB) Chorleywood College for girls with little or no sight. The school was located in the Cedars, a large Renaissance-style mansion in Hertfordshire which is now the site of the Cedars Retirement Village. Careen was educated there from the age of 13.

Prior to marrying in 1963 Careen worked as a telephonist for Barclays Bank which was in those days a reserved occupation for blind and partially sighted people, when she started a family Careen worked for a decade as a specialist teacher at RNIB Sunshine House, Northwood, West London which is an education setting for blind and partially sighted children aged 3-14 and continues to operate.

When Careen's own children grew up she returned to working as a Barclays Bank telephonist at Pinner Branch close to her home, working there until her retirement.

Careen was a very active National Federation of the Blind (NFB), London Branch member and assisted as Editor of Viewpoint the NFB magazine for several years. She enjoyed working as a team with Fundraising for various blind charities, raising much needed money.

Careen was passionate about the education of blind children, and was a school governor for specialist schools including RNIB New College Worcester and RNIB Rushton Hall School in Northampton.

A few years after the death of her husband Guy, Careen moved from Pinner to Chorleywood to be near her daughter Catherine and youngest grandson William, purchasing a lovely retirement apartment. Careen spent eight happy years in Chorleywood before her health began to deteriorate and spent the final six months of her life in Chorleywood Beaumont, a lovely caring nursing home where she enjoyed the beautiful grounds.

Careen died peacefully in Watford General Hospital after a short illness, with Catherine and William by her side.

Rest in Peace lovely Careen, so many of us remember you with affection. Love from Valerie and friends.

News from our partners

Aquabats

The next event will be on Thursday 6 July swimming at Parliament Hill. Please meet at Gospel Oak at 6.40pm leaving at 6.55pm, Thursday 13 July walk at Hyde Park. Please meet at Hyde Park Corner Underground at the barriers at 6.45pm leaving at 7.00pm.

27 July rearranged boat trip. There are two places available from the original eight as two have had to drop out. If you would like to come on the trip please let me know by Thursday 20 July. It is from the London Regatta Centre and meets at Royal Albert D,L.R at 5.30pm leaving at 5.45pm.

My new e-mail address from 10 July will be: Arthur.payne@businessandtrade.gov.uk. Please do not use this new e-mail address until Monday 10 July,

All the above events are subject to any possible rail strikes that may be called. We will let you know if any event is affected.

The Braillists Foundation

The Braillists Foundation was established in 2020 to promote the value of braille as a proven literacy tool that enriches the lives of blind people. We do this by supporting efforts to make affordable braille and tactile reading technologies available to all blind people irrespective of education and employment status and provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas about the development of future braille technology. We actively encourage braille learning through our Braille for Beginners course, improve peer support and access to expertise through our Braille Bar, Masterclasses, Book Club and podcast. Crucially most of our volunteers and trustees are braille readers. Find out more and join the community at <http://www.braillists.org/>

Eye Matter

7 July Friday Guest Speaker Haren Thillainathan

7 July Friday 7:30pm Groundhog Day theatre outing

11 July Tuesday TATE MODERN outing – (DAY)

11 July Tuesday Neurobics with Steve Wax -
evening

14 July Friday Audio Described Workout with Louise from
IlluminateFreedom Health and Well-Being

18 July Tuesday Audio Described Zumba with Louise from Illuminate
Freedom. Health and Well-Being

21 July Friday Poetry club with Diana

25 July Tuesday BGT – Blindies got Talent

28 July Friday Neurobics with Steve Wax

7 August Monday The Crucible theatre outing

9 August Wednesday Midsummer Mechanicals theatre outing

23 August Wednesday Wizard of Oz theatre outing

2 September Saturday La Cage aux Folles theatre outing

29 September Friday Postal Museum outing

For more information, please email: eyemattervi@gmail.com

EYES 4 POSITIVITY

EYES 4 POSITIVITY is committed to providing tailored services to support people living with sight loss. To ensure that we are meeting your needs, we would appreciate your feedback through this personal independence training survey.

The survey is designed to assess your current level of independence and identify areas where you may require further support. Your responses will help us to develop a training program that is tailored to your specific needs.

Your input is valuable, and we thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey. If you require any assistance with the survey or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

https://us14.list-manage.com/survey?u=de843847b64ab6ac785351d49&id=d3e157e8a1&mc_cid=761b44364f&mc_eid=22abd4ce07&e=22abd4ce07

Together, we can work towards improving the quality of life for people living with sight loss. Thank you for your participation.

New dates for Royal Collection Trust.

Our sincere apologies, unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances, we have to postpone today's Descriptive Zoom about coronations until next month. We will be able to incorporate today's coronation session and July's session on the Gold State Coach to make sure everything is covered!

Join us next month:

Tuesday 4 July- Coronations: An ancient ceremony 2pm-3pm

Our programme of Descriptive Zoom talks are for blind and partially-sighted people. Talks take place on the first Tuesday of the month, from 2pm. Join us to hear about different works in the Royal Collection, the Royal Residences and the history of the Monarchy. Talks are free and informal, and you can participate camera on or off, however you prefer.

