

# TEAM TALK



Summer 2022

## The Newsletter for Chichester Area Talking News Volunteers

### Update from our Chairman, Dick Bunker

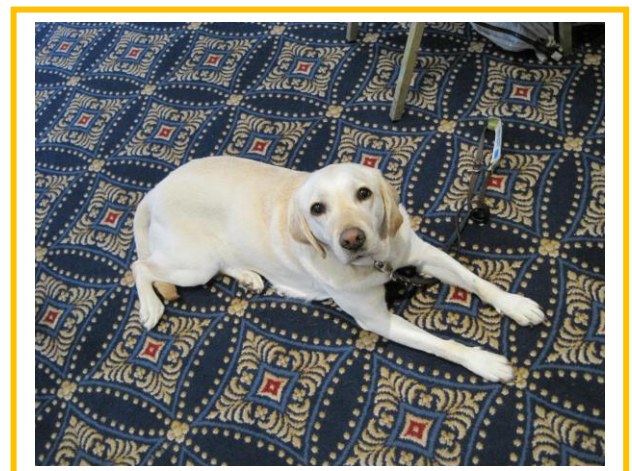
This edition includes a feature by the ROVI (the members of the team from WSCC Adult Services who support our listeners with important help and advice); and an article by Nick Sturt on his role and interests.

A lot has been happening since our Spring edition:

The film show and musical performance at the Chichester New Park Road Cinema in memory of Anva Luc, the blind piano tuner and long-time listener to our broadcasts, was a very moving occasion and raised nearly a thousand pounds for CaTN, thanks to the generosity of the Luc family.

We had a very helpful meeting of the Area and Office Volunteers at Lavant Village Hall, followed by a buffet lunch; and a discussion forum for the production teams and others at the South Downs Planetarium in Chichester, followed by a show in the Planetarium Dome and tea and cakes. The discussion there confirmed that production continued to go very well and David Bathurst and the teams are exploring a few new developments including introducing a wider selection of musical excerpts into our News programmes.

The Team Lunch at the Park Hotel was, as usual, a most enjoyable and successful occasion. We were all very pleased to be able to meet up again face to face after the long gap imposed by the Covid restrictions. The photographs show several members of the team including two of our blind volunteers, Jan Penn and Jodie Pedder, at the lunch, and Jan's guide dog, Bobbi, who also seemed very content!



## **The Listeners' Lunch 2022:**

Invitations will shortly be sent out for the Listeners' Lunch on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> September at 12.30 for 1 pm at the Park Hotel, Chichester. This is an opportunity for volunteers and listeners and partners, friends and carers to meet together informally and socialise over a very pleasant Sunday lunch. It is an occasion to which the listeners and we all look forward greatly.

The Committee has decided that, as we all enjoy together a three-course seated Sunday lunch, served by the hotel staff, including a glass of wine or fruit juice, tea and coffee, everyone attending – listeners, volunteers, partners, friends and carers – should all be charged the very reasonable subsidised price of £17. Any further drinks would be paid for by the person ordering them. It is hoped that many listeners and volunteers together with partners will wish to attend what is always a very enjoyable event and that, as in previous years, wherever possible, volunteers will be willing to offer lifts to our listeners.

## **“Be My Eyes”:**

BME is an international scheme operated via a free mobile phone app to help visually impaired people manage a problem when they are without the support of a sighted person. BME sends a notification to several volunteers based on language and time zone. The first volunteer who responds will provide live support through a video call. The app has won several awards including Best Daily Helper and Google Play Best App. This may be of interest to listeners who have a smartphone and internet facility and it will be drawn to the attention of our listeners in the Information Desk section of our News broadcasts.

## **New Leaflets about CaTN:**



Bob Money has revised and updated our publicity leaflets to include our new charity number as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and Gift Aid and CaTN bank account details. The leaflets are available in the studio office. They have already been issued to the Eye Clinic at St. Richard's Hospital and will be distributed to local opticians etc. shortly.

### **Richard Williamson, former CaTN Vice-President:**

We were very saddened to learn of the death of Richard Williamson following several years of ill health. Richard had contributed 'Nature Notes' to our News programmes for many years as well as writing a weekly column for the Chichester Observer for 57 years. Several of us attended his funeral on June 16<sup>th</sup> to represent CaTN. He will be sadly missed by us all and by our listeners. We have paid tribute to him, including one of his broadcasts, in the final item of the Summer edition of 'Insight'.

