

✱ **SITE eNewsletter March 2018 Issue No. 100** ✱

It's our 100th edition of the newsletter! We can't believe it has been 8 years since our first edition - where has the time gone. So much has changed for those of us with sight loss since 2010.

The newsletter has grown over the last 8 years from under 100 members to over 800 this year! Thank you all for supporting the newsletter and our charity too.

And in a week which really impacted on our ability to travel due to the Beast From The East this months newsletter has something to shake off the snow!

Please email any questions, comments, articles and news leads to [info@sitescotland.org](mailto:info@sitescotland.org)

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Section 1: News Update

Restoring sight with 'tooth in eye surgery'

For some patients with severe types of corneal and ocular surface diseases, 'tooth in eye surgery' is a last resort to restore their sight.

Osteo-odonto-keratoprosthesis (OOKP), also known as 'tooth in eye surgery', is a specialist procedure which involves removing the patient's tooth and inserting a tiny lens inside it, before it is implanted into the patient's eye.

There are only a small number of OOKP operations that take place each year and just one surgeon who carry out the operations in the UK. Funded by NHS England, it is reserved for patients with rare types of corneal blindness and for whom a conventional corneal transplant would not work.

[Read more.](#)

[Electoral Reform Consultation](#)

The Scottish Government is committed to increasing participation in elections both in terms of voter turnout and encouraging citizens to stand for election. Democratic participation for all challenges the inequalities of power and influence that exist in society, and an electoral system that supports and empowers the engagement of the Scottish people in their own elections plays a crucial role in this. We are keen to elicit views on a number of issues related to

Local Government and Scottish Parliament elections, including: how often these elections should be held; who runs these and how they are run; who can register and vote; and who may stand for election. If you wish to respond then please return the online questionnaire template by 12 March 2018.

RWPN Rehabilitation Worker Scottish Conference  
The first conference for Vision Rehabilitation Workers and Habilitation Workers in Scotland for over a decade takes place in March hosted by the Rehabilitation Workers Professional Network.

The day will bring together professionals from across Scotland to share knowledge and skills as part of their professional development. It is also a rare chance for professionally isolated staff to network and support professional resilience.

The conference takes place on 20 Mar 2018 commencing 9:45am -until 3:45pm at Scottish War Blinded Hawkhead Centre Paisley PA2 7BS.

[Find out more on the RWPN website.](#)

Have you experienced visual hallucinations known as Charles Bonnet Syndrome?

Newcastle University is looking for people diagnosed with Charles Bonnet Syndrome (CBS) and currently experiencing frequent visual hallucinations to take part in a study.

Currently, there are no effective treatments for visual hallucinations in people with eye disease and it's common for people with eye disease to experience vivid, persistent visual hallucinations. These hallucinations can sometimes be distressing and disrupt day-to-day life.

Research has shown that areas of the brain involved in visual perception may be over-active in people with CBS. A new treatment called transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS), which involves the passing of a weak electric current between two pads placed on a person's scalp, has been found to change activity levels in

certain areas of the brain. The University is keen to investigate whether this treatment can decrease activity in areas of the brain which may be over-active in CBS and which may be contributing to causing visual hallucinations.

Participation will require five visits across one week. For the first and last visit, volunteers will need to attend the research site at Newcastle University, where visual hallucinations, vision and brain activity will be assessed using electroencephalography, transcranial magnetic stimulation and brain imaging.

This will last around two hours. During the rest of the week, volunteers will receive tDCS treatment, which will take no more than 45 minutes and can be carried out at home. After four weeks, the treatment and tests will be repeated. Pre-paid travel expenses will be covered for all visits to the research site.

If you are interested in taking part and would like more information, please contact Kat da Silva Morgan by telephone on 0191 208 1341, or by email link [k.da-silva-morgan@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:k.da-silva-morgan@ncl.ac.uk)

Save the Date: Monday 30 April 2018

A major congress on disability, employment and the workplace is being held by the Scottish Government in Glasgow, in collaboration with Disabled People's Organisations, the STUC and employers. First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, Minister for Social Security, Jeane Freeman and Minister for Employability and Training, Jamie Hepburn will all be attending.