Join the Royal Collection Trust Zoom (camera can be on or off)

Joining details:

Meeting ID: 440 773 2986

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4407732986>

Join by phone:

0208 080 6591

0131 460 1196

Dates and topics to be covered are:

Tuesday 4 July	Coronation-an ancient ceremony
Tuesday 1 August	The Coronation portrait of Queen Victoria
Tuesday 5 September	Fashion trends in Victorian England
Tuesday 3 October	James VI & witchcraft
Tuesday 7 November	Object focus – clocks in the Royal Collection
Tuesday 5 December	Hans Holbein

RJ4All Accessible Fitness Classes from Charlie Mlcek

Thanks to Roy Snith..

Your organisation and its users might have interest in free, inclusive, accessible fitness classes for people aged 16+ with disabilities and/or health conditions.

Starting 1st July until the end of August, we are offering 2 exciting fitness classes for people who are disabled, neurodivergent, and/or people with a long term health or mental health condition.

Group training sessions in our accessible gym, Mondays 11 - 11:45 AM, with a qualified Personal Trainer who will lead relevant and accessible exercises tailored to a group of no more than 4 people.

Seated/standing Pilates, 1st Saturdays of the month 12 - 12:45 PM, with a qualified Personal Trainer who will lead relevant and accessible exercises tailored to a group of no more than 6 people. This is a low-impact stretching class which is beneficial for people with long-term health conditions looking to regain mobility.

Location: RJ4All Community Centre, 30 Plough Way, London SE16 2LJ

Registration: Free to sign-up at <https://forms.gle/1YnC8TuPdUeL7DPQ7> or CALL: +44(0)7708758600.

Transport News

NaviLens trial on the DLR from Tom Page, General Manager, DLR.

Thanks to Martin Wilson.

We have partnered with KeolisAmey Docklands (KAD), GoMedia and The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) to trial NaviLens, a mobile app designed to help visually impaired passengers navigate stations on the DLR.

The trial will take place at Cutty Sark, Canary Wharf, Woolwich Arsenal and Tower Gateway DLR stations for six months.

NaviLens is designed to enable blind and partially sighted people to access and locate information and interact with their environment, particularly in busy areas like train stations.

The technology is based on image recognition using augmented smart codes placed along designated customer itineraries and a smartphone app that provides voice guidance for visually impaired passengers.

The NaviLens app will need to be downloaded in order to gain access to the image recognition and voice guidance technology.

Once smart codes have been scanned, users can benefit from the help of the app's voice assistant to continue their journey, the voice assistant having told them practical information including description of a physical element, guidance indications and real-time DLR arrivals and departures.

The trial will be supported by audio announcements at stations, members of staff at Bank, Cutty Sark, Island Gardens and Woolwich Arsenal DLR stations, and Passenger Service Agents that are on board all DLR trains to assist passengers.

Downham – proposed changes to bus route 336 from Fraser MacDonald

Strategic Consultations Lead

Thanks to Andrew Hodgson.

We have launched a consultation on proposed changes to bus route 336. We are proposing: A change from 'hail and ride' to fixed stops on route 336 on Catford Road, Canadian Avenue, Bromley Road, Fordmill Road and Brookhowse Rose in the London Borough of Lewisham

A permanent change to the route to travel along Haddington Road and Oak shade Road in the south direction and along Churchdown and Downderry Road in the north

This email explains how you can find out more about these proposals and respond to the consultation. How do I respond to the consultation

You can read more about the proposed changes and respond to the consultation on our website <https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/route-336>

You need to register your email address before you can submit a response through our website. We will keep your information secure and, if you agree, we will send you updates about the scheme periodically. If you cannot submit a response online, or would prefer not to, you can do so:

- By emailing haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk
- By writing by Freepost to 'TfL Have your Say'

The consultation will be open for eight weeks so you can respond at any time up to 23 August 2023.

If you would like to receive information about our consultation through the post, please call us on 020 3054 6037 and quote 'Bus route 336' when recording your message.

If you have any questions about the consultation, please contact us at haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk or by calling us on 020 3054 6037 and quoting 'Bus route 336' when recording your message. Drop-in event

We are holding an in-person event where you can hear more about the proposals on 12 July 2023 at Phoenix Community Housing Community Hall, 355 Bromley Road, Lewisham, London, SE6 2RP from 11:00 until 17:00.

If you are unable to make this time, please get in touch with us and we can have a discussion with you if needed.

Important information for all Com Cab Customers.

There have been some recent changes to the booking process. Made by Com Cab. When now booking your cab, you are asked a number of qualifying questions. These can include: "Why do you want a Black Taxi and not a minicab?" "What medical issues do you have which won't allow you to get into a minicab?"

To stop these questions from being repeated each time you will need to amend and update your records. Phone the London councils Taxi Card Help Line on: :0207 934 9791 They may ask for proof of your medical conditions.

In our next edition we will continue to share experiences from Blackpool, so please send us your articles and photos. We hope you have enjoyed this London Life and look forward to hearing from you soon.

keepWalking on sunshine"

Fiona and Jane