



Winter 2008



GLS NEWSLETTER

Chairman's Christmas Message

I would like to thank all our staff, volunteers and supporters for all their hard work throughout 2008 and wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year. Merry Christmas to you all.

Peter Clery
Chairman

Members Xmas Lunch

Don't forget the Members' Xmas Lunch on Tuesday 9th December, 2008, at The Cheltenham Area Civil Service Club, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham GL51 9SL. Please arrive between 12 noon to 12.30pm. Lunch will be served from 12.45pm onwards and we hope to finish by 3.30pm to 4.00pm. There are still places available so if you haven't sent in your reply slip with the payment, please send it in, at the very latest, by 27th November, 2008.

Sad News

I have some sad news that Alan Finney has sadly passed away on the 18th October, 2008. Alan was a founder member and Chairman of Gloucestershire Lifestyles for many years. At this time our thoughts are with his wife and family. He will be sadly missed.

Peter Clery
Chair of GLS

Members' Questionnaire

It has been two years since we last carried out members' survey. Therefore, in order to identify and

meet your current needs and wishes, a Members' Questionnaire is enclosed with this newsletter. Please take a few minutes to complete the form and return it in the FREEPOST envelope enclosed, no stamp needed. Thank you.

Alan Finney

My dear friend Alan Finney sadly died last month. I first met Alan over 10 years ago. His failing health meant that he could no longer work but he wasn't prepared to sit around doing nothing, he wanted to do some volunteering with a charity and Stroud & Dursley Lifestyles, as we were then, was suggested to him. We talked about the things he could do for us and to our delight he agreed to be our first Newsletter Editor. Alan took great care to find useful information & articles for our quarterly newsletter, which at the time went to over 200 disabled members. He also became part of the Members' Advisory Group and in 2001, when Gloucestershire Lifestyles became an independent charity, Alan became our first Chairman. He continued in this role until 2006 when, because of his failing health, he stepped down to become Vice Chair. This year Alan's health reached the point where he very sadly felt he could no longer fulfil the role of a Trustee and resigned. Alan's contribution to the management of Gloucestershire Lifestyles will be greatly missed and I will miss a dear friend.

Sue McClung

Physical and Sensory Disability Scheme

Hi everyone,

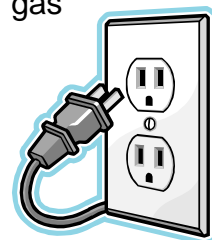
I am going to start off with some good news. We have just heard from Supporting People, our funders for 1:1 housing related support, that our contract has been extended until March 2011. That is of course fantastic news for GLS and the PSD team, as it means that we can continue to provide support of the highest quality to our members. A wonderful Christmas present for GLS.

I recently attended one of the Cheltenham Lunch Club meetings, which are held on the first Monday of each month at Weatherspoons in Cheltenham, and was really disappointed that only 3 members turned up. I understand from Wendy that the numbers have been diminishing over the last few months and would like to take this opportunity to find out why. I firmly believe that having the opportunity to meet up regularly is a great thing. It enables us to re-establish friendships, gives us the opportunity to get out to a venue where you know like-minded people are going to be and also gives opportunities for anyone who is in need of some support or advice to let either Wendy or myself know and we can advise or move things forward for you. It was so disappointing at the November meeting, not only for me but also for those who did attend, not

seeing other members there to have a chat to. What I would like to know is whether this Lunch Club has run its course or whether people don't like the venue. Either way, I will try to do my utmost to make sure that this social occasion is something that you will enjoy and look forward to each month. To help me do this, I would be very grateful if you could let me have your feedback on the Lunch Club by either telephoning me on 07792 508785 or emailing me at Lorraine@gloslifestyles.co.uk. I really look forward to hearing from you.

Another lunch club has also started up, run by Hilary James of Cheltenham Disability Forum. This is held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hogs Head Pub in Cheltenham. This is another opportunity for everyone to socialise. I hope that you will all go along and lend your support to this activity.

I would like to send a big thank you to Sister Choosang, who has sent information to me regarding utilities and telephone numbers' websites. I received an email regarding NPower, where this utility provider is giving discounts to those who are on low income reduced rates for gas and electricity.



You can save up to £250 per year on your

utilities. To sign up to this scheme, you need to be an NPower customer. They have a website which will give more information, www.Npower.com/spreadthewarmth. Go online and see if you can make a saving.

Are you fed up with 0870 and 0845 numbers? If so, you might be interested in www.saynoto0870.com. On this site they will ask you to type in an 0870 or 0845 number and in turn they will give you a direct



line number to contact. This should save you having to wait in queues, press option buttons and generally get frustrated with having to deal with machines. I have tried it on many an occasion and it really does help.