### **Smart by Charlotte Bennie**

Charlotte once again provides us with her experiences of living with sight loss and in her most recent article she tells us about her recent tech fest!

[Read the article here.](#)

Blind man and guide dog face discrimination on Tube

Staff at London Bridge station had to ask a commuter to stop trying to push past a blind person on the escalator.

Amit Patel and his guide dog, Kika, were on their way to the Tube platform when someone behind them tried to get past.

Other commuters could not tolerate his "inconsiderate" behaviour.

[See video at BBC News.](#)

## Section 2: Tech Talk

Microsoft has launched an app which can help map the world

The Soundscape app lets users set a beacon at their destination and then sets off 3D spatial audio cues to give the user awareness of what is around them. It connects to global map services to describe places of interest or street names.

[Read more.](#)

### Microsoft Accessibility

Microsoft Just Released A List Of All Accessible Features In Windows 10 & Office 365.

[Read more at - Assistive Technology blog...](#)

### Microsoft Partners With Be My Eyes

Be My Eyes, the popular iOS and Android app that connects blind and low vision users with sighted volunteers for assistance via live video chat, has today launched an exciting new feature for users needing specialized or technical help.

Following today's update to the Be My Eyes app, users will find a new menu option on the app's main screen titled "Specialised Help".

In its [announcement of this new feature](#) Be My Eyes stated that this is a response to the growing number of technology-related requests to volunteers.

Be My Eyes has taken careful note of these kinds of calls and wondered if representatives from the given company itself would be best suited to assist in these scenarios. Contacting customer support through email or by phone isn't always ideal. Direct communication with a business's customer support agent could be a vision-friendly alternative and less time consuming for users. If someone from the company could see the issue in real time, issues with their products or service could be resolved more efficiently.

The first company to partner with Be My Eyes is [Microsoft](#):

Microsoft is the first company to be highlighted in Specialised Help, offering Be My Eyes customers a direct connection to receive technical assistance from the Disability Answer Desk, a free consumer service for Microsoft's customers with disabilities.

The app will work the same, connecting customers through video; but instead of reaching out to volunteers, customers will work directly with a member of the Microsoft Disability Answer Desk to get support on questions about their Microsoft product or service.

[Read More: "Microsoft Partners With Be My Eyes to Offer Specialised Help to its Blind and Low Vision customers Via Live Video Chat"](#)

#### JAWS Version Number Change

Beginning with the latest February release, JAWS will now be numbered using the year it will be shipping in, rather than an arbitrary number. You can think of it as though this is the 2018 model of JAWS coming out this Fall, just as they do with cars. The versions of ZoomText and Fusion that get released following this new JAWS 2018, will also have the same 2018 numbering. This will make it easier for users to know which versions go together, and when they were released.

To find out What's New in JAWS 2018 visit the [Freedom Scientific website here](#).

#### SITE Apps Club!

We are delighted to welcome Ruth from Sight Sound Technologies to our March meeting which will take place on Wednesday 28 March in the Fairfield Room, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

Commencing 10:30 until 12noon (Enter from Granville Street where you will be met upon arrival)

Ruth will be demonstrating the new Buzzclip which is a small and discreet wearable device for people living with blindness or partial sight. The device uses ultrasound to detect obstacles that may lie directly in one's path. It then notifies the user of these obstacles through intuitive vibrations, allowing the user to safely navigate around any objects that they may encounter. The BuzzClip offers essential head level obstacle detection and can be easily held or attached to many forms of clothing, as well as a cane, making it a highly versatile and useful device.

Due to the 'Beast from the East' the February meeting had to be cancelled and we will let you know soon when Lucy Begley, Humanware can get along and demo the Victor Reader Trek.

Remember you can also join the SITE Apps Club on Face Book by clicking the link below.

[SITE Face Book Group](#).

#### **Google Tech support.**

Google has launched a Disability Support Team to answer accessibility queries from users. The team will answer questions about using separate assistive technology with Google products, as well as Google's own accessibility features, such as ChromeVox or TalkBack. The support team will answer questions by email and are available Monday-Friday, working on Pacific Standard Time. To contact the team, email: [disability-support-external@google.com](mailto:disability-support-external@google.com).

