



SIGHT MATTERS

Optic Topics

Issue 44

Spring 2024



Twenty-One for Twenty-One

This April, we mark 21 incredible years at Corrin Court, our cherished headquarters. Join us in our Twenty-One for Twenty-One campaign, aiming to raise £21,000 in 2024 for our SUN-Raiser initiative, to install a solar panel array at Corrin Court.

Your support matters now more than ever. Donations, big or small, directly impact our sustainability efforts and the wellbeing of our members. Every contribution earns recognition on our SUN-o-Meter.

Here's how you can get involved:

- **Donate:** Contribute online or contact us directly to support our £21,000 goal.
- **Spread the Word:** Share our campaign on social media and with your network.
- **Join the Celebration:** Follow us for updates and events as we commemorate 21 years of Corrin Court.

Let's make Twenty-One for Twenty-One a success together, shaping a more sustainable and inclusive future for those with sight-loss



Dining in the Dark

A Journey of the Senses:

Picture this – you, blindfolded, relying solely on taste, smell, touch, and sound to savour a gourmet meal. Dining in the Dark is designed to challenge your senses and provide a unique dining experience. There are three menus available, all of which have been designed to surprise and delight. After you've made your initial choice, you'll rely solely on smell, sound, texture and taste to work out what you're eating.

There are still tickets left for this fantastic experience...get yours today!!

Date: Saturday, 20th April, Doors: 7PM

Venue: Sight Matters, Corrin Court, Heywood Ave, Onchan, IM3 3AP

Tickets: £70 (including four-course set meal - meat, fish or vegetarian - and a bottle of wine)

21st Birthday Coffee Morning

To celebrate the 21st birthday of Corrin Court we are holding one of our ever-popular Coffee Mornings on **Thursday 25th April at 10.30**. It's a chance to

catch up with friends and meet the team here at Sight Matters, buy some sweet treats and take part in our tombola and raffle. Entry is just £2. If you would like to help on the day or donate any cakes or prizes contact Debbie on 674727.



The Coast 2 Coast is back – Mark Your Calendars!

The highly anticipated annual 'Sight Matters Coast 2 Coast Walk' is gearing up for its return this September, sponsored by Conister Bank.

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, September 8th**, as participants will be embarking on a picturesque 12-mile journey from Douglas to Peel. The Coast 2 Coast isn't about competition; it's about fun and family, welcoming walkers of all ages and abilities, including children, individuals with disabilities, and even our beloved furry, four-legged doggy companions. The scenic route will kick off with a lap around the NSC track, leading westward along the Heritage Trail before concluding in Peel.

Beyond the joys of walking through the stunning Manx countryside, by taking part, participants will contribute to

Sight Matters' crucial mission of supporting the Island's blind and visually impaired community.

The full-distance walk commences at 1:30 pm, with check-in starting at 12:45 pm at the NSC's outdoor pitches' reception. For those opting for a shorter route, an alternative start at St John's is available. Check-in for the three-mile route opens at 3:15 pm at the car park by St John's School, with walkers setting off at 3:30 pm.

More info to follow

Bank Holiday Bingo!



Come and join in the fun of Bingo at Sight Matters on **Friday 3rd May – 7pm!** This is going to be a popular night and tickets will be limited. Bingo caller Dave will be drawing the numbers for cash prizes! Entry is £10 and will include a 10-game bingo book – there will be more books available if you're feeling lucky and want to do more! The numbers are in large print (and we won't be calling at speed) but if you require larger numbers please let us know in advance. Bring your own

drink, no food will be provided so feel free to bring snacks too. There will also be a fabulous raffle on the night which has been put together by member, Lynne Foster – lots of vouchers and donations by many companies and friends.