Telecare in Gloucester is an organisation which supplies and installs Telecare Systems to people in Gloucestershire, enabling them to maintain independence at home. The project is aimed at those who need extra support to live on their own. The system uses sensors to monitor potential accidents and emergencies, e.g. falling, flooding, fire etc. These sensors are linked to a monitoring centre via your telephone line and will alert trained operators within seconds if there is a problem.

The response from the control centre includes such

things like reassurance, even if it is not an emergency. The special phone has a speaker that can be heard from a distance and the operator can hear your voice when nearby. They will also contact your nominated keyholder to ask them to visit to check that everything in the home is alright, or they would contact your housing manager, or warden. They would also contact the emergency services, e.g. an ambulance, if you have a fall, the fire brigade if there is a fire or the police if there is an unknown caller at your door.



The benefits Telecare provides are reassurance and peace of mind as well as rapid response in the case of emergencies. The equipment is simple and can be tailored to suit individual needs.

How do you get Telecare? For this service you need to be referred to the Adult Social Care Helpdesk, who will arrange for a screening assessment to make sure the equipment is suitable for you. They will then contact the monitoring centre to arrange the installation. If you are considered suitable for the Telecare system and you meet the County Council's Fair Access to Care Criteria, the equipment will be provided free of charge. Also during the two year pilot phase of the service, the monitoring and

maintenance of the equipment will be provided free of charge, after which there may be a small affordable charge but that will be based on an individual's ability to pay.

For those who do not meet the Fair Access to Care criteria but want to receive the Telecare System, they can contact their local Careline/Linkline via the Adult Helpdesk on 01452 426868.

I look forward to meeting up with you all again at the Members' Christmas Lunch on 9th December at the Cheltenham Civil Service Sports Club on Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham which I know will be a very enjoyable occasion. It is intended that we arrive between 12noon and 12.30pm, with a view to being served lunch around 12.45pm. There is also a bar in the dining area.

If I do not see you at the Members' Christmas Lunch then I would like to take this opportunity to wish you

**A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Lorraine Easdown
PSD Scheme Manager

Community Members' Events & Activities

Sailing

Our two days' sailing at Whitefriars went ahead

despite the poor weather. When we left Gloucester and Cheltenham on the first day it was raining heavily. The weather improved as we travelled to the sailing club and we had sunshine all day. On the second day we left in rain and although we did not have a lot of sun, it was dry for most of the time.

Everyone that attended enjoyed the days' sailing and the BBQ. I would like to say a big thank you to the Cheltenham Sunrise Rotary Club for supporting the event by providing transport, cooking the BBQ and supplying the delicious strawberries and cream. Many thanks to all staff and volunteers that supported the event.



New Year Lunch Outing

The Cheltenham Sunrise Rotary Club are kindly organising a lunch outing to a Cotswold pub/restaurant for Lifestyles' members. The lunch will take place late January / early February 2009, more details to follow. Anyone who would like to attend, please contact John Print on 01452 541556.

Buddy Page

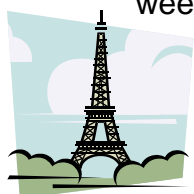
If anyone blinked they would have missed this year. Where did the time go?

In this issue of the Challenger, I thought you might like to see the bigger picture of the Buddy Scheme and hear a little of the 'behind the scenes' news.

We are supporting ninety-four carers across the county; fifteen in the Forest, forty-one in Gloucester, sixteen in Cheltenham, four in Tewkesbury, sixteen in Stroud and Dursley and one in Cirencester (perhaps you can now see why we are sometimes late in picking people up).

Since April 1st, we have held approximately three hundred and twenty activities which have provided ONE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED and FIFTEEN (1,415) respite breaks (and that's no joke!).

Twenty carers received four days of continued respite when we took their charges to either Paris or Butlins in Minehead for a long weekend.



Hopefully all our carers feel that they are receiving ample, quality breaks at a time that is suitable to them and the participant, not forgetting the new chance for carers to come and join us on an event.

We have not forgotten those participants who have more complex needs and we have still managed to retain our one-to-one service.

Apart from the breaks, we have also given carers emotional and practical support and provided advice or sign-posted carers to agencies who can help with benefits, housing and health issues.

All of this said, we aren't perfect and mistakes have been made, thankfully not many but if you have been let down please accept our apologies.

All that we provide is carried out by a small team of staff; Ian, Lisa, and new girl Julie and volunteers; Caroline, Daphne, Maria, Paul, Sophia, Oliver, Vicky, Katie and Dawn.