### **Inclusive Fitness Equipment Research**

Going to the gym or using exercise equipment at home is simply part of a daily routine for many people, but locking-in this routine isn't as easy for everyone. A huge amount of modern fitness equipment just isn't accessible for those with a visual impairment, as a new report has demonstrated.

The study, 'Inclusive fitness equipment for people with a visual impairment', was commissioned by sight loss charity Thomas Pocklington Trust and carried out by Rica (the Research Institute for Consumer Affairs). It showed the prevalence of console systems that are partially or entirely unusable to people with a visual impairment, despite a widespread desire among this group stay physically active.

[Read full story here.](#)

### **Virtual World**

A cane that lets people with sight loss experience virtual reality has been developed by Microsoft. Named the Canetroller, the system features a 'haptic cane controller', which generates sounds, physical resistance and vibrations when it encounters objects in a virtual landscape, simulating how a cane behaves in the real world. One aim of the project is to help people with sight loss practice navigation skills in a controlled environment.

[Read more about the Canetroller at the Microsoft Research portal.](#)

### **Blindfold Crossword (iOS, Free With In-App Purchases)**

Blindfold Crossword is a fully accessible crossword game, for both sighted and visually impaired people, designed for rapid audio play. It is based on the standard crossword puzzle that is a grid 15 rows by 15 columns.

In Blindfold Crossword, you are given a set of hints and its location in the grid, and you have to come up with the answer - a word or words - that fits into the grid, either horizontally or vertically. When entering a word, it might share letters with other words, so you must pick answer carefully.

To make the puzzles easier, you can set the difficulty level of the puzzles, and ask for hints. You can also have the puzzle partially completed, which helps you learn how to solve a crossword puzzle.

Blindfold Crossword Puzzle comes with a practice puzzle, and there are upgrade packs of 100 puzzles each.

[Visit Blindfold Crossword's App Store page](#)

### **Glucose - Blood Sugar Tracker (iOS, Free)**

Glucose allows users to store a history of their blood sugar records. This makes it easy to identify trends and retain your data. You can also schedule reminders to ensure that you are diligent about checking your blood sugar.

The app also tracks what time of day you are checking your blood sugar, such as first thing in the morning, before a meal, or before bed. You can also add a note to each record.

Glucose also integrates with HealthKit by writing all inputted entries to the Health app.

Current Version: 1.7.8 (February 9, 2018)

[Visit Glucose - Blood Sugar Tracker's App Store page](#)

### **Writers App - Basic (iOS, Free With In-App Purchase)**

Writers App is a notepad for writers. It offers you an adjusted user interface to easily put all your thoughts and ideas about your story into one single place. Writers App gives you complete flexibility about the attributes and information you want to enter for all the parts of your story, regardless of whether you're editing a chapter, character, place or item.

I like to call Writers App „Writers little helper“. It is the perfect supplement in your creative writing process which helps you to outline your thoughts and ideas and to plan the story you work on; nothing more, nothing less. Writers App is developed for passionate writers to help and support them in their daily work.

The main features of Writers App at a glance:

- Create your stories in Writers App and outline all important parts like the chapters, characters, places and items
- Export the contents of Writers App as TXT file or print them directly from your iOS device via AirPrint
- Customise the app the way you want with given fonts, font sizes and background images

You can also unlock the following PRO features with a onetime in app purchase:

- Synchronise your contents between all your iOS devices with iCloud
- Organise all categories within the app the way you want to gain total flexibility in planning and outlining your story
- Add additional notes to all the elements to your story to capture extra information
- Customise your stories by adding own cover images to them
- Export the contents of Writers App as TXT file with additional with Markdown formatting
- Lock the app with a passcode or even Touch ID
- Use automatically created backups to restore contents and to keep all your work save

[Visit Writers App - Basic's App Store page](#)

### **Section 3: Events**

March

20 March - RWPN Rehabilitation Worker Scottish Conference,  
Paisley

28 March SITE Apps Club, Mitchell Library, Glasgow

April

Monday 30 April 2018 - Disability and Employment Congress, Glasgow

Please note that the statements and views expressed in this email and any attachments are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of SITE.

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