To book, call 674727 or email events@sightmatters.im

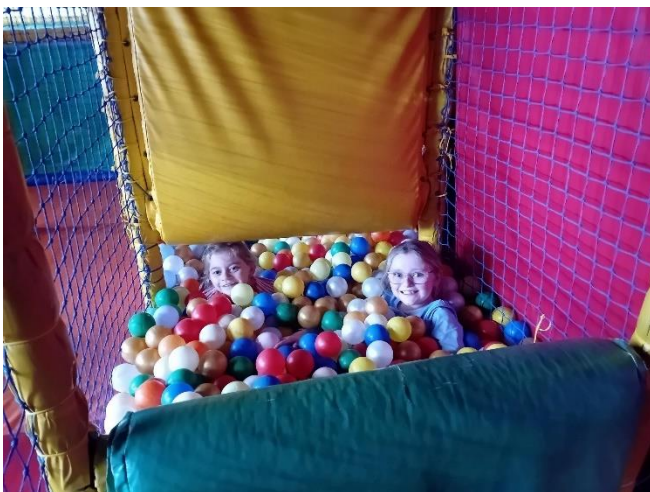
Younger members Activity Club

Over the winter our younger members have enjoyed several fun activities starting with a trip to Energy FM Bowl in Ramsey. This was a popular event where some competitive games of tenpin bowls were had!

The next activity was at the Manx Fun Farm – Fun Barn, the children enjoyed slide races, jumping in the ball pit, climbing over obstacles and through the tunnels! They certainly worked up an appetite and had a well-deserved meal afterwards.



In March they boarded the Great Laxey Mine Train, a new experience for some members. They travelled through the Isle of Man's only remaining railway tunnel before walking to the Ballacregga Corn Mill Café for lunch. After lunch they enjoyed a few hours in the Laxey Glen playpark. There was plenty of play equipment to choose from including a rope ladder swing, some very fast slides, seesaw and several of our younger members entertained themselves on the assault course. There were some very tired but happy children going home.



We have several activities planned for the Easter holidays fingers crossed the weather is kind to us!

If you know any young person that would benefit from our services or you would like to sponsor any of our activities, please get in touch.

Adult members activities club

Members have had the opportunity to see some fantastic shows at the Villa Marina and the Gaiety. The local productions of Evita and Oliver were amazing. Members also had a good sing along to the Neil Diamond tribute band.

A big thank you to Boakesey Closs, Manx Bard, for opening our creativity with poetry writing and who is due to complete a creative writing session with members. Members creativeness was in abundance in the ceramics workshop, where some pottery was produced!

The monthly activity groups and walking groups continue to be popular with members.





We have also had some of the gentlemen try out the acoustic shooting and other members enjoying the Manx Carriage Riding for the disabled.



Upcoming events

If members are interested in attending any of the events please give Julie a call on 674727 or email jcannon@sightmatters.im Transport is available for the following events.

Monday 29th April Guided Tour of the Manx Aviation and Military Museum- 10.30-12.30

The museum focuses on people rather than events and has an unusually intimate and often moving atmosphere. You can discover the amazing story of civil and military aviation in the Isle of Man and also find out about the Island and its people both at home and in the armed forces in wartime. Often likened to Dr Who's "Tardis", and packed full of exhibits ranging from a single button to a full-size aeroplane, the museum has something of interest for everybody.

Tuesday 21st May Wild Mann Photographic Exhibition – Manx Museum 10.30-12

Inspired by Wildlife Photographer of the Year, enjoy a photographic showcase of the Isle of Man's wildlife and natural environment captured by photography enthusiasts.

Also on display to view at the museum, is a colourful wall of recently digitised prints and posters from the Manx National Heritage collections.

Saturday 25th May Illegal Eagles - 7.30pm Villa Marina

Celebrating the music of the legendary USA West Coast country rock band The Eagles, this critically acclaimed show features the very best from The Eagles catalogue of classics including *Hotel California*, *Desperado*, *Take It Easy*, *New Kid in Town*, *Life in the Fast Lane* and many more...

**Saturday 15th June The
Overtones- 8.30pm Villa Marina**

One of the most successful vocal harmony groups in the UK, the four-piece band known for their exquisite vocals, incredible harmonies, dance moves and their charming and distinctive style will have you singing and dancing along.

**Friday 21st June Craftworks
10.30am**

Why not come along to the Craftworks Studio and have a go at painting an item of pottery from a great selection? The studio is a fully equipped ceramic studio and they will glaze and fire the item once completed and you will receive it a week later.

**Monday 1st July Have a go
Acoustic Shooting – Corrin Court**

Would anyone like to come and have a go at Acoustic Shooting? This is proving a popular event with members, it is a sport for any degree of sight loss and you do not need to have any previous experience and the session is safely supervised.