We all work long and strange hours; day, late evenings and weekends, so I would like to thank them all, especially the volunteers, for their support. Without them the Buddy Scheme wouldn't be able to do a third of what we do.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and Joy and Peace for the New Year.

Liz West

Buddy Scheme Manager

GLS Charity Shop

OUR CHARITY SHOP is now open five days week, thanks to dedicated and

hard working volunteers, without whom we would not be able to run the shop. We are aware how important and valuable the shop is in so many ways to the local community and volunteers. We are always looking at ways to make improvements in the shop to enable customers to come in and find what they are looking for. They have been asking if we can put size labels on the rail to make it



easier, which we now have. Also, our stock is now rotated on a regular basis so there is always something new as most of our customers are regulars who come in 2 or 3 times a week.

Thank you to all for your donation of goods for the charity shop and we hope we continue to receive them. Donations can be taken to the storage & sorting area of the GLS Office, ring Bharti on 01452 530184 for details.

Volunteers

Could you spare some time to come into the warehouse and help us sort our stock for the shop, organising and sorting through our clothes and bric-a-brac?

We are always looking for volunteers to work in our charity shop. If you are interested and can spare a few hours then please contact me, Bharti, on 01452 530184 or bharti@gloslifestyles.co.uk

Bulletin Page

Cheaper Calls

If your readers are, like me, fed up with having to pay 6p plus 5p a minute for 0845 numbers and 10p a min for 087 numbers, there is a solution. If you have a computer, just key in: www.saynoto0870.com. A

page comes up and you click search for an alternative number. That gives you your landline numbers and sometimes even 0800 (free) numbers. I very rarely ring 0845 or 0870 – too expensive.



GLS Member

Sue's Piece

Online Blue Badge Map

You can find Blue Badge parking bays, Shopmobility Centres, accessible toilets and much more in over 100 towns and cities across the UK using an interactive map at:

www.direct.gov.uk/bluebadgemap.

The Blue Badge map can be used to find: Blue Badge parking bays in over 100 towns and cities across the UK; Red Route parking bays in London; petrol stations and their service facilities on major routes in the UK; accessible public toilets in over 100 towns and cities across the UK; railway stations and their accessibility; Underground stations and their accessibility in London; taxi ranks; Shopmobility centres;

accessible beaches; Wheelyboat locations; Mobility Centres; locations of interest (like town halls, hospitals, museums and tourist attractions); and parking rules for all councils in the UK. Different councils have different parking rules and the map uses a colour-coding system to show the rules in any given area. You can search the map by entering a street, town or postcode. Alternatively, you can pick a town or city from a list of all locations covered by the service.

MS Society Carers' Emergency Card

Do you ever worry what you would do if you had an accident or emergency while away from home, and were unable to get back to the person you care for? If so, you aren't alone. Many carers are so anxious about being away from home that they don't bother going out; some have given up work; and others no longer socialise or take part in away from home activities at all.

The MS Society's Carers' Emergency Card is available to all carers of people with MS. They have joined forces with an organisation called Welbeing, which is very experienced in providing high-quality call centre support for carers and people with disabilities. In an emergency the carer, or someone with them, telephones the control centre who then retrieves the carer's records using a unique ID number given to

them when registering for the service. Welbeing then put in place the necessary agreed arrangements.

If you would like to register for a carer's emergency card, or simply wish to find out more, please ring Welbeing on Freephone 0800 085 8344 or go to the website:

www.mssociety.org.uk/support_and_services/family_and_friends/carers_emergency.html

[Source: Newsletter of the West Midlands Region]

Road Atlas for Blue Badge Holders

[For those not on the Internet, or who prefer a book format]

This manual Atlas contains not just maps but also route planning information such as which petrol stations are accessible, where you can park, even down to how accessible the accommodation is at your destination.



To request a free copy, send a cheque for £3.99

(to cover p&p) payable to PIE Enterprises and quoting reference FREEATLAS with your name, address and telephone number to: PIE Enterprises Ltd, Caledonia House, 223 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NG.