### **A Reminder about BCCS ('blind carbon copies'):**

Please remember, when sending an email to a large number of people, always to make use of the 'bcc' feature of email. To do this, address the email to yourself (and also to the studio office: [studio@catn.org.uk](mailto:studio@catn.org.uk) if appropriate, to keep the office informed) and then enter all the recipients **only** in the 'bcc' section. This will send the email to everyone listed in 'bcc' but the names and email addresses will not feature on the face of the email and these details will not be revealed more widely to the other recipients. This is important for us all at CaTN as, under data protection legislation, we have a duty to protect personal information and not to share this, including email addresses, with third parties.

### **A Thank You to you all:**

Once again, sincere thanks to you all for everything you do for Chichester area Talking News. Our listeners frequently mention the help and support they receive from members of our team, the high quality of our programmes, and the difference our service makes to their lives. Thank you all and enjoy the summer months. I look forward to seeing you again together with your spouses/partners, our listeners, their carers, and friends of CaTN at the Listeners' Lunch in September and at our Annual General Meeting in October.

Dick Bunker

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## **Role of the ROVI – (Rehabilitation Officers for people with Vision Impairment)**

The ROVI Team work for West Sussex County Council, providing a service to people with sight loss. We aim to help people stay independent at home, access their community and reduce the risk of accidents and injury, while completing day-to-day activities. Every 'customer' experiences their eye condition differently, so it is really important to talk to individuals to find out what is important to them and what they would like to achieve. We can then help look for solutions – which might include offering small pieces of equipment such as the clever yellow gadget (properly known as a liquid level indicator!) to help someone pour a hot drink more safely - or apply some bright orange 'bump-ons' to their appliances, so that they can set the oven temperature or wash programme more easily. We can advise on lighting and liaise with Housing Associations or landlords to request improvements to existing lighting. We often visit people at home as it helps to observe how they approach tasks but sometimes a phone call is all they need.



Some customers want to get out and about more confidently, so senior ROVI colleagues may teach them road safety techniques or how to use a guide cane to alert them to obstacles, kerbs etc. They can demonstrate techniques to prepare food or use kitchen equipment safely and even teach Braille.

The ROVI Team also manage registrations as Sight Impaired or Severely Sight Impaired. When someone is issued a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) by their ophthalmologist, a copy is sent to our Team. We then contact them to discuss registration, explain any benefits they may be eligible for, such as a disabled person's bus pass, and send out a registration card. It is also a good opportunity to ask how they are managing their sight loss and if they need further support from our Team.

We can help put people in touch with lots of other services and organisations, such as 4Sight, the Macular and Glaucoma Societies, RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind), Department of Work and Pensions, Blind Veterans, Carers' Support, and of course Talking News ...the list goes on! There is a wide range of support out there for people with sight loss but someone recently diagnosed with an eye condition may be upset and bewildered, so we can help them navigate some of these things to begin with. If anyone needs to speak to the ROVI Team, they can ring the West Sussex County Council call centre on 01243 642121 and they can put you through to our Team voicemail.

## **On volunteering for CATN, with some mention of Bakewell Tart and the Flora of Sussex by Nick Sturt**

My mother-in-law Joyce was a lovely, warm, north-country woman whose repertoire of comforting food included an incomparable Bakewell Tart. In the latter part of her life, she was handicapped by Age-related Macular Degeneration and although cookery became more difficult she was still able to turn out delicious roasts, casseroles, puddings and cakes. During the 1990s Chichester Area Talking News gave her a great deal of pleasure as she had been a regular reader of the Chichester Observer and retained a lively interest in local affairs. In fact, the Talking News gave us all pleasure: as soon as we realised how good the programmes were my wife Elisabeth and I would join Joyce to listen to them. In those days the recording arrived in the form of a bulky cassette-type tape, the packages of which could only just be squeezed through a letterbox.

Wind the clock on twenty years and my retirement from teaching. I thought I had plenty of activities to keep me busy, not to mention the modest plans drawn up by Elisabeth – another lovely, warm woman who can make a delicious Bakewell Tart. These modest plans, of course, pertained to various projects of a DIY nature and my fair share of the maintenance of quite a large garden. There was in addition my commitment to a team which since 2000 had been putting together the first comprehensive account of the flora of the county of Sussex since 1937. Nevertheless, there came the day when Elisabeth expressed the view that perhaps I would enjoy some additional responsibility – why not volunteer for the Talking News which (she reminded me) we so enjoyed when her mother was alive?