All our services are free at the point of delivery. If you are interested in supporting any of these activities, please contact us on 674727 or email enquiries@sightmatters.im

Below is a poem which was written during one of our recent poetry workshops.

My handbag, by Sue Dentith

My life without my handbag is
unthinkable and impossible,
everywhere I go it's with me,
my life is in that bag.

My purse with no money in it,
bills, glasses, tissues, painkillers, you
name it,

if I rooted long enough I'd find
anything anybody needed.

I'm always good for a plaster or two
and if you need a potato peeler I'm
your woman,
found one of them in there yesterday!

God help anyone who tried to swipe it
from me

they would need strong arms and
muscles

like a weight lifter to get it over my
head!

Try it at your own risk I dare you!

If I don't hit you with it first,
the weight will break your arms trying
to lift it.

It's my bag with my stuff in it, my big bag of mostly crap,

but my life would be much duller without it.

Digital Accessibility Collaboration



In a digital age where technology is omnipresent, ensuring accessibility for all is not just a moral imperative but a necessity. Sight Matters and SQR Group, a local trailblazer in digital identity solutions are proud to continue their digital accessibility collaboration.

The recent success of the second accessibility focus group exemplifies the power of partnership in driving positive change. Through robust dialogue and a user-centric approach, the focus group tackled critical accessibility challenges faced by individuals with sight loss.

At the heart of this collaboration lies a shared commitment to inclusivity. SQR Group's dedication to listening and learning from the experiences of

individuals with sight loss has been instrumental in driving meaningful progress. Together, we're not just improving digital experiences; we're fostering a culture of understanding and empathy – that we wish to continue with other companies.

Looking forward, the journey towards accessibility is an ongoing one. With each focus group session, we take significant strides towards a more inclusive digital landscape. From enhancing screen reader compatibility to improving navigation for users with low vision, every improvement brings us closer to our vision of a world where technology empowers everyone, regardless of ability.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our members who have contributed to this endeavour. Whether you're a member of the Sight Matters community or a representative from SQR Group, together, we look forward to continuing to break barriers and build a future where accessibility is not just a goal but a reality for all.

We'd like to say a huge thanks to Cooil Roy Social Club for raising a fantastic £890 for Sight Matters!

Cooil Roy Social Club organises a range of fundraising events through the year, and has raised thousands of pounds for local charities since its inception

We are incredibly grateful that this time they chose to support us!



Can you help?

We are looking for a volunteer kitchen assistant to cover holidays and sickness. Would you like more information? If so, please contact us.

MBWS AGM

At the recent AGM held in March, Mr Charles Fargher MBE stepped down as Chairman. He has supported our charity for 47 years, from the young age of 27! He became Chairman after the late Deemster Corrin retired. We wish him well and thank him for all his support over the years.

Our new Chairman is Mr Bob Dowty. Bob has been a volunteer for many years and was our Vice-Chairman. We therefore also have a new Vice-Chairman, Mrs Jayne Hughes, who many of the luncheon club members will know!

Parent Support Group

There is now a dedicated parent support group on the island, for parents and carers with visually impaired children. This group is chaired by a parent of a visually impaired child. Sight Matters are supporting this initiative with the meetings being held at Corrin Court.

They meet in person every few months and are also available to chat via a WhatsApp group. If you are interested in joining this group or want to find out more information, please contact Hayley via email viparentsgroup@gmail.com



It is of considerable concern to our members that recently two of our housebound members have left our group as they can no longer see well enough to read. So, we wish to do something about that. We are looking at setting up a "telephone buddy" service where a volunteer phones the other member to read out the newsletter to them. In the first instance we would like to see how many reading this newsletter would like to become involved either as a recipient or as a reader. In order to do so would anyone interested in either side of this service please contact me either by letter, email, or phone as shown below.

We are acutely aware that with no ECLo certain help is not available and in particular the nonmedical kind. At our AGM we discussed an idea that the members would like to take forward. We would like to hear from anyone with help or advice of how to better deal with the problems of low vision.