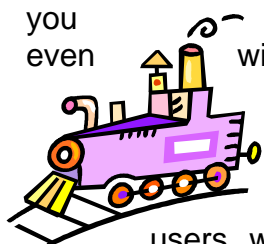
NHS Failing People with MS

A report published by the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and the MS Trust states the NHS is failing people with multiple

Sclerosis (MS). The report identified that the estimated 85,000 people in the UK with MS are subject to a "postcode lottery", with access to basic Services, including pain relief, a matter of geographical location. The NHS is still failing to implement 2003 National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines on the management of the condition. An audit of services revealed that only 36% of people with MS had access to neurological rehabilitation facilities and long delays mean 50% of patients are waiting more than 20 weeks to be diagnosed after a GP referral. Simon Gillespie, Chief Executive of the MS Society said "It's vital that health services are held to account and his latest audit confirms what our 40,000 members tell us - people with MS need access to more and better care". "The NICE guidelines set out a laudable range of care and support on paper but it needs to be backed up in practice". [Source: Links 2]

Disabled Persons Railcard

It costs £18 a year, and this gives you and an adult companion a third off a standard or first class fare throughout the UK. But, did you even know, that without a railcard,



wheelchair users who stay in their chairs are entitled to the same discount? For

more information, visit: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

NEW BENEFIT - Employment & Support Allowance

Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) is the new benefit paid to people whose ability to work is limited by ill health or disability. From 27th October 2008 it replaced both incapacity benefit and income support paid on the grounds of incapacity. ESA has two elements; contributory ESA, which is similar to incapacity benefit and linked to your national insurance contribution record; and income related ESA, similar to income support paid on the grounds of incapacity. Anyone making a claim for ESA enters a 13 week 'assessment phase', during which you undertake a work capability assessment. Those currently receiving incapacity benefit or income support paid on the grounds of incapacity will continue to do so until reassessed in the period from 2009 to 2013.

The rates paid by the new benefit are not as generous as the old and the emphasis is on getting people back into work. There is an excellent booklet explaining ESA available from Disability Alliance, Universal House, 88-94 Wentworth Street, London E1 7SA, costing £7 (post free). Tel 020 7247 8776.

British Gas Free Survey

British Gas are offering their customers their "here to

help" programme, giving free loft and cavity wall insulation to eligible households, i.e. those aged 70 or over, or receiving income or disability related benefits. The programme covers a free survey, free labour and free materials. I booked the survey, which lasted 25 mins, to discover that I did have cavity wall insulation and more than adequate loft insulation.

Choice Based Letting

People who need social housing will have to register as they do now. However, rather than wait for a property to be offered to them, they put themselves forward for any available property advertised. People on current housing lists are automatically registered. It is a web based system and people need internet access or access to a public library or similar. My concerns are that it discriminates against people with a disability, older people & people living in rural areas. If you are on the housing register please get in touch with GLS and we will see how we can support you.

Gloucester City Access Group

George Ridgeon is looking for people with a disability who live in the Gloucester area. He is hoping to set up an Access Group to try to raise awareness of access issues in the city. Anyone interested, please contact George on george.ridgeon.bowls@blueyonder.co.uk.

Gloucestershire Service Users' Forum

It has been a busy few months for the Service Users' Forum. Our members have been involved with Gloucestershire University on many occasions. A group of 10 Service Users joined the 2nd year Social Work students during their induction week. The students were due to go on their first placement and had not yet had the opportunity of working with Service Users. The students interviewed the Service Users on what makes a good Social Worker. On another occasion, our members were involved in a role-play for 1st year students. They gave an example of a difficulty they have getting accessible transport in the evening. They then met students in groups to answer any questions. Other members have been involved in teaching support at the University. Service Users have been involved in County Council budget consultations in Cheltenham and Gloucester. Some of our members attended the South West Service Users' meeting at Taunton to discuss how different area's work.

Anyone wishing to be involved please contact John Print on 01452 541556.

GLS 2008 GRAND CHRISTMAS DRAW

MANY EXCELLENT PRIZES!

The draw will take place at 12 noon at the GLS Members' Christmas Lunch at the Cheltenham Area Civil Service Club, Tewkesbury Road, Cheltenham GL51 9SL on 9th December, 2008.



Proceeds from this year's draw will be used to help with the Event and Activities' programme for GLS members.



Draw tickets are 50p each, £2.50 per book. You can either give your ticket counterfoils and payment to your support worker or return them in the FREEPOST envelope supplied, no stamp needed. Please do not send cash in the post, either pay by cheque or postal order.



Two books of tickets are enclosed with this Newsletter. Further books are available from the GLS Office, Hatherley Day Centre, Hatherley Road, GLOUCESTER GL1 4PW or ring Bharti on 01452 530184.



Coming Events

December 2008

9th Members' Xmas Lunch*

January 2009

31st Gloucester Disability Forum Meeting

Please let your Support Worker or GLS know if you would like to attend any of the monthly events listed here. Deposit required when booking * events.

Trustees' Meetings

20th January & 17th March 2009

Members wishing to contact the Trustees, please write to Colin Parry at the Lifestyles Office, Hatherley Day Centre, Hatherley Road, Gloucester, GL1 4PW.

The Challenger Information

Copy to GLS Office by 13th February 2009

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