Elisabeth's ideas are always worth serious consideration and so very soon I found my way to the Studio where I was interviewed by the genial Robbie Burns. It so happened that there was a vacancy for the role of Area Helper for the eastern region – essentially all points east from Tangmere and Boxgrove. This task I happily accepted and went on to meet a number of most interesting listeners, hear some wonderful stories and examine many a black and white photograph commemorating a personally historic event. Occasionally I was able to fix a Boom-box or exchange an old faulty one for a new model, and my teaching skills were revived as I inducted new listeners into the mysteries of operating these handy machines. Meanwhile, my path had crossed with CaTN's wonderful John Holloway and for some reason, he suggested a voice test. He ushered me into the Studio, sat me down at the desk and gave me something to read into the microphone. I assume I passed the test for in a few weeks' time I was filling gaps in the reading line-up for Barbara MacWhirter and David Bathurst and coming in to do the odd bonus track or *Insight* item for John. In time I became a regular on Barbara's team and also moonlighted for David's; then when Susan Washtell stepped

down it was suggested I might like to take over the digest of readers' letters which she had been compiling and reading so successfully.

I had not been grappling with this new task for long when Covid arrived. No longer could I go out and meet the listeners of the Far East in their homes or enter the hallowed portals of the Studio. Instead I was equipped with a microphone and instructions from John as to how my wood-shed might be made acoustically suitable for recording Readers' Letters on a more frequent, fortnightly basis. There were pillows, an old eiderdown and a lot of trial and error until the result met the high standards demanded by John's finely tuned ear. Our furnishings being of the rather ancient and characterful kind the most tricky detail was finding a chair to sit on which would not creak while I was reading. Then in late 2020 Elisabeth and I moved beyond even the boundaries of the Far East. Across the River Arun in Storrington the same old soft furnishings were pressed into use in my new study and the Letters continued to go out.

I try to present a broad selection of topics from around the area without being too party-political: I like to preserve a balance and also to mix in some lighter comment to leaven any air of angst or doom which may be created by some of the correspondence. By now many of the regular contributors to the Observer's letter pages seem like old friends. It was Elisabeth's idea to describe a photograph now and then; here I encounter those who send in their pictures regularly and I am particularly impressed by the couple who go by the name of Coastal JJ because they seem to venture out at the crack of dawn whatever the season for the sake of their art. Recently I have had my remit expanded to take in other parts of the centre section of the Observer entitled *Opinion*.

It has been a pleasure to get back to the Studio since Covid restrictions have been relaxed as there is always a very uplifting camaraderie in the building when we are recording. Barbara and our sound recordist Caroline Aston are very good at getting the best out of everyone who comes in to read. For me it was somewhat daunting to take over the presentation from the popular Geoff Farrell but I had plenty of support and it seems to have worked out. (By chance Geoff was able to stand in for me when I tested positive for Covid in April and it sounded as if he had never been away.) Meanwhile, I have been asked by David to read some really fascinating pieces on Sussex which he has conjured up for the bonus tracks featured in the regular editions.

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Our new garden, it turns out, is not much smaller than the last one and there is also a programme of home improvements on the agenda. The *Flora of Sussex* was achieved: published in 2018 and covering all 2,500 or so wild flowers, grasses, sedges, rushes and ferns seen in the county since records began. (Records began in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with the herbalists, including Sussex's own Nicholas Culpepper.)

The book has notes on all these plants and maps of modern distributions across the county based on 2x2 kilometre squares plus introductory chapters on the geology which shapes the plant communities present, the various habitats, agricultural change over the last 60 years and the history of conservation in our county. To date, we have sold something in excess of 1000 copies but it seems that there is to be no resting upon laurels – be they Cherry Laurel, Portugal Laurel or Spurge-laurel! The next project is an updated register of the rare and threatened species of Sussex which will feed into the database kept by the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre at Woods Mill and so help to inform planning decisions across the county. The existing Register was published in 2001 and there have been many changes since then – not just losses to development but changes in land use and management, not to mention the warming up of the climate which has allowed quite a number of tender species to move into the county. Arguably the best example of this is an insignificant little grass called Early Meadow-grass (*Poa infirma*): on mainland Britain, this was known from Victorian times only from the mildest edges of Cornwall. Twenty-five or so years ago, it suddenly marched up through Devon and along the south coast until it was first reported in Sussex (somewhat infuriatingly) by botanists from Hampshire.

The new Rare Plant Register looks like being something in the order of five years of fieldwork by the members of the Sussex Botanical Recording Society before all the data necessary for the publication is assembled and processed. I foresee that I shall need to be sustained regularly with slices of Bakewell Tart...