For example, when I was first diagnosed someone told me how to differentiate between your shampoo and conditioner in the shower, put an elastic band around your shampoo! The intention is to gather as many of these "Helpful Hints" as we can and publish them to hand out to all who want a copy and especially those recently diagnosed with some vision impairment. It doesn't have to be an action it could be a thought that you found helpful. Again, as with the Phone Buddy initiative could I invite anyone with a "Helpful Hint" to contact me by which ever means they choose do so.

I can be contacted in writing to:

N.H. Malpass, 10 Clifton Drive, Ramsey
IM8 3ND

Tel 813774 or Mob 491234 or email
nhmalpass@manx.net

Finally, Professor Harding last year said that the most beneficial way everyone could help the doctors in whatever treatment they are receiving is by controlling the amount of sugar they use daily. Excess sugar in the blood

stream affects Eyes, Heart, Nerves to name but a few.

On Friday May 17th at 1100 hrs in the main hall of Sight Matters I will be giving a 30-minute power point presentation to anyone who wants to attend on "Loss of Vision, Diabetes II and the effects of excess sugar". On how to identify hidden sugars and how to help the medical profession help you. For good measure we will be also discussing Charles Bonnet Syndrome. You may not have Macular or Diabetic symptoms yet but being aware of how to avoid excess sugar will help you remain free. So, all and everyone is very welcome.

Nigel H. Malpass Chairman

Nystagmus Research

A lecturer at University College IOM is looking for individuals with nystagmus to help him with his research. Adam Melvin, who is working on his PhD, is researching the lived experiences of individuals with nystagmus. He is in the process of interviewing people with this condition on the island and is looking for people willing to take part in his interviews.

If you are interested and are over 18, please contact

Adam.Melvin@ucm.ac.im



Our Services

Transport

We currently have four Society vehicles, two minibuses, a people carrier and one car. We are therefore able to offer help to many of our members to attend our centre and to travel to and from the various functions and events we hold throughout the year.

Audio Library

We have a range of mp3 stick audio books. We are supported in the delivery of these audio library books by the IOM Post Office who deliver the books and our weekly news sticks as items free for delivery to visually impaired and blind people.

Outreach visits

A member of our team can arrange to visit you at home/hospital to assist with supporting your needs.

Specialist Equipment

We have a range of assistive technology to help visually impaired and blind people; some of the simplest items like talking clocks, make the biggest difference in helping people with sight difficulties to live more accessible lives

Weekly News

Our well-used weekly news service provides an invaluable source of information to in excess of 100 people who rely on hearing the local news brought to them in detail on MP3 sticks; we issue players to all who require this fabulous service.

Social Activities

We run a series of activities designed to enhance the lives of the local blind and visually impaired community, and we have new and exciting ideas being brought forward regularly, some of which provide real challenges to the staff and volunteers who provide our services. We hold luncheon clubs in our centre on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. These consist of a three-course meal with a menu second to none and we can cater for all dietary and most other menu preferences.

Visual Impairment Awareness training

We run courses designed to assist organisations who may occasionally deal with blind and visually impaired clients. We can bring the training to businesses and provide them with a chance to strengthen their customer service for this vulnerable group of people.

Events

We regularly run events for the Society. These vary from week to week and we have adopted a no holds barred approach to the entertainment provided!

Buddy Service

We provide a carefully matched volunteer Buddy service for some of those of our members who prefer to have occasional one to one assistance in their own homes

Charitable status

We are a charity totally reliant on the contributions and donations of our many wonderful supporters; in particular we are grateful to the people of the Island who continue to give generously to our work. Much of our work is supported and delivered by our fabulous teams of volunteers. Membership is free to anyone living with challenges to their vision and most of our services are provided without charge.



Please feel free to visit our Centre and review our operations. We welcome constructive feedback and thoughts and ideas on how we can further improve our services. We are pleased to offer 'walk and talk' tours of our facilities to organisations of all types. Sometimes it can be very difficult to find out what help is available. We have a wide range of services and support to offer the best help possible.

We are here to discuss any issues that affect the lives of people with serious sight loss.

Call us confidentially on 674727

SIGHT MATTERS

Corrin Court, Heywood Avenue, Onchan, Isle of Man, IM3 3AP

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Sight Matters is a trading name under Manx Blind Welfare Society Registered Charity No. 132.

If you would like this letter in large print, please contact our office on 674727